



Tuesday December 10, 2013

Media alert

BBC World News presenter Komla Dumor has recorded an interview with Makaziwe Mandela - eldest daughter of Nelson Mandela from his first marriage to Evelyn.

Below is a brief transcript of when she discusses her father's passing with Komla Dumor. Further elements from the interview can be heard here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25301146>

This is Makaziwe's first broadcast interview since her father's death.

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Interview between Komla Dumor, BBC World News and Makaziwe Mandela, Daughter of Nelson Mandela. K= Komla, M= Makaziwe

M: "...we tried to explain it to him that, you know, people are outside the hospital singing, uh, putting cards and flowers. I do believe he heard, you know, because even this last week, I don't know what we were saying with the doctors, because, you know, he hardly opened his eyes, I think he ... the smile. And I don't know who was... someone was saying to me. I believe he still hears me, you know, when I speak to him because I would everyday say to him even if he had all of those tubes, either kiss here, or kiss the cheek and say, every day for the past I don't know how months I would say, " I love you Tata. I am coming to see you tomorrow." And then maybe he would open his eyes for just a second and close those eyes. So for me I think Tata, until the last moment heard us. And the children were there, grandchildren were there, you know, Graca was there, so we were always around him even at the last moment we were sitting with him on Thursday the whole day.

M: "...I think from last week Friday until Thursday it was a wonderful time. If we can say the process of death is wonderful. But Tata had a wonderful time because we were there and when the doctors told us I think Thursday morning, they had warned us before of signs. They told us Thursday morning that it's likely and said to be Maki call everyone that is here that wants to see him and say bye-bye. It was the most wonderful day for us because the grandchildren were there, we were there, the professional doctors, and in actual fact when they say him slipping away, those doctors dedicated their time. They were running shifts, 3-hour shifts, 24 hours. Being there, it was like they were soldiers guarding this ... I don't know whether you understand this ... they were soldiers guarding the spirit of a king. Yes, my father comes from royalty. Without them knowing they were actually practising our rituals and culture. They were there in silence, and when we as family members come in they would excuse themselves and just a few of them will give us to give us the time to be around my dad's bed. And so even for the grandchildren I think it was a wonderful moment.

K: "he will be mourned around the world. What do you think is most important for people to remember when they're watching the laying in state, when they are celebrating his life? What do you think is the most important thing?"

M: "...for me when I look at my dad and look at his life, it's that nothing, nothing. If you set your goal, this higher-than-life-goal, all of us, to be a better person, to give back to society. Because I don't think my father fought just for political freedom. My father also fought for spiritual freedom, to free yourself spiritually. He talks about the fact that it takes courage to forgive. Forgiveness is a very difficult thing. I don't think it was easy – he woke up one day and said "I forgive those who incarcerated me and everything", but I think he knew that if you didn't forgive he would be forever in prison – himself spiritually. And if you're not free here, you can't be free definitely here. So for me the lesson we can take away from his life is to have the courage to forgive other people. Your own husband, your own children, your own community, people who have done ... because if we have the courage to forgive as human beings, there will be no wars that we see around us, there will be no crime, there will be no violence, there will be no conflict, ok, and for me that's the greatest gift that Tata has given to the world because he says none of us when we're born are born hating another. We are taught to hate. And if you can teach a human being to hate, you can also teach a human to love, to embrace, to forgive, and for me that's the greatest lesson."

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