

Special Committee against
Apartheid
588th Meeting (PM)



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21 March 1986

ANTI-APARTHEID COMMITTEE CONCLUDES OBSERVANCE OF INTERNATIONAL DAY
FOR ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The Special Committee against Apartheid heard statements this afternoon by representatives of liberation movements and non-governmental organizations and received messages from 32 Heads of State or Government, as well as other government officials in observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, thus concluding its solemn observance of the International Day which this year marks the twenty-sixth anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre.

During that incident which took place on 21 March 1960 in Sharpeville, South Africa, 69 people were shot and killed and 180 others wounded, during a peaceful demonstration against the South African "pass laws" which required the black population of that country to carry passes that determine where they may live.

The General Assembly in 1965 proclaimed 21 March as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In 1979, the Assembly also decided to designate the week beginning 21 March as the Week of Solidarity with People Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination.

Representatives of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the League of Arab States and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) addressed the Special Committee.

The Committee also heard statements by representatives of the Soviet Afro-Asian solidarity Committee and the End Conscription Campaign; and by Joyce Makhesi, a South African student.

The Special Committee received messages from the Heads of State or Government of the following 32 countries: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, China, Democratic Yemen, Egypt, Ghana, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal, Seychelles, Sudan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and Yugoslavia.

Messages were also received from the Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers of States, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Governments of the following

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countries: Barbados, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Hungary, Jamaica, Japan, Mali, Netherlands (on behalf of the European Commission), Panama, Republic of Korea, Suriname, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela.

The Special Committee also received messages from the heads of the following intergovernmental organizations and specialized agencies: Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The following non-governmental organizations also sent messages on the occasion of the International Day: World Federation of Trade Unions; Polish Committee of Solidarity with People of Asia, Africa and Latin America; Solidarity Committee of German Democratic Republic, Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee and the Czechoslovak Committee for Solidarity with the Nations of Africa, Asian and Latin America.

The Committee decided to publish the texts of the messages in a document and not to read them out during the meeting.

Also this afternoon, the Acting Chairman of the Special Committee, Jai Pratap Rana (Nepal), announced that at yesterday's pledging conference for trust funds and programmes of assistance to southern Africans, \$7,906,432 was contributed by 30 Governments, representing an increase of \$2,187,773 over the 1985 pledging conference. In addition, \$164,370 had been pledged earlier by five other Governments and a total of \$20,000 was contributed by three Governments to the London-based International Defence and Aid Fund for southern Africa.

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Observance of Day for Elimination of Facial Discrimination

The Special Committee against Apartheid meets this afternoon for a second solemn meeting in observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The International Day coincides with the twenty-sixth anniversary of the incident of 21 March 1960 in Sharpeville, South Africa, when 69 people were shot and killed and 180 were wounded, during a peaceful demonstration against the South African "pass laws".

Statements Made

The first speaker, STEPHEN TSEWETE, representative of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), said that in South Africa there were two worlds: Metropolitan South Africa -- rich, affluent and dastardly, striding our country like a colossus with a licence to kill and maim at will; and Colonial South Africa -- poor and miserable, but firm in its resolve to free itself from the shackles of colonial oppression and exploitation.

As long as South Africa remained a strategic source of mineral and military convenience to the so-called West, it would continue to maim and kill those who clamoured for democracy and social justice. "Apartheid is here to stay. All we need to do is merely apply plastic surgery on its ugly and decomposing face and inflict pain and death on all those sub-humans who have the courage to call to question both the leadership and privilege of the white man in this country." That was the thinking within the ruling clique in his country on the occasion of the twenty-sixth anniversary of Sharpeville and Langa, he said.

Everyday people were shot at, wounded and killed simply because they demanded to be people in their own country, he said. Popular leaders had mysteriously disappeared without trace. Where else had eminent men who had reason to pour scorn on a Fascist clique which enjoyed the support of the United States and Britain because of its gold and its so-called strategic importance to the West, disappeared to be found dead and mutilated?

