



A campaign
initiated by
The Africa Fund.

Memo

August 18, 1992

To: Southern Africa Support and Human Rights Groups
From: Research Department
Re: Amnesty and the Security Forces: Excusing Apartheid

The quest for democracy in South Africa is in serious jeopardy. The violence has continued unabated (claiming nearly 350 lives in July alone), peaceful negotiations remain almost in ruins, and to add insult to injury the De Klerk government now has the audacity to suggest a general amnesty for all people guilty of political violence (including security force personnel) be the first step in efforts to get talks back on track.

Pretoria's call for a blanket amnesty is a blatant attempt to excuse itself of over 40 years of violent political oppression. The thousands of exiled South Africans who fled this repression, were not granted amnesty when they sought to return in 1991, they were granted indemnity, and that only after filling out lengthy forms in essence accepting guilt for the charges held against them by the State. The fiasco surrounding the still unfinished business of releasing the country's political prisoners has been universally condemned. The fact that there are 440 political prisoners still behind bars over a year after the deadline agreed to by Pretoria is offensive but it pales in comparison to Pretoria's efforts to now link their release to this blanket amnesty. Obviously, the government is in a frenzy trying to protect itself from accounting for its barbarous violations of human rights which are seeping into the light.

In May 1992, the international community was stunned by the disclosure of a secret government document implicating the State Security Council in the 1985 assassinations of four anti-apartheid activists. The document contained the death warrant for the four issued by then Defense Force Military Chief of Staff, General CP van der Westhuizen, who is now in F. W. De Klerk's cabinet. To date no action has been taken against him.

On July 26, 1992, South Africa's most prominent pathologist, Dr. Jonathan Gluckman, released a scathing report accusing the South African Police with a "pattern of torturing and killing prisoners" and being "totally out of control." The report examined 200 cases in which prisoners died while in police custody and determined that in 90 percent of those cases, the prisoners were actually murdered by the police. Attempts to prosecute such cases have been unsuccessful. Police internal probes are ineffective and so called "independent" commissions routinely exonerate officers of any wrong doing. The few cases which are prosecuted in the criminal courts are often dismissed on grounds of insufficient evidence due to police incompetency and their failure to thoroughly investigate the charges. Despite this yet another internal investigation has been called for.

For decades the South African government has sanctioned police terrorism and urban warfare against the black majority. Despite ample evidence of police complicity, the government has taken little action against security force members. Obviously the present government cannot be left in charge of policing itself, of being responsible for creating a truly unbiased effective force for law and order, and most certainly of excusing itself for butchering its citizens. Having UN peacekeeping monitors is a positive step, but in the end a just peace in South Africa will depend on a just constitution, just security forces, and a legitimate government to make them all work together. This cannot happen until F. W. De Klerk's government steps down and an interim government assumes power.

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Tilden J. LeMelle
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PRESS SUMMARY**ON****WEEKLY REPRESSION REPORT****FROM****29/07/92 TO 04/08/92**

86 deaths and 176 injuries were recorded during this period. The death toll of 86 for this week, whilst higher than the previous week's toll of 32, is only marginally higher than the weekly average of 80 recorded over the last five months from March when the whites-only referendum saw an escalation in the levels of violence. Of these deaths, 30 occurred in Natal (an escalation against the average of 23), and 46 in PWV (a decrease against an average of 54).

MASS ACTION

There has been a great deal of hysteria emanating from the authorities, the state-owned media and some sectors of the press, around Mass Action, to the effect that the supporters of Mass Action have engaged in violence and have escalated its levels. Our records show otherwise :

- Death toll this past week of 86, compared to a weekly average of 80 over the past five months;
- Victims have been predominantly ANC supporters and members
- Security Force actions this week alone accounted for 11 deaths (the highest weekly figure in a long while), 40 injuries and 639 arrests. Even these figures are conservative, as many reports do not indicate figures of casualties and arrests.
- Many incidents, in particular vigilante-related actions, bear no relation at all to the Mass Action Campaign.
- Some reports show that intimidation has come from Security Force and vigilante groups.

Vigilante Related Actions account for 50 deaths and 60 injuries, with incidents reported only in PWV and Natal, higher than last week's tolls of 23 deaths and 31 injuries. The death and injury toll in the PWV is 23 and 6 respectively. Allegations of security force collusion through omitting to intervene were made in respect of 2 attacks: Alex resulting in 6 deaths and Ratanda resulting in 4 deaths and 3 injuries. Deaths and injuries in Natal totalled 27 and 10 respectively. Of the total deaths in Natal, 5 were IFP supporters killed during attacks said to be launched by the IFP, and 7 were ANC supporters.

Security Force Actions account for 11 deaths and 40 injuries in actions in PWV, E.Tvl, N.Tvl, Natal, E.Cape, W.Cape, N.Cape and Ciskei. Six hundred and thirty-nine people were arrested in this period, bringing the number of arrests since the 15 July to 3121.

The remaining deaths and injuries are categorised as uncertain and other political actions.

Three attacks against journalists were recorded and the HRC believes that the ongoing attacks against journalists has serious ramifications, not only for the reporting of the situation in townships, but for the future freedom of the press.

SEE ATTACHED REPORT FOR DETAILS !

PRESS SUMMARY

ON

WEEKLY REPRESSION REPORT

FROM

05/08/92 TO 11/08/92

Thirty-six deaths and 28 injuries were recorded during this period, lower than last week's tolls of 86 deaths and 176 injuries.

The low death toll comes in the midst of the ANC's mass action campaign, which was in full flight for most of the period covered. Furthermore, the death toll is one of the lowest weekly figures registered in the past 6 months. This echoes the comment by members of the UN monitoring team to the effect that they had yet to see an incident of violence or intimidation during the mass action campaign, and were very pleased with the conduct of the protesters. This is also an encouraging indication that the Peace Accord mechanisms and international monitoring, are beginning to have the desired effect.

Vigilante Related Actions account for 26 deaths and 4 injuries, with incidents reported only in PWV and Natal.

Security Force Actions account for 6 deaths and 14 injuries, and 757 arrests. Once again, a significant number of the arrests were ANC supporters participating in the ANC's mass action campaign.

The remaining deaths and injuries are categorised as uncertain and other political actions.

SEE ATTACHED REPORT FOR DETAILS !

SUMMARY REPORT ON REPRESSION FOR THE MONTH OF JULY 1992

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

FORM OF REPRESSION	JULY 1992	TOTAL YEAR TO DATE	1992 MONTHLY AVERAGE	1991 MONTHLY AVERAGE
POLITICAL VIOLENCE				
DEATHS: PWV	182	1359	194,1	99,8
Natal	133	678	96,9	88,1
Elsewhere	14	98	14,0	27,3
TOTAL DEATHS:	329	2135	305,0	215,2
INJURIES:	517	3448	492,6	338,8
FORMAL REPRESSION				
DETENTIONS WITHOUT TRIAL	34	260	37,1	91,1
DEATHS IN POLICE CUSTODY	6	74	10,6	0,87
POLITICAL ARRESTS	3348	7664	1094,9	772,2
POLITICAL TRIALS:-				
Completed Trials	12	121	17,3	47,9
No. Convicted	5	169	24,1	20,2
POLITICAL PRISONERS:-				
No. Imprisoned	4	5	0,7	3,8
No. Released	-	3	0,4	81,7
DEATH SENTENCES	-	19	2,7	7,1