

Press Conference

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STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICA ON THE DEATH SENTENCE PASSED ON JAMES MNCEDISI MANGE AND ON THE SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

On the 11th October, 1979, the International Day of Solidarity with Political prisoners in South Africa, the international community - United Nations, Governments, international regional and national organisations demanded the release of all political prisoners in South Africa. Earlier this year on April 6, day of arrival of White Settlers in South Africa, SOLOMON MAHLANGU - that young, gallant and now immortal South African freedom fighter was executed in spite of various appeals from almost all countries including the U.N. Security Council not to mention the many organisations and personalities, there are now more political prisoners and more executions than ever before.

Now once again, on November 15th, an outstanding young militant fighter, a comrade-in-arms of the same Solomon Mahlangu, at the tender age of 24, was sentenced to death in a bogus court in South Africa. His only crime stems from his deep hatred for the apartheid system and for upholding principles which are in direct opposition to those of a system which has been declared by the U.N. and by all sane people all over the world as a crime against humanity. He is JAMES MNCEDISI MANGE. He was charged with eleven others for High Treason, attempt to overthrow the apartheid State. The White South African press called this verdict "the first levied against a Black for High Treason."

At the very start of the trial the accused turned into the accusers and the fascist judge and prosecutor immediately decided that proceedings should continue "in camera" (secretly) to which decision the accused objected to no avail. They informed the Judge that the charge of High Treason affected not only the State but also the people as a whole and therefore the public was entitled to know what was happening in the trial. The racist court dismissed the objections in spite of the fact that this was a normal internationally accepted procedure in such serious cases. At this stage the accused informed the judge that they will not be a party to such a farcical procedure. Throughout the mockery of a trial the court was surrounded by para-military police armed with automatic weapons. The accused themselves were kept in bullet-proof cages like animals throughout the proceedings. And for their non co-operation the accused were charged 15 times with contempt of court.

The Judge at one of the mockery sessions referred to Mange: "You are a thoroughly repulsive and objectionable character in more ways than one." He was infuriated by the calmness, determination, commitment, dedication, his contempt for the evil system of apartheid and the fact that he was reported to be highly knowledgeable and a militant of the South African revolution.

Revolution who had made a highly recognised specialist of apartheid army look like a child. The Judge must have also been infuriated by the fact that he had no control over his small apartheid kingdom despite the camouflaged para-military police guarding him. The accused occasionally sang songs of freedom or just sat quietly and obviously bored. At the final session when the racist Judge was making his summary: the accused out of the blue suddenly produced posters reading "Apartheid is a crime against humanity", "Apartheid is Treason", "Never on our knees".

As if the sentence of death is not enough for this loyal servant of apartheid James Mange was given additional 18 months sentence for contempt of court.

The South African Courts and Jails are battle fields as savagery and bloody as the trenches that are bound to fill the length and breadth of our beautiful Motherland. It is these same courts that executed outstanding leaders of the South African People like Mini, Mkhaba, Khayinga and Solomon Mahlangu just to cite a few. It is the same jails that have claimed the lives of Joseph Mdluli and Steve Biko amongst scores of others who were tortured to death. We are not mentioning those who have been crippled and disabled. It is the same South African Courts and jails that within the last 10 months of this year has ensured the execution of 125 men, including 90 blacks, 23 coloureds (people of mixed race) and 12 whites. It is in the same courts that the mother of one of the accused during the Mange High Treason Trial exclaimed "It is a nightmare, I may never see my son again". It might have been the mother of Mange.

The African National Congress calls upon all those who support justice, all those who hate apartheid and love freedom, to rally as never before to save the young life of James Daniel Mncedisi Mange. All indications are that the regime frightened by the might and level of the movement to save Solomon Mahlangu will this time try to execute him without delay in order to offset a mightier movement to save Mange. The fight for which he is sentenced is your fight. He is implementing the lofty decisions and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. He was not accused of killing anybody. He is accused of honestly fighting for the overthrow of the apartheid system. We must act now, without delay and should demand the reprieve of the savage sentence and for his release with all the other Political Prisoners in South Africa.

