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19 July 1964

Dear Comrade President

The United Democratic Front - a broad alliance of political, worker, women, youth, religious, sport, professional and civic organisations of the people of South Africa - has followed closely and with grave concern events of the last few months in the Southern African region. And because of the central role in which Mozambique has featured we are determined to communicate our views on some of the issues to you and the people of Mozambique.

The Nkomati Accord aside the reported assertion by the Mozambican Chief of the Army, Comrade Sebastiao Mabote, in an interview with Pierre Haski of Liberation, that the South African struggle is a mere civil rights issue has not only caused consternation, it has also not found acceptability among us. We, therefore, wish to seek clarification on this statement and also to state our view on the matter.

The South African struggle, as you are no doubt aware, is a struggle against colonialism albeit, colonialism in a special type. This country was initially invaded by the Dutch and later comprehensively conquered by the English at the turn of the century.

Then in 1910 Britain passed political power into the hands of the white settler population against the wishes of the other sections of the population. Since then whites have monopolised the rule of this country contending themselves with a systematic and violent repression of the aspirations of the other national groups. This state of affairs remains unchanged even under the so-called new constitutional dispensation.

It is, therefore, abundantly clear that the present regime is not the government of the people of South Africa but one arbitrarily installed by imperialist countries. Its express role is to check our people's resistance against the exploitation of the human and mineral resources of the country. Obviously such a government has no legitimacy to govern over the people of South Africa.

To suggest, therefore, as Comrade Mabote's reported sentiments does, that the South African struggle is a mere civil rights affair is to mistakenly lend legitimacy and credibility to a minority colonial regime. And we cannot object in the strongest of terms.

Let us, however, hasten to remark that the South African struggle, like all other struggles, has both national and international dimensions. And to that extent freedom and peace-loving people around the world - and that includes the people of Mozambique - have a role in it as well. But the primacy of the role of South Africans must always be recognised and respected.

It is our view, that in the struggles that are being waged against oppression, exploitation and imperialist plunder the peoples of the particular countries in which these struggles are being waged must enjoy the right to determine for themselves the conditions and interpret the nature and stages through which such struggles go.

It was in this spirit that throughout the Mozambican struggle South Africans refrained from interpreting for Mozambicans their struggle, but, instead, contended themselves with taking the cue, in the final analysis, from Frelimo as the spearhead of that struggle. Obviously this is correct because it is only as the oppressed and exploited masses carry the responsibility for their freedom that what freedom is won will benefit them. This is valid for our country and her people too. We shall appreciate clarification on this matter, Comrade President, if our response is not correctly conceived.

Finally, we salute Frelimo and the gallant people of Mozambique for the heroic struggle they waged against their erstwhile Portuguese colonisers. We shall forever show inspiration from their performance.

Your continuing struggle against the counter revolutionary MNR, which is set on undermining the present efforts to eradicate the colonial after-effects of starvation, disease, poverty, illiteracy, lack of housing, etc, enjoys our people's full backing too.

Long live the Mozambican revolution!

Long live Frelimo, the leaders and people of Mozambique!

Long live the friendship and co-operation of the peoples of South Africa and Mozambique!

Long live the co-operation of Frontline states!

Long live the international struggle against oppression and exploitation!

Yours in the struggle for justice and peace.

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