

THE WASHINGTON OFFICE ON AFRICA

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Dear Friends,

Violence in South Africa continues unabated despite the July 16 United Nations debate and ensuing resolution which appointed a Special Representative of the Secretary-General to negotiate an end to the violence and "remove the obstacles towards the resumption of negotiations."

Enclosed is an Action Alert and a transcript from ABC news which provide information on the impact of the violence. The Alert suggests actions for you and your organizations.

For additional information on how U.S. anti-apartheid activists can help "Stop Apartheid Violence" please contact the American Committee on Africa (212) 962-1210.

Sincerely,



Imani Countess
Acting Director

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ACTION ALERT

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VIOLENCE BLOCKS CONSTITUTIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

July 1992

Negotiations between the African National Congress (ANC) and the government of South Africa were suspended on June 23 as a result of escalating political violence.

The U.S. government has issued a low-key appeal to all parties to resume talks. But it has not supported urgent demands that the South African government take responsibility for ending the violence.

Sanctions against South Africa still in effect ban U.S. support for International Monetary Fund credit, exports to the South African police and military, arms trade and intelligence-sharing between the U.S. and South Africa. But the administration has not used this leverage to advance the negotiation process nor to demand an end to the violence. The administration is deafeningly silent about the delays in abolishing apartheid and the abundant evidence of regime complicity with violence.

It is urgent that the U.S. government:

- apply all diplomatic pressure at its disposal to encourage an end to the South African government's complicity in the violence.
- maintain and enforce all remaining sanctions against South Africa until an interim government is in place.

BACKGROUND

The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) talks deadlocked in May, over the de Klerk regime's insistence on an effective white veto in the constitutional assembly. Following the June 17 massacre of over 40 people at Boipatong, the African National Congress withdrew from the talks, demanding that the South African government take effective action to end township violence. ANC President Nelson Mandela charged that de Klerk, whether directly or by indifference, was complicit in the wave of violence. President de Klerk, rejecting the charges "with contempt," blamed the ANC's campaign of peaceful mass action for provoking the violence.

Political Violence Since the Release of Mandela

Political violence has been a feature of the apartheid political system since its inception. Ironically, it has been at its most intense since President F. W. de Klerk released Nelson Mandela and unbanned the African National Congress in February 1990. Anti-apartheid activists charge that it is part of a deliberate campaign by the South African security forces to destabilize opponents of the government and terrorize Black communities, while concealing government involvement and presenting the existing regime as the force of stability.

More than 7,000 people have been killed in South African townships since January 1990. The Boipatong massacre was only the latest and the best publicized incident. At the grassroots level the violence has in some areas become a matter of back-and-forth retaliation between migrant workers in hostels organized by Chief Buthelezi's Inkatha, and township dwellers loyal to the African National Congress.

Nevertheless, recent reports by Amnesty International, the International Commission of Jurists and other human rights observers stress that (1) the initiative for violence most often comes from the government-allied Inkatha warriors, (2) there is massive documentation for inaction, partiality and coverups by the security forces, with no evidence of serious reform efforts by top officials, and (3) the de Klerk regime shows no interest in exploring evidence presented by investigative journalists and human rights observers of direct involvement in instigating the violence by some individuals and groups within the security forces.

The violence has included random attacks against commuters on trains, as well as targeted assassinations of anti-apartheid leaders and large-scale massacres. Train attacks alone have taken 112 lives and injured 204 people since January 1992, with little evidence of effective police protection.

According to a new report by the South African Human Rights Commission (HRC), 49 massacres have taken place in the Transvaal since July 1990, for a total of 1,250 dead. Members of Chief Buthelezi's Inkatha were responsible for 34, township supporters of the ANC were implicated in six incidents, and security forces alone or unidentified whites in the others. Police or unidentified whites were also allegedly involved in many of the incidents attributed to Inkatha. No one has been convicted for any of the massacres.

The ANC's Demands

Following the suspension of talks, the African National Congress initiated a large-scale mass action campaign of civil disobedience. It also demanded significant international involvement in monitoring the process. The United Nations Security Council agreed to the limited step of sending Special Envoy Cyrus Vance, but more substantive action is likely to be needed in order to ensure compliance by the South African government.

In particular, the demands of the African National Congress include:

- The termination of covert operations by the government;
- The dissolution of all special forces;
- The commencement of the conversion of hostels into family domiciles;
- The re-implementation of a ban on the possession of dangerous weapons;
- The establishment of an international investigation into the massacre at Boipatong as well as other incidents of violence;
- The repeal of all existing repressive legislation;
- Government agreement to the creation of a democratically elected constituent assembly.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1) Contact the American Committee on Africa in support of their **STOP THE VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN**. Write to Dumisani Kumalo, 198 Broadway, New York, NY 10038 or phone (212) 962-1210.

