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HARARE. — African National Congress president Mr Oliver Tambo has warned that even if the ANC sat down for talks with the South African Government they would not abandon the armed struggle until apartheid was ended and Nelson Mandela and other black leaders were released.

In an interview published in the Zimbabwe Herald on Monday Mr Tambo insisted there was no alternative to armed struggle against the "Pretoria regime" and the ANC would intensify it as long as apartheid prevailed.

All the peaceful alternatives had failed in the past, he said.

"Therefore we say: to remove armed struggle, the regime should first remove apartheid which is the cause of armed struggle."

The system had been responsible for sending millions of people into barren lands where, he said, they were only queueing up for death.

The Bantustans were themselves an act of violence, so it was wrong to think his organisation would abandon the armed struggle.

"In any case, even if there were any talks, and if we thought the time had come for talks with the Pretoria regime, we would not abandon the armed struggle. We would simply carry on.

"We would not talk to the regime about the fate of our country before the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and the other leaders imprisoned with him," Mr Tambo said.

On the recent offer by the President of South Africa, Mr P W Botha, to release Mandela on condition that he renounces the use of violence, Mr Tambo said it was significant only to the extent that it was a new

The armed fight will go on — Tambo

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Mr Tambo is banned and may not be quoted in South Africa. At the request of SAPA, the Minister of Law and Order, Mr Louis le Grange, exercised his right to give permission for this report to be published in South African newspapers. The Rand Daily Mail does not normally seek such dispensation because of the danger of news manipulation. It is obvious that permission may be given only because it suits the Minister and his Government.

However, in view of the significance of the report, the Mail has set aside these reservations in this case.

Readers should note that South African newspapers may be prohibited from publishing further statements or elaborations by Mr Tambo, no matter how relevant. Should this happen, the Mail will inform its readers of the situation.

condition, which Mandela would once again reject.

"Up to now, and for many years, Mr Mandela has been offered release on condition that he went to live in the Bantustans; to endorse and recognise the so-called independent Bantustans. But consistently he has rejected the condition."

Pretoria should know by now that Mandela was a man whose life was governed by strong principles and if they want to talk to him about armed struggle, Mr Tambo said, then they would talk to him as a free man.

It was not clear, he said, "why we, who are the victims of violence, are expected to abandon our violence when the regime pursues us with worse violence".

Of the recent proposal by Mr Botha that Africans living in the urban areas should have different status from those in the Bantustans, Mr Tambo said all this move represented was another idea for Bantustans in the urban areas.

He said that whatever the Government was trying to build — including its so-called constitutional reforms — was being built upon the crumbling foundation of apartheid.

Asked whether the apparent lull in the ANC's armed activities was because the Nkomati Accord was beginning to have some effect, he said there had been more military activity in South Africa by his organisation after the

'End apartheid to end fighting'

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agreement than before.

Armed struggle was only a part of the ANC's strategy which consisted of international mobilisation in support of the struggle, the internal activities of the people and their unity of action in resistance to apartheid.

Armed struggle needed all the three fronts in order to be successful.

"The recent upsurge of mass resistance, coupled with the numerous strikes, the resistance to the constitutional amendment and the opposition to the coloured and Indian election for the tricameral Parliament, form an essential part of the armed struggle," Mr Tambo said.

The ANC had never believed the neighbouring African states should offer their countries as rear-guard bases for the armed struggle in South Africa.

"We planned our military activities in the knowledge that the Frontline States were vulnerable," he said.

Asked what significance

he attached to the growing opposition to apartheid in the United States, Mr Tambo said it was significant for the future of the "racist regime" and was complementary to, and not a substitute for, the internal struggle against apartheid.

"It undermines the calculation the racist regime made that it was going to have another four years of uninterrupted blissful relations with the Reagan administration."

On the argument by some Bantustan spokesmen that economic sanctions against South Africa would bring more suffering to the African people, he said that that was an "old song" telling the Africans to accept enslavement to avoid suffering.

"It is an argument being repeated by people in South Africa who are by definition puppets of the regime whose word only has meaning to the exploiters and the companies which want to live off our cheap labour in the pretext of giving us jobs when they are reinforcing the apartheid system," the ANC leader said. — Sapa.

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