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## COSATU STATEMENT ON THE BANNING AND RESTRICTION OF ORGANISATIONS

The promulgation of the orders affecting COSATU and 17 other organisations are a direct attack on the democratic movement.

The state has obviously chosen a path of total repression. They intend to destroy the few remaining vestiges of democracy after the clampdown of the Emergency regulations.

The closing of the avenues of democratic expression will possibly lead to an escalation of civil conflict and violence. There cannot be a peaceful resolution of South Africa's crisis without freedom of expression and association, and without credible organisations which can articulate the needs and interests of the majority.

Democratic organisations in the country have recently faced severe attack from vigilante and conservative rightwing forces. All peace initiatives we have taken to resolve the violence in Pietermaritzburg, KTC etc are jeopardised by the banning and restrictions which open the way for conservative forces to continue at will their campaigns of violence and intimidation against our members and the community.

It is clear that the government has been encouraged to opt for the path of increased repression through the support it has received from employers and rightwing governments of Thatcher, Reagan and Kohl, as well as through the vocal fanaticism of the rightwing.

The banning and restricting of our organisations is the action of a panic-stricken government which is unable to deal with the realities facing South Africa today. Conflict in our country is inherent because the majority of people are denied access to the formal political institutions. The government has rejected the option of stability through dealing with the legitimate demands of the majority in favour of total control and iron-fisted repression.

The state is attempting to restrict COSATU to what they see as legitimate trade union functions. We reject this because there is no democracy in South Africa, and COSATU and other organisations are part of the extra-parliamentary opposition that are legitimately putting forward the demands and interests of our members both on the shop floor and in broader society.

The promulgation is aimed at smashing the campaigns which COSATU has already embarked upon and undermin-

ing COSATU's strength. All these campaigns are lawful and reflect the demands of our members and the concerns of the oppressed majority.

The restrictions on COSATU, taken together with the proposed Labour Relations Amendment Bill, will place COSATU in almost the same position as the other 17 organisations which have been effectively banned.

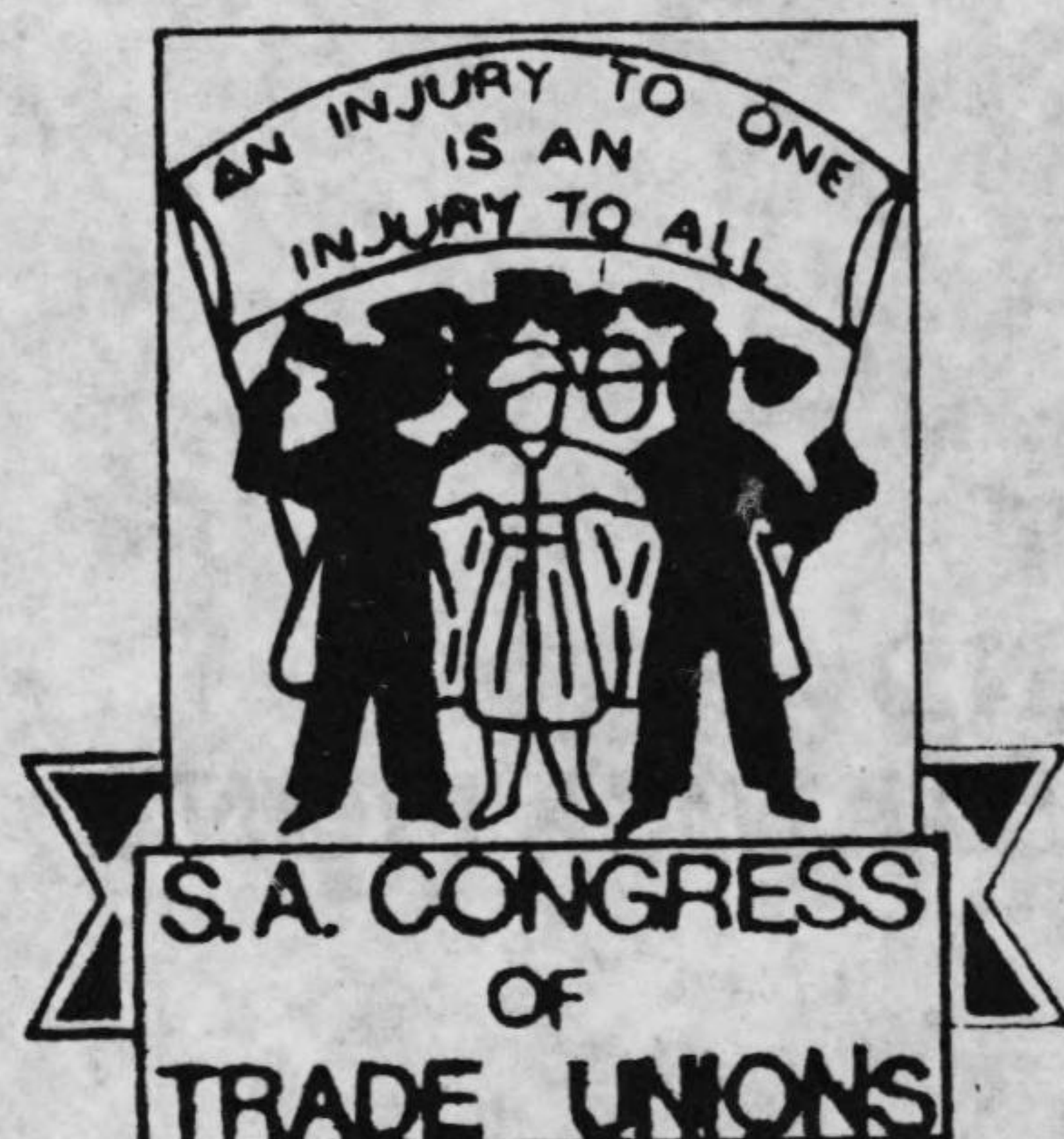
The order prohibits COSATU from:

- Calling for the unbanning of banned organisations.
- Calling for the release of detainees.
- Calling for the release of our comrades in prison, for example Moses Mayekiso and the Alexandra Five, as well as the members of the South African Railway and Harbour Workers' Union who are presently on trial.
- Calling for the commuting of sentences, eg comrades on death row, among them three NUM members and one CCAWUSA member.
- Opposing any local authorities or boycotting any local or municipal elections, eg from campaigning against the October municipal elections.
- Taking up a campaign to oppose the system of detention or any provision of security regulations.
- To commemorate or celebrate the founding of any banned organisation.
- Commemorating any days of mourning, such as June 16, Sharpeville Day, Kinross and the shooting of railway workers.
- Involvement in any way in developing democratic structures in the community in opposition to the structures set up by the government itself.
- 'Meddling' with the affairs of a local authority eg rent collections, rent evictions, forced removals.
- Supporting disinvestment and sanctions or the international isolation of South African organisations.
- Any public meetings which would discuss any of the above issues - affecting open debate and democratic discussion in all COSATU structures.
- Opposing forced removals and violent vigilante action in Brits.

COSATU has convened a special Central Executive Committee meeting to discuss all possible steps to defend our democratic rights.

24th February, 1988





## SACTU STATEMENT ON THE RESTRICTIONS ON COSATU AND THE BANNING OF PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS

SACTU condemns in the strongest terms the announcement made today by the racist South African regime of the banning of 17 people's organisations and the severe restriction of the activities of the largest trade union federation our country has seen, COSATU.

Considering the wide-ranging armoury of repressive legislation already used to curb the legitimate demands of our people, it is inexplicable why the regime has taken up yet another weapon. This proclamation has effectively prevented COSATU involvement in any activity that the regime defines as political.

In a country where black people have no political rights whatsoever, all organised activity is political. SACTU has always maintained that the struggle for trade union rights in our country is inseparable from the struggle for political rights. Therefore, this act of repression means that the voice of over one million black workers has been stifled.

This proclamation makes it illegal for COSATU to protest against the new obnoxious labour bill, which seeks to destroy COSATU and the democratic movement. It gives the regime and its brutal machinery, the police and army, leeway to smash up meetings of workers around the Living Wage campaign, around the Hands Off Cosatu campaign, around a range of issues from factory problems to workers' health and safety, the workers living conditions and issues which

affect workers in their communities.

This short-sighted, poverty-stricken response has yet again proved to the people of our country and the international community that the white minority regime is not interested in change. This proclamation is a recipe for confrontation and will force workers to get redress by other methods from the many grievances the apartheid system causes.

If Western governments, and some in the international community, had any doubts about the need for firm and decisive action against the regime - this doubt can no longer be sustained.

The policies of constructive engagement, trade and investment with apartheid South Africa must be abandoned immediately. Mandatory comprehensive sanctions must be implemented now. The international trade union movement must take a clear, active stance in defence of COSATU.

SACTU calls on the workers of the world to unite in defence of their brothers and sisters in struggle in South Africa.

**AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL!**

John K. Nkadimeng  
General Secretary, 24.2.88

8 Flowers Mews, off Archway Close  
Upper Holloway, London N19 3TB

**The United Democratic Front and its affiliates warn the fascist and racist Botha regime that its latest outrageous and unforgiveable actions against the people of South Africa and their democratic organisations can only result in a further escalation of the crisis. We protest the banning and restricting of activities of our open and peaceful organisations.**

**The experience of the banning of the African National Congress showed that the desire and determination of our people for freedom and justice burns stronger under repressive conditions. Nothing, we repeat nothing, will stand in the way of the United Democratic Front as it carries out its historical task and duty of uniting the oppressed and silenced people of our country.**

**Long Live the United Democratic Front!**  
UDF Spokesperson, 24.2.88

## UDF PRESS STATEMENT