The Fascist regime in South Africa was carrying out genocidal warfare against his people, he said. Homes, factories, mines, churches, mosques, schools and creches had been converted into war zones. That was South Africa on the occasion of the twenty-sixth anniversary of Sharpeville and Langa. The memory of Sharpeville and Langa had only one message for people in South Africa: "Stop talking about apartheid and its being reprehensible. Do something practical and concrete to eradicate it now and not tomorrow."

With the United Democratic Front as the spearhead of mass democratic political mobilization in the past two years, the ANC had been able to achieve tremendous political victories: rendering the country ungovernable and apartheid unworkable. "We have been able to knock the Fascist Botha regime out of an equilibrium which he will never regain", he said. "With or without American and British support, he now stands naked in front of the world without even a scrap of philosophy to cover his nakedness. We have demonstrated beyond any doubt that our masses inside the country are the

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decisive factor and that the role of the international community is merely influencing", he stated.

Thanks to the on-ground presence of ANC and its military wing -- Umkhonto we Sizwe -- the only organization which had been able to engage the Fascist clique militarily in the country, South African people were now able to talk in terms of dual power in South Africa: people's power and Fascist power. The only alternative to the Fascist was the ANC Congress and its Freedom Charter. He was not aware of any other political organization of relevance to the democratic struggle.

ELLIOT MFAYA, representative of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), said that the 21 March 1960 PAC campaign had been referred to as an anti-pass campaign, but it had also been a rejection of the legitimacy of the settler colonial Government and not a mere protest against a single discriminatory law. It had been an affirmation of the unity of the African people bound together as no other people by the pass system.

He said the tone of the campaign had been set by PAC President Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe when he had declared: "In this campaign, we are going to observe absolute non-violence." He had communicated to the Commissioner of Police the same message and had requested that he restrain his men from committing violent acts. None the less, the police had reacted with deadly violence most notably in Sharpeville, Langa, Nyanga and Gugulethu, among others, killing and wounding scores of men, women and children.

The PAC had ended an era of regaining Azania by peaceful means. It had accepted the view that to achieve political goals in racist South Africa, Africans could only do so by the use of force.

He said the South African version of Reagan's policy of "constructive engagement" had been stated in The Sowetan on 5 February, he went on: "My Government and I are committed to power-sharing" said Botha.

The PAC rejected that with the contempt it deserved. The PAC remembered Colonel Pienaar's remarks: "The native mentality does not allow them to gather for a peaceful demonstration." Mr. Botha's statement could only be a trick and a diversion, as his real attitude was that of Pienaar: "South Africa will never hand this country to those who would see it destroyed..." Botha would never hand over the land, he said. South Africa was evil, racist and degenerate, and would have to be eliminated, and a new and humane society of Azania would need to be created in its place.

Concluding, he said that the Azanian people were their own liberators. As had been said in the past, "The PAC resolves that what happened to our children in 1976 will never happen again."

RIYAD B. MANSOUR, speaking on behalf of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), said the Palestinians were very familiar with the type of repression, coercion and intimidation used by the South African regime to

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attempt to dominate the South African people. There had been over 1,000 martyrs last year, but the regime could never destroy the will of the people to resist.

Had the state of siege in South Africa been raised? he asked. The behaviour of the racist regime indicated otherwise, but that regime had been isolated. Palestinians knew what the people in South Africa were confronting, as they had to deal with a similar oppressive Government.

Continuing, he said all the racist forces had failed to put down the Palestinian resistance. American imperialism had increased the intransigence of South African leaders, as it had supported Israel against the Palestinians' quest for self-determination.

VASILY SOLODOVNIKOV, Vice-President of the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, said the Committee provided moral, political and material support to the people of southern Africa. Among other things, it had invited activists from the organizations fighting apartheid in South Africa to spend vacation in the Soviet Union.

From his Committee's standpoint, the terrorists in South Africa were the racists who were oppressing the people of South Africa and carrying out attacks on neighbouring African countries, he stated. Those countries supporting the racist regime were accomplices in its policies. The United States, France, the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany had tried to block efforts to eliminate the apartheid policies of the South African regime, as they had major investments there. If the Western countries did not wish to support sanctions against South Africa, trade unions could impose their own de facto sanctions, he said.

