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**AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS***Mission to the United States***FAX TRANSMISSION COVER SHEET**

TO: Cde Tebogo Mafole - Chief Rep., ANC Mission to the UN  
212 972 6499

RE: Plight of Political Prisoners.  
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FROM: ANC/DC Lindiwe Mabasa, Chief Rep.

DATE: 5/02/1991

Number of pages (cover sheet included) 7





# AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

*Mission to the United States*

May 1, 1991

## POLITICAL PRISONERS AWAITING DEATH

Political prisoners on death row [approximately 40] and those released from death row to Pretoria Local Prison [18 including one death row trialist] commenced a hunger strike "to the death" in Pretoria Maximum Security [death row] and Pretoria Local Prisons today. Most will take water for the first seven days only. Umkhonto we Sizwe regional commander, Mzondelele Nondula, who recently had his appeal against his death sentence rejected is already refusing water.

Families, friends and supporters of these political prisoners will fast each Wednesday in support of the hunger strikers and their demands.

The statement from death row prisoners about the hunger strike which is in protest at the government reneging on its commitment in the Pretoria Minute of August 6, to release all political prisoners by April 30, 1991, reads:

"This was not an easy decision to take, neither do we believe it is a reckless decision. Our decision was influenced by political developments at home and abroad: the regime's reluctance to meet the preconditions set out under the Harare Declaration and the response of some other governments. Nowhere in that document is it stated or suggested that exploratory talks should be undertaken by the ANC or any other liberation movement before general negotiations commence. The ANC went out of its way to assist in any way it could, with the express intention of bringing a just and democratic order as speedily as possible. This resulted in the Groote Schuur and Pretoria summits whereupon the ANC and government agreed to a common commitment to the resolution of the existing climate of violence and intimidation from whatever quarter, as well as the commitment to stability and a peaceful process of negotiations, as contained in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Pretoria Minute.





















# AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

## *Mission to the United States*

May 1, 1991 - PRESS STATEMENT

Released by political prisoners at New Local Prison, Pretoria.

The only reason that we, the political prisoners currently being held at the Pretoria Local Prison, are in prison because we dared to destroy the system of Apartheid. A system which even the Nationalist Party government now purports to regard as "wrong" "evil" and a "sin in the eyes of God". Yet, we are still being incarcerated. The reason for us not having been released is, according to the government, because we caused death and injury [in our quest to destroy this "sin in the eyes of God".] This reasoning is outrageous. How can this same government which developed the most sophisticated form of genocide decide to keep us in jail because we caused death and injury in our quest to resist this genocide?

The April 30th 1991 deadline [it is a deadline - see Pretoria Minute] for the release of political prisoners (including those who committed murder with a political motive - see Paragraph 6.5.2 [c] of the Joint ANC/Govt Working Group Report) has come and gone. And, once again the Nationalist Party government has shown its inability to be honest and to negotiate in good faith. Once again Nationalist Party political trickery is the order of the day.

We, like all other political prisoners in the country, have had high hopes of being reunited with our families, and high hopes of being able to contribute towards reconstruction and reconciliation with our oppressors and jailors - the Nationalist Party government. These hopes have now been dashed. The government's attitude towards political prisoners can hardly be described as creating conditions conducive to negotiation. In fact, the prospects of peace, reconstruction and reconciliation are now as remote as ever.

For us, there is still a war being waged. We continue to be victims of racist violence. Violence in the form of our incarceration, harassment and psychological torture.