As a freedom fighter under the revised 1949 Geneva Convention he cannot and should not be treated as a Prisoner of War.

The apartheid regime has escaped with too many bloody crimes. Its hands are already dripping with the blood of innocent people. This time it must be stopped. We can ~~only~~ do that by mobilising international opinion as never before. We must flood the regime's Post Office with letters and telegrams demanding the commuting of the sentence and for his immediate and unconditional release. We also want to re-state our policy that the criminals will not escape judgment. ~~They should~~ remember the Judgment in Nuremberg. The same fate awaits the legal perpetrators of apartheid. They should not say that they did not know or that they were merely implementing Botha's laws.

Situation in the Country and the Region.

The escalating liberation struggle in our Country and in the Region is the necessary back ground to the nervous and more irrational behaviour of those charged with the task of upholding apartheid. The psychology of the oppressors in Pretoria is that of hysteria and cornered beasts. They can see the writing on the wall. Out of fascism in Neighbouring Mozambique and Angola they have seen the birth of mighty peoples Governments. The Patriotic Front in Zimbabwe is putting the finishing touches to their glorious struggle. The Namibian comrades in arms are certain of victory. The militancy of the struggle in South Africa itself has grown tremendously and its spreading. The Frontline States are firm and unshakeable in their support for the armed liberation struggle. The future is really bleak for the racists.

The Pretoria regime has been forced to revise its strategies from time to time since the escalation of the struggle makes it ~~so~~ them obsolete. Its so-called Total War Strategy which besides being directed against our people in South Africa, covers the whole subcontinent South of the Equator. ^{is doomed to failure} Its aggression against the people of Zambia and Angola testifies to the fact that it is not just a paper plan. But this strategy is in disarray. The regime has failed to stem the growing tide of people's fury which is finding expression in rich and varied forms of struggle. The numerous promises it has been making to its White electorate that it will put an end to the growing struggle, and the escalating armed struggle. The armed struggle in South Africa is spreading not ~~on~~ the borders with other countries but deep inside the Country. The Security Chiefs of the regime and the very so-called Prime Minister of apartheid on numerous occasions has had to admit that the struggle in our country has come to stay. If we have issued few statements it is because at this stage of our struggle we are of the

opinion that the enemy will be unable to hide ^{from} the fury of our people. There is no way in which the enemy can prevent the escalation of our struggle. We are not under-estimating his strength. We are fully aware that our struggle shall be long and bitter and that the sacrifices that lie ahead are mountainous. But we have no alternative. There are many factors that have made our struggle one of the most difficult of our times.

There are clear indications that the enemy is becoming less certain of her might. One basic reason is that he has not acquitted himself well in the engagements that have taken place. The other reason is that he has seen superior forces to himself like the United States in Vietnam, and other forces in other parts of the world bowing down to the power of national liberation struggle. He has no reason why he should hope to fare better.

Aware that military might is not everything, the Pretoria regime is today engaged in deceitful manoeuvres both inside and outside the country in futile attempts to save the system. But our people are in mood to be deceived. The tasks which history has placed before our Organisation and our people -the overthrow of white minority domination and the creation of a democratic South Africa-are yet to be achieved. But indisputably, we are making significant progress towards the attainment of our cherished and historic goal of liberation in our country. More than ever before, we are confident of victory. It is not without significance that the vicious campaign of terror unleashed upon our people by the Botha regime has only served to stoke the fires of revolution.

There is mounting militant black opposition to the brutal and inhuman policy. There is increased action by the workers in the strike movement. It is now temporary off and now there. The coloured population are totally rejecting apartheid and demanding one-man one vote in a unitary South Africa. All the blacks, African Coloureds and Indians and white democrats stand solidly for a democratic nonracial and united South Africa. The Workers are not deceived by the announced cosmetic changes in their status. They are demanding full and genuine Trade Union Rights in a democratic and free South Africa. The Students and Youth as symbolised by Solomon Mahlangu and James Mange continue to make great sacrifices for the liberation of their Motherland.

