

Tributes pour in for late journalist and apartheid activist Rafiq Rohan

Rafiq Rohan, a veteran journalist and former political prisoner has died.



Source: www.unsplash.com

Rohan was found dead by neighbours on Sunday and the circumstances surrounding his death are not yet known.

“For much of the 1980s and early 1990s, Rohan, who had been a journalist for more than 40 years, straddled the difficult divide being a journalist and a political activist, finally ending up on Robben Island, where he was sent for 15 years for his activities in uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the then-banned African National Congress. He spent three years on the Island,” said Sanef in a statement.

Veteran journalists have sent out their condolences

Moegsien Williams, a former Sanef chairperson who worked with Rohan at *South Newspaper* in the 1980s and later at Independent Media, said Rohan was a journalist who always went the extra mile to get a story.

“He was a dedicated and an extremely loyal staffer on all the publications we had worked on over the years. He was also a very good cook on the occasions I had the pleasure of being served by him. May his soul rest in peace after he had spent a better part of his life fighting some inner demons,” said Williams.

Former Sanef leader Ryland Fisher said he knew Rohan for over 40 years and they became good friends.

“Rafiq was the one who drove my wife and me to maternity hospital in 1985, for the birth of our first child. He also took part in our discussions on a possible name for her. But I also knew him as a dedicated and professional journalist, and a committed anti-apartheid activist. He would often write on a voluntary basis for *Grassroots* community newspaper, where I worked in the mid-1980s,” he said.

Hoosein Ismail, a South African now living in Australia and a close friend of Rohan said he had converted to Islam after being inspired by Malcolm X.

“I first got to know Rafiq when he worked at the Iranian Interest Section in Morningside in Johannesburg. When Rafiq was arrested in Durban in 1987, Faizel Dawjee, who was Editor at *Al Qalam*, broke the news to us. Receiving the news on his arrest, I knew this was going to be a long road for Rafiq. After I migrated to New Zealand (now living in Perth, Australia) in 1999, Rafiq and I remained close friends and we were in almost daily contact via WhatsApp. He was a kind and caring person and would enquire about my family and I daily,” he said.

“A year ago, Rafiq entrusted me with his unpublished book. I will forever remember my dear friend as outspoken, kind and caring and strong willed. May Allah grant him a high pillar in Jannah (heaven).”

Rohan was also the editor of the government newspaper *Vuk'uzenzele* from 2005 until 2010.

Acting Director-General of GCIS, Michael Currin, said: "It is truly with deep sadness that we at GCIS learned of the passing of our former colleague Rafiq Rohan. His gentle yet firm and confident ability to tell stories of hope and determination in our country's efforts to improve the lives of ordinary citizens, continue to inspire us in our work in communicating the South African story in the GCIS. His passing is a great shock to many in the government communication fraternity and we extend to his family our heartfelt condolences.”

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