

## Warrant of Committal 12 June 1964

On 12 June 1964 Judge Quartus De Wet sentenced the Rivonia Trialists.

The day, before one of the nine accused was acquitted, leaving Nelson Mandela and seven others to hear their fate.

In his autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom* Nelson Mandela recounted Justice De Wet's words:

“I have decided not to impose the supreme penalty which in a case like this would usually be the proper penalty for the crime, but consistent with my duty that is the only leniency which I can show. The sentence in the case of all the accused will be one of life imprisonment.”

Mandela then wrote: “We looked at each other and smiled. There had been a great collective gasp in the courtroom when de Wet announced that he was not sentencing us to death.”

As is common practice each of the men had a warrant of committal issued in their name; the sentence handed down and their fingerprints. The document was then placed in their prison files.

Mandela's warrants of committal detailing his 1962 five-year sentence for leaving the country without permission and inciting a strike; and his life sentence in the Rivonia Trial for sabotage were framed and given to him on 2 November 1995 by Minister Siphon E. Mzimela on behalf of the Department of Correctional Services.

At Mandela's request the items were added to the Nelson Mandela Foundation's archival holdings, along with his personal papers he had donated.