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Father Trevor Huddleston
Your Excellencies
Participants at the 10th and
Final Conference of the
International Defence and Aid
Fund for Southern Africa,
Friends

This Conference is a very special occasion for me personally, for the African National Congress and indeed for all the peoples of Southern Africa. It is both a duty and a privilege to pay tribute to the unique contribution which IDAF has made to the cause of freedom and democracy in Southern Africa.

The work of the Fund reaches back over almost four decades to the time of the Defiance Campaign when Canon Collins and Christian Action

pledged to raise funds for the volunteers who were charged for defying the unjust laws of apartheid. This work mushroomed with the establishment of the Treason Trial Defence Fund when the South African regime sought to convict us of treason for daring to oppose apartheid. It was from these origins that a great international

organisation was to emerge with National Committees across the world and which has done so much to provide defence and aid to the victims

of apartheid, not only in South Africa but also for our compatriots in Namibia, Zimbabwe, and throughout Southern Africa during their struggles for independence.

We will always owe an immense debt of gratitude to Canon Collins for his foresight and vision in creating the Fund and we can never forget the contribution of Diana Collins and those like Freda Nuell who were with us from those earliest of days.

There were two other great Christian leaders who were associated with the Fund from those days. Ambrose Reeves who chaired the Treason Trial Defence Fund set up inside South Africa and of course Father, now Archbishop, Huddleston who was with us in the Defiance Campaign and has so ably succeeded John Collins as the Chair of the IDAF Trustees.

Today I cannot but recall many very special and personal memories of the

numerous ways in which the Fund was able to help our people in their time of need.

How many more of our political prisoners would have been executed? How many more detainees would have been brutally tortured? How many families of those detained and imprisoned would have been destitute, if it had not been for IDAF? Above all, IDAF stood with us during our darkest days. When Defence and Aid was banned inside South Africa following the Rivonia Trial the ways and

means were established to keep the work going. When we took the difficult decision to embark on the armed struggle, IDAF was prepared to provide defence for our captured combatants. This is the true meaning of solidarity.

Tonight I cannot do justice fully to the task I have. It is for others to write the complete history of IDAF and I cannot begin to thank all those who have helped make the work of IDAF possible, especially the Donors. But as we mourn the

tragic assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, we should recall that India was the first

Government to donate to the Fund. Likewise, we cannot forget the tremendous

contribution of the Nordic countries, especially Sweden.

To all the Governments and to all the individual donors, we say thank you. And we must acknowledge the support which IDAF has received from the United Nations, including the role played in mobilising world opinion in support of

the release of political prisoners.

Although this weekend is the final Conference of IDAF, we know that at this very time, hundreds of political prisoners remain

incarcerated and almost two hundred are on hunger strike.

Just as the work of IDAF began before it was formally established, so it will continue in the future until our people have won their freedom and apartheid is totally destroyed. However, it is right and proper

that this work should now be undertaken from within South Africa with new

organizational forms.

Thus as you meet this weekend, you do so in the knowledge that the African National Congress deeply appreciates all your efforts, and especially we thank all who have worked for the Fund and who have given such dedicated service to our cause.

Thank you