2) Write your Senators. Urge them to support Senator Paul Simon's Resolution 301 which denounces the ongoing violence and demands an investigation into and report on the involvement of the South African government.

3) Work to maintain local sanctions. Express your support to the appropriate government official for the maintenance of applicable local sanctions against South Africa until the South African government adopts a democratic, non-racial constitution.

4) Draw local attention to the South Africa's government's complicity in violence by writing a letter to your local newspaper. For further information, contact the Washington Office on Africa for a media kit containing recent press clips and tips on preparing a letter.

ABC NEWS SHOW: WORLD NEWS TONIGHT WITH PETER JENNINGS

This is an uncorrected copy. Not a final version.

JULY 20, 1992

DIANE SAWYER: South Africa today is still in the grip of a bitter murder mystery. Government prosecutors say they will file charges against 78 members of the Zulu tribe in connection with the massacre last month in the black township of Boipatong. But the African National Congress still insists the government is behind much of the violence. ABC's Don Kladstrup started his investigation by talking to some of the people who survived the massacre.

DON KLADSTRUP: [BODY] Just before her brother and nephew were killed, Martha Hlehlethe says she heard one of the killers give a command.

MARTHA HLEHLETHE: "Open the door".

DON KLADSTRUP: It was a white man's voice, she says.

MARTHA HLEHLETHE: [INTERPRETER] I was under the bed when they broke the door. The man's face was covered but I saw his arm. It was white.

DON KLADSTRUP: Martha's granddaughter, who was also hiding, says she saw the same thing.

MS. HLEHLETHE: [INTERPRETER] And then he began shooting at random. It would have been better if I had been killed, then I would have seen nothing.

DON KLADSTRUP: But she did see. And so did her neighbors.

BOIPATONG RESIDENT: [INTERPRETER] The killers were brought here in police vehicles. We saw them get out, being helped by the police.

DON KLADSTRUP: It is a story nearly everyone in Boipatong tells. But is it true?

MAJ. RAY HARRALD / SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE: It is, as far as I'm concerned, ludicrous to think that the South African police would do that.

MATHEW PHOSA / ANC LEGAL ADVISER: Then the people of South Africa must be crazy to just imagine things when they're getting killed.

DON KLADSTRUP: Getting killed in taxis, being thrown from trains: state-sponsored terrorism, critics say. And this man should know.

DIRK COETZEE / FORMER SOUTH AFRICAN POLICEMAN: We committed murders. I was in charge of a team that committed murders, burned people to ashes.

DON KLADSTRUP: Dirk Coetzee, a former police captain who fled to Britain, says government hit squads are still targeting political opponents as they did in the 1980's. He, himself, was a recent target but the plot was foiled by British intelligence. The attacks, Coetzee says, are being carried out by South African commandos who fought secret wars in other African countries but who are now applying their deadly talents in black townships.

MR. COETZEE: It is a well-known policy in the security forces: you fight fire with fire. It's a twilight war.

DON KLADSTRUP: After the massacre in Boipatong, that war is now in the spotlight.

JAY NAIDOO / TRADE UNION LEADER: We know the police have been involved. We know that the government has been involved in this massacre.

DON KLADSTRUP: Even the Goldstone Commission, an independent judicial body investigating the violence, is harshly critical. While emphasizing it still has no direct evidence that President de Klerk and his security forces are involved, it slams the government for ignoring its recommendations: for not banning the carrying of dangerous weapons, for not being more vigorous in investigating acts of police violence. While some blame the violence on rogue police elements who oppose President de Klerk's reforms, many, including Nelson Mandela, still hold the president personally responsible.

NELSON MANDELA: A state president who is unaware after 14,000 have been killed by faceless killers, who does nothing about it, is an incompetent head of state.

FW DE KLERK / SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT: I want to say here today that I resent these allegations.

DON KLADSTRUP: Every day, however, there are new allegations. This man says police offered him 1,000 to kill a government opponent. Others, in sworn affidavits, tell how they were taken to secret camps and trained to be assassins- charges authorities claim are unfounded and malicious.

HERNUS KRIEL / LAW AND ORDER MINISTER: I want to call again on anybody, on all the so-called eye witnesses, to come forward, give that evidence. And if it's found to be true, the South African police will act on it.

DON KLADSTRUP: But Martha Hlehlethe doesn't believe a word of it. As she stands by the graves of her loved ones, she feels only fear and despair. "When I remember what happened," she says, "I feel like crying. We used to like whites. But now those people are trying to kill us".

Don Kladstrup, ABC News, in Boipatong.