



christenen tegen apartheid  
christians against apartheid

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MESSAGE/INSTRUCTION:



FROM: HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
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TO FAX NO:

ATTENTION:

FROM: SAFOORA SADEK, NELIA ALLENBERG  
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Instructions/message:

**SPECIAL ALERT!**

**BOPHUTHATSWANA HUNGER STRIKERS  
IN BOPHELONG HOSPITAL  
"REMOVED" BY PRISON OFFICIALS**

HRC received reports this morning that some of the hunger strikers at Bophelong Hospital, near Mafikeng, were "forcibly removed" to different hospitals.

The incident took place yesterday, 28 June 1991, at ± 2.15 pm, when Bop prison officials and warders arrived at Bophelong hospital, allegedly without prior warning to their doctors. They ordered 29 of the 33 prisoners in the hospital to pack their belongings and prepare to be moved in ten minutes. Medical staff informed the prison officials that these patients were in no condition to be moved, that some of their conditions included "unrecordable blood pressure". The prison officials ignored them entirely, and loaded the prisoners, who had to carry their own drips, into a minibus.

Fifteen of the hunger strikers were driven to the airport and flown to a military base in Pretoria from where they were moved to Odi Hospital near Garankuwa.

The other 14 hunger strikers were moved to a private hospital in Mafikeng, the Victoria Hospital. The 4 hunger strikers remaining in Bophelong were also allegedly told they would be removed.

HRC is distressed at these reports which indicate a complete disregard for the physical and mental health of prisoners in the care of Bophuthatswana Prisons Department.

This move appears to be an attempt to break the morale of the hunger strikers and therefore the hunger strike itself, through dispersing the prisoners in hospitals away from family and friends' support and making it more difficult for press and public scrutiny.

The fact that they are prepared to have patients, declared by doctors to be in no condition to be moved, carry their own drips, makes us fear for these hunger strikers' lives.