



**Palestine Solidarity Alliance**  
United Against Apartheid Israel



**Palestine Solidarity Alliance**  
**South Africa**

PO Box 357, Lenasia, 1820 - Tel. 0823366711

Email: [info@palestinesa.co.za](mailto:info@palestinesa.co.za)

[www.palestinesa.co.za](http://www.palestinesa.co.za)

**18-07-22**

### **Statement on the Passing of Don Mattera**

We are deeply saddened by the passing of community activist, struggle icon, and poet, Dr Donato “Don” Francesco Mattera, also known as Muhammad Omaruddin. Comrade Don Mattera was an ardent advocate for Palestinian liberation. He provided active solidarity, support, and leadership in our attempts to amplify the Palestinian calls for justice here in South Africa.

Born in 1935, Mattera was raised by his grandparents in Sophiatown before the Apartheid government forcibly relocated his family to Westbury, an area earmarked for people classified “Coloured.” He attended high school in Pageview, another Johannesburg suburb whose residents were forcefully removed. These formative experiences of forced removals and mass dispossession shaped Mattera’s worldview, and was visibly present in his poetry and activism throughout the rest of his life.

Bra Don’s political activity saw him banned between 1973 to 1982 by the apartheid government. During this time, he was also subject to house arrest, arbitrary detention, and repeated torture. He later joined the National Forum, which called for a democratic, anti-racist, socialist Azania.

There can be little doubt that Mattera’s experiences of apartheid, violent dispossession, forced removals, and incarceration informed his commitment to the Palestinian cause. His poem, Song for Palestine, provokes heart-wrenching empathy and a deep sense of compassion that were the hallmarks of his writing:



**Palestine Solidarity Alliance**  
United Against Apartheid Israel



**Palestine Solidarity Alliance**  
**South Africa**

PO Box 357, Lenasia, 1820 - Tel. 0823366711

Email: [info@palestinesa.co.za](mailto:info@palestinesa.co.za)

[www.palestinesa.co.za](http://www.palestinesa.co.za)

---

### **Song For Palestine:**

Palestine, O Palestine  
land of miracles wondrous,  
of idols stern and ancient  
a plundered place of plenty  
of scourged, purged prophets,  
and histories of blood, battery and  
bondage.

Today, when the feet and hands of Africa  
are still bound by ethnic enmity,  
and most states enjoy sovereignty  
and belong to the global family  
but you, beautiful, beloved Palestine  
are orphaned by the tyranny of Israel  
and their Martian masters.

Africa sings from its deep heart  
Africa, that witnessed the first outbreak of  
creation,  
the same Africa  
that gave succour and sanctuary  
to the Chosen Messengers of the Book  
Lo, the stars dance over Jerusalem,  
a mesmerising moon swoons in Gaza  
as children challenge chicanery  
with slings and stones,  
torn flesh, bruised brows and broken bones.

Palestine, O Palestine,  
Your hour is come...

Besieged, beleaguered Palestine,  
not here, are we to decry  
your solemn, dynamite reapers  
the ultimate harvest of their sacrifice,  
nor say what anthems  
may speak or measure the devastation  
by an unheeding, unfeeling world.

Even this frail poetic fragment  
cannot assuage your loss  
nor renew the lost days and broken nights  
but did not our caring breath  
keep fresh the flowers of your affliction,  
and memory, write the scroll  
of your patience and conviction.

We know the remembered carnage  
sucks deep the soul of Palestine,  
that the yearning for nationhood  
should be made a mockery  
and your cause, a compromise  
when so much was given by you  
yet so little gained.

This song,  
daughters and sons  
of beautiful, beloved Palestine,  
is for you,  
sung from the deepest soul of Africa...



**Palestine Solidarity Alliance**  
United Against Apartheid Israel



**Palestine Solidarity Alliance**  
**South Africa**

PO Box 357, Lenasia, 1820 - Tel. 0823366711

Email: [info@palestinesa.co.za](mailto:info@palestinesa.co.za)

[www.palestinesa.co.za](http://www.palestinesa.co.za)

---

Comrade Don Muhammad Omaruddin Mattera's life is celebrated in the deepest hearts of the PSA, in the deepest soul of Africa, from the river to the sea, and across the world. Our deepest sympathies go out to his family, friends and loved ones – for whom such a loss can never be easy. As we mourn, we mobilise. We reaffirm our commitment to upholding the beliefs and values that Bra Don held dear. We remain steadfast and united against apartheid Israel. We reaffirm our commitment to justice, dignity, and freedom.

Tsama' Sente Comrade

Inna lillahi wa inna ilahi rajioon