In the rural areas, in the Bantustans themselves people are up in direct challenge and total rejection of apartheid and its puppet

institutions. People in South Africa reject the artificial division of their country. The movement of resistance to mass removals of our people in the interest of apartheid and the bantustan puppets is growing and in some cases it succeeded in staying the hands of the regime as demonstrated in cross-road, clemont and in the socalled Bophutatswana.

Within the camp of the enemy there is growing disenchantment with the visibly non-existent invincibility of the regime. There number of army deserters is growing. The percentage of those who fail to answer the roll call of the fascist army is also growing sometimes reaching 10%. The African National Congress calls upon countries particularly Western Countries to open their gates to the deserters. Ofcourse it will be necessary to scrutinise them since apartheid agents will also try to find their way.

Despite the difficulties and hazards involved in our struggle, the units of our armed wing Umkhonto Wesizwe is making headways prepari ng more grounds to escalate the struggle. It is spreading its tentacles throughout the length and breadth of our country. The lessons of Sharpville and Soweto are being drawn and the enemy is answered in the only voice that he seems to understand better. The reality of the South African situation is that nothing will change except at the instance of the majority of our people of all races and social strata. Nothing will change without enduring and sustained sacrifices on our part. Nothing no force on earth can deny us victory of our just and united struggle. The cosmetic imperialist inspired and lauded changes be they in Sports, marriages or in Trade Unions are a fuss meant to win time for apartheid and those that are backing and sustaining it. Botha speaking a few days ago said that all whatever changes he envisages, they will not affect the position of the white man...white supremacy or apartheid. Botha says although he "supports" one man one vote in Zimbabwe and Namibia but in South Africa for him its ~~same~~ and the socalled Constellation of Southern African States which will include the bantastans and any country that wants to be appendage of Pretoria. The same Botha says he will not accept the will of the people of Zimbabwe if they choose a Government sympathetic to the ANC and other patriotic forces

In Zimbabwe and Namibia the national Liberation forces of the Patriotic Front and Swapo are posed for victories. They have our full support. The Pretoria regime has been flying in and out of London in a desperate attempt to rob the Patriotic front of victory. They are even trying blackmail and threats of intervention incase the Patriotic Front wins. According to Pretoria only a bantustan type of regime will be

acceptable. Already when it was baptising yet another of its phantom independent states the socalled Vendaland, the puppet regime of socalled Zimbabwe/Rhodesia was invited and it sent a delegation led by the socalled minister. This shows just what kind of a regime ^{it is}. It does not even respect itself. We repeat that Pretoria has no business to interfere in the negotiations in Lancaster ^{Talks} London. It is not a party. The British have no business to be discussing the futute of Zimbabwe with Pretoria. We all know the reasons. Imperialism fear an independent Zimbabwe because of what it will be in the region and for the force of example. It will stand testimony of the invincibility of the armed struggle waged by the liberation movement for a just and legitimate cause. The Lancaster talks are a direct results of the armed struggle at great sacrifice by the people of Zimbabwe supported by the progressive and freedom loving international community.

We cannot forget the great contribution of the Frontline States which are making great human and material sacrifices. Without this support it would be extremely difficult to escalate the struggle. The enemy aware of the immense contribution of these countries to our struggle, is now desperately trying to reduce the economic capacity of these countries, break their communication lines for military and economic purposes and to force these countries ^{to stop} making their contribution. The Front line countries deserve all the assistance possible both political and material. The recent bombings of Zambia Angola and Mozambique by South Africa and Rhodesia must be condemned. The British must take full responsibilities for the damage caused. If they think that these bombing will stop the support of the Frontline States and de-escalate the struggle then they better revise their analysis. We thank democratic Organisations like AAPSO, WPC etc

We wish to thank the OAU, the Socialist Countries, the Democratic Forces in the West including many countries like Sweden Finland etc that have begun supporting our struggle and accepting ANC as the legitimate and authentic Representative of the People of South Africa.

The legitimacy of our struggle has won firm and widespread international support and recognition. This recognition is itself a tribute to the indomitable spirit and indeflectible determination of all oppressed people. We support the palestinian struggle under PLO in M/E.

It is this situation and the growing strength of our movement that has so frightened the regime to resort to judiciary murders. We must save James Daniel Mhoedisi Mange from the gallows. We must mobilise as never before.