

ANC arrest poses threat to vital talks

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From RAY KENNEDY in Johannesburg

RELATIONS between the South African Government and the African National Congress appeared to be on a knife edge last night after a two-hour meeting between the President, Mr De Klerk, and the deputy leader of the ANC, Mr Nelson Mandela.

A terse statement issued afterwards by Mr De Klerk's office said they would meet again next week and that there was nothing further to add.

The Pretoria meeting, which was at Mr De Klerk's request, came after the arrest in Johannesburg of the senior ANC and South African Communist Party member, Sathyanathan "Mac" Maharaj.

Police have linked him with a plot they claim has been formulated by the ANC-Communist Party alliance to topple the Government through armed insurrection.

Police said hardline ANC guerillas have infiltrated the country since the preliminary peace talks were held between the ANC and the Government in Cape Town in May.

A critical second round of talks is due to be held in Pretoria on August 6 and Mr Mandela said on Wednesday that they would go ahead despite the arrest of an estimated 40 ANC-Communist Party members.

However, the developments last night cast some doubt.

The ANC called off the first round of talks originally scheduled to be held in April after demonstrators were killed by police in the black township of Sebokeng.

Another wave of killings there in the past few days has claimed an estimated 30 lives in fighting between the ANC and the mainly Zulu Inkatha movement.

Observers last night believed there was a possibility that the August 6 talks might be postponed, if only because the Government wants to make it clear to the ANC that it is not alone in calling the shots.

A statement issued by Mr De Klerk's office before his meeting with Mr Mandela said the ANC executive did not seem to appreciate the seriousness of the evidence uncovered by the police of the alleged insurrection plot.

The statement came after the condemnation by the ANC of the arrest of Maharaj.

He is being held under the Internal Security Act, which provides for indefinite detention without trial.

As the political temperature in South Africa rises sharply, Mr De Klerk is coming under increasing pressure from the Right to abandon negotiations.

Maharaj, 56, a member since 1985 of the ANC's national executive, is one of the few identified members of the central committee of the South African Communist Party.

He returned to South Africa last month after 13 years in exile and is the most senior ANC member to be detained since its ban was removed in February.

The chief of staff of Umkonto we Sizwe, the ANC's military wing, Mr Chris Hani, said last week that the ANC might have to seize power if the Government proved unwilling to share it.

The Times

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WORLD

Moi flies home to deal with spreading violence

KENYA

NAIROBI, Tuesday: Violence and unrest spread across Kenya yesterday as riot police fought running battles in Nairobi with stone-throwing mobs, forcing President Daniel arap Moi to fly back from an Organisation of African Unity meeting in Addis Ababa.

Riot police armed with batons, automatic rifles and tear gas fought running battles in the capital with rioters. Violence spread to other parts of the country on the third day of unrest, which began as a demonstration for multi-party democracy, and which now poses a serious challenge to Mr Moi's authority.

Scores of arrests were made, dozens of people were reported seriously injured with gunshot wounds, and the death toll rose to at least nine, including a seven-year-old schoolboy shot dead by police yesterday at Ndenderu, 16 kilometres north of Nairobi. Eight empty car-tridges were found around his

body, which was left on the road for several hours.

Throughout the day increasingly tense and nervous police and members of the paramilitary General Service Unit fought an uphill struggle to restore law and order in Nairobi's shanty towns.

The Government lashed out at the United States after its embassy in Nairobi officially announced it was sheltering Mr Gibson Kamau Kuria, a leading government critic and prominent human rights lawyer who has been in hiding from security police for several days.

Accusing the US of interfering in Kenya's internal politics, a government statement read out over the radio said: "The embassy has openly given solace and support to elements within the country bent on destabilising the constitutionally elected Government of Kenya."

Mr Kuria was one of the few leaders of the campaign for a multi-party democracy not to have been detained last week in advance of a rally called for last Saturday to demonstrate popular support for the movement. At least 6,000 people attended the



Mr Moi ... serious challenge to his authority.

rally, which turned into a riot.

Nairobi was tense last night as gangs of barefoot youths in ragged clothes mounted makeshift roadblocks on the outskirts of the capital and continued stoning vehicles and setting fire to buses and government cars in many of the city's slum areas.

Rioting spread outside Nairobi to Nakuru, Murang'a, Nyeri, Kikuyu, Kiambu and Kiharu, the former constituency

of Mr Kenneth Matiba, the de facto opposition leader who was detained last week.

Several shops were reported looted and destroyed and police fired into crowds of demonstrators calling for a multi-party democracy.

Violent clashes began early in the morning in the Nairobi suburbs of Kangemi, Kwangare and Dandora. Youths chanted "Down with Moi" "two parties" and "Free Matiba", and burnt down buildings belonging to the ruling party, the Kenya African National Union.

Motorists who refused to flash a two-finger salute, the sign of support for a multi-party system, were intimidated and stoned by gangs.

News of the renewed violence panicked the residents of Nairobi. Most of the downtown shops and businesses closed early and several Western embassies advised their nationals to stay at home.

"The threat now is of a gathering slide into anarchy," said one Western diplomat.

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