He called upon all countries and peoples to oppose apartheid by isolating the South African regime through the imposition of sanctions.

CAVIN EVANS, representative of the End Conscription Campaign of South Africa, said that he had been imprisoned for refusing to take up arms to defend minority rule in South Africa. More and more white conscripts in South Africa were similarly questioning their role in the situation. He called on all countries to accept such persons who refused to take part in the actions of the South African military.

The loss of life which had already occurred was a picnic compared to what could happen in South Africa if the situation continued unchecked, he said. Thousands of conscripts were refusing to serve in the military and this year the Government had refused to release the statistics on the grounds that they were being misused by a certain organization.

His organization was non-racial, but because military conscription mainly affected the white community, the group had focused its efforts in that segment, in an effort to organize broad-based opposition to military service, he said.

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He called on all Members States to oppose all support for the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) which was merely a conduit for South African military goals. Aid from the United States would force Angola to rely more heavily on assistance from Cuba, thus giving South Africa further material for its "linkage" policy.

His organization was also concerned about reports that certain Members and corporations were involved in arms dealings and other trade with South Africa. He called on all States to refrain from such dealings.

Beyond civil rights, until political detainees were released, and exiles allowed to return, there would be no lasting peace in southern Africa, he said.

JOYCE MOKRESI, petitioner, said her blood brother was one of six blacks currently sentenced to be hanged for the death of a black township member who had died during a period of unrest. The judge and the law were either ignorant of the plight of blacks in South Africa or had chosen to be ignorant of the true situation there.

The unrest had been caused by a decision to raise the rents of township residents, she said.

Peaceful opposition to the increases, in the forms of marches and demonstrations, had taken place. The Deputy-Mayor of the township and his bodyguard had fired on the demonstrators before listening to their grievances. They had then been killed by the crowd which had stoned the official's house. The violence had been clearly initiated by the authorities.

Concluding, she said that the facts suggested that the Pretoria regime was not interested in justice but wished to deter people from defying the system. This did not work in a revolutionary situation, however, it only created more revolutionaries.

RIHAB KANAWATY, representative of the League of Arab States, condemned the policies of South Africa. Recent history had shown that the Palestinian and African peoples had both struggled against racism.

The observance of the International Day reminded the peoples of the world that the event in Sharpeville had not been in vain, but was part of a struggle which would result in the end of apartheid.

The elimination of racist practices was the sine qua non of international harmony. She expressed the League's support for the work of the Special Committee and for the people of Namibia and South Africa in their just struggle.

SOPHIA-KAKENA MANGULA, representative of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), said it was important to express solidarity with the

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DRAFT--1

A MASSIVE, SMUGGLED-OUT PETITION FROM THE (CAPS) END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN PRESENTED TO THE UNITED NATIONS WITH AN APPEAL TO MEMBER GOVERNMENTS TO GRANT ASYLUM TO PEOPLE "UNWILLING TO DO MILITARY SERVICE IN SOUTH AFRICA."

ASSERTING THAT "MORE AND MORE" CONSCRIPTS WERE CONFRONTED WITH A "CRISIS OF CONSCIENCE," DRAFT PROTESTOR GAVIN EVANS TOLD A HEARING OF THE (CAPS) UN SPECIAL COMMITTEE AGAINST APARTHEID: "THE BRUTALITY WITH WHICH THE SADF AND POLICE ARE CARRYING OUT THEIR RULE OF TERROR IS UNPRECEDENTED."

THE 226-PAGE DOSSIER HE PRESENTED TO THE COMMITTEE INCLUDED A ^{Missive} OF THE (CAPS) EEC AND ITS STANCE, AFFIDAVITS BY ABUSED TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS AND BY CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS AND A FIVE-POINT APPEAL:

THIS URGED UN MEMBER COUNTRIES TO DO ALL THEY COULD TO HELP EFFECT CHANGE IN THE REPUBLIC AND "TO DO EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER TO ACCEPT PEOPLE INTO THEIR COUNTRIES WHO, FOR WHATEVER REASON, ARE UNWILLING TO DO MILITARY SERVICE IN SOUTH AFRICA."

