



STATEMENT OF THE ANC WOMEN'S SECTION ON AUGUST 9, 1986

WOMEN UNITE AGAINST FASCIST TERROR FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION, EQUALITY & PEACE

On the occasion of August 9th, the International Day of Solidarity with the struggling women of South Africa and Namibia, South African Women's Day, the African National Congress Women's Section salutes the daring and courageous women of our country who are daily engaged in bitter struggle against all forms of apartheid colonialism. We dip our banner to the fallen heroines in the course of the liberation struggle and vow to pick up their weapons, to continue fighting until victory is won and the people seize power.

We take this opportunity to greet our fellow sisters in Namibia and under Swapo Women's Council and pledge to intensify the struggle against our common enemy until we rid our countries of the scourge of racism and apartheid.

This year, in the midst of stepped up state of terror, we mark the 30th anniversary of August 9th — a day when the women of South Africa, black and white, marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria — the citadel of apartheid, to protest against the hated pass laws. State terrorism will always fail to intimidate us. We must now go from a state of ungovernability to people's power.

As we mark the 30th Anniversary of the Anti-Pass Struggle, let us once more boldly confront the issue of this badge of slavery — the pass laws. We must not be misled by the enemy's promise to abolish influx control and introduce what it calls orderly urbanisation. Nor must we be taken in by the regime's tactic of so-called common citizenship. The Botha regime has no intention whatsoever of seeing the black majority live in our country as equals with whites. Its main concern, and that of its allies, is to maintain white domination.

On August 9th this year, the cry must ring out through the length and breadth of our country — "Away with Passes". This is an immense offensive which must spread to every corner of our country, encompassing cities, towns and the countryside. It must involve both men and women alike and produce the most formidable, united and sustained mass action to destroy, once and for all, the pass laws, influx control and our forcible removal to the bantustans.

Our capability to act in unity has been demonstrated by the might of the workers under their trade union movement, Cosatu, who are presently leading gigantic strikes in protest against detention of people's leaders and the imposition of the state of emergency. This powerful organisation of the workers' contingent reflects a dynamic, sophisticated method of continuing the struggle even when the enemy has attempted to make it impossible. No amount of terror, detention, arrest, harassment and killings can deter the people's courage to continue fighting for freedom.

As women, our role in the struggle particularly during this state of emergency has become more crucial in uniting the oppressed women of our country for the further advancement of our struggle. The need has arisen at this hour to organise women in their greatest

numbers from all corners of our country and together form a united national women's organisation.

On this day let us re-affirm our commitment never to rest until we win for ourselves and our children fundamental freedoms and human dignity. In the year of Umkhonto we Sizwe, our people's army as declared by our vanguard organisation, the ANC, the armed units and masses of our people are charged to advance, attack and give the enemy no quarter — an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

Women, we are called upon to strengthen our underground units of the ANC and swell the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Mount a determined mass political and military offensive, retain the strategic initiative and shift the balance of power further in favour of the revolution. We must turn every corner of our country into a battlefield, weaken the enemy and prepare to seize power. Every patriot a combatant, every combatant a patriot. People's power is within our grasp.

The progressive world and all democratic forces are fully behind us. Their support was demonstrated in Nairobi at the World Conference of Women to mark the end of the UN Decade for Women. Not only do women and progressive mankind in general support our campaign for comprehensive, mandatory sanctions and for the release of political prisoners in general as well as that of Nelson Mandela, the eradication of apartheid is also part of a forward-looking strategy. We salute all the women and progressive people who continue to make tireless efforts in the struggle to rid Southern Africa and the world of the scourge of apartheid.

In this International Year of Peace declared by the United Nations, the African National Congress Women's Section calls for the intensification of the campaign for sanctions. The racist regime must be stopped in their destabilisation campaign against Angola, the Front Line States and other neighbouring countries. These countries continue to bear the brunt of apartheid aggression, and need the support of all progressive mankind. We salute their courage and resolute stand. We dip our banner in tribute to those citizens of the Front Line States who have lost their lives.

Finally, we do not forget our comrades and friends in the Palestine Liberation Organisation who are fighting to return to their home and the right to self-determination, the Polisario Front, the women and the people of Nicaragua facing the threat of US aggression against their country, and all those in the struggle against fascism, racism and all forms of foreign domination.

In conclusion, August 9th is the day when we rededicate ourselves, drawing inspiration from women like Lilian Ngoyi, Ruth First, Jeanette Schoon, Victoria Mxenge and many others who have died in the struggle against apartheid, for the liberation of our motherland and in the fight for peace in Africa and the world.