THE EEC PETITION ALSO CALLED ON COUNTRIES "TO CAREFULLY CONSIDER" THE IMPLICATIONS OF HAVING ANY DEALINGS WITH THE SADF, "TO DO ALL IN THEIR POWER TO ENSURE THAT UNITA, THE MNR AND OTHER SUCH GROUPS WERE "ISOLATED FROM SUPPORT" AND TO ENSURE SPEEDY, UNCONDITIONAL NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE.

MR EVANS TOLD THE COMMITTEE THAT HE WAS "SPEAKING AS A CONVERT, ONE WHO FACES A CHOICE BETWEEN FOUR YEARS IN THE APARTHEID ARMY OR SIX YEARS IN PRISON, OR A LIFE IN EXILE... LIKE THOUSANDS OF OTHER YOUNG CONSCRIPTS, I AM NOT PREPARED TO FIGHT IN DEFIANCE OF MINORITY RULE, TO FIGHT FOR A SIDE IN A CIVIL WAR WHOSE AIMS I DON'T SUPPORT."

PARTICULARLY SINCE THE OCTOBER 1984 TROOP OCCUPATION OF TOWNSHIPS, RESISTANCE TO THE SADF AMONG WHITE YOUTH HAD BEEN INCREASING, HE SAID. "YOUNG WHITE MEN JUST OUT OF SCHOOL ARE BEING CALLED UP TO FIGHT AGAINST BLACK YOUTH THEIR OWN AGE IN THE TOWNSHIPS A FEW MILES FROM THEIR PROTECTED WHITE SUBURBS. FOR MANY CONSCRIPTS THIS SITUATION HAS PRODUCED A CRISIS OF CONSCIENCE. THEY ARE STARTING TO QUESTION WHETHER THEIR PRESENCE IN THE SADF CAN BE JUSTIFIED IN ANY WAY."

MR EVANS TOLD THE COMMITTEE THAT THE PETITION HAD BEEN CONFISCATED AT JAN SMUTS AIRPORT, BUT THAT "FORTUNATELY WE MANAGED TO GET ONE COPY THROUGH."

HE ESTIMATED THE NUMBER OF DRAFT DODGERS LIVING IN BRITAIN, EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES AT BETWEEN SEVEN AND EIGHT THOUSAND AND HE SUGGESTED THAT A SHARP INCREASE IN WHITE IMMIGRATION MIGHT BE DUE TO THE CALL-UP. HE REPORTED THAT 26 EEC MEMBERS HAD BEEN DETAINED LAST YEAR, WHILE OTHERS HAD BEEN FORCED INTO HIDING.

HE STRESSED THAT THE EEC WAS NOT ONLY FOCUSED ON THE TOWNSHIPS, BUT WAS CONCERNED OVER THE USE OF TROOPS IN SWA/NAMIBIA AND IN ANGOLA, MOZAMBIQUE OTHER OTHER NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES. AMERICAN MOVES TO AID UNITA HAD EEC "EXTREMELY CONCERNED," HE FURTHER NOTED.

--THE PRESENTATION WAS TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH THE SHARPEVILLE ANNIVERSARY, OBSERVED AT THE UN AS AN (CAPS) INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION. THIS YEAR'S COMMEMORATION FEATURED MESSAGES FROM 32 HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENTS AND A PERSONALLY DELIVERED PETITION FROM THE SISTER OF A CONDEMNED MAN, JOYCE MOKHESI, WHOSE BROTHER WAS SAID TO BE ONE OF SIX SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR THE MURDER OF A TOWNSHIP DEPUTY MAYOR AND HIS BODYGUARD, ACCUSED THE AUTHORITIES OF INITIATING THE VIOLENT EPISODE. SUCH TACTICS DID NOT WORK IN A REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION, BUT "ONLY CREATES MORE REVOLUTIONARIES," SHE SAID.

ENDS

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