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Statement of the African National Congress of South Africa on the 16th December, the HEROES DAY!

The heroic and relentless struggle waged by the people of South Africa over many centuries for the right of Self-Determination and National Independence is amply symbolised by the significance of the 16th December. The Pretoria apartheid regime trembles at the very thought of this Day. It has had to twice rename this National Day in our country in a desperate and futile attempt to destroy its revolutionary and militant significance. It first renamed it Voorttrekkers Day (Day of the boer settlers) and later the Day of Covenant. The original name is Dingane's Day. Dingane was the leader of our people who engaged the boer settlers in the fiercest battle forcing them to seek refuge in the armed laager. He is one of our national heroes who symbolises resistance. The battle of Blood river (named after the river that turned red as a result of the intensity and fierceness of the fighting) was fought on the 16th December 1838.

The African National Congress of South Africa has declared this Day, Heroes Day in recognition of its heroic significance in struggle and in remembrance of all the heroes of our country who spared no effort and dared all in the heroic uprisings in spite of the alarming disparity in weapons. We include all our people who sacrificed their lives in the course of the just struggle for the total overthrow of the colonialist apartheid system. Our movement deepens its flag in militant memory of the fallen heroes of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the African National Congress, whose blood has watered the growing tree of freedom. It is hardly accidental that this wing of our movement was formed on the 16th December, 16 years ago. We include all those who died in the secret torture chambers of solitary confinement and banishment, men like Chief Albert Lutuli, Joseph Mdluli and Bram Fischer. We definitely include all those who were massacred and mowed down in Soweto, Alexandra Township, Atteridgeville, Guguletu, Langa, Sekhukhuni, Zeerust, Pondoland, Sharpville and all over the country. We include all our heroic forebears who initiated our struggle right from the very first day of invasion.

The heroes of the people of South Africa are not confined nor limited to those that have already sacrificed their lives. Today we remember our heroes in Robben Island and other places of imprisonments and banishment. Men like Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Dorothy Nyembe and youthful Pokanoka. It is dedicated to the heroes of our

movement and people who are today in the very belly of the apartheid beast in the underground cells of the African National Congress and to other patriots some of whom are still to make contact with the main stream of the national liberation movement in our country the African National Congress. It is dedicated to all the militants of Umkhonto we Sizwe, to the African National Congress the tested shield of our people and to its dedicated leadership. It is a Day dedicated to all our people who are rising as one in anticipation of the inevitable victory.

On this Day inspired by the heroic battle of Blood river fought in 1838, and imbued with the lofty ideals of the creation of a just and nonracial South Africa, the African National Congress pledges its full commitment to shoulder any sacrifice till victory is achieved

We call upon the international Community to render increased material and political support to our organisation. It is necessary to completely isolate the Pretoria racist regime, expel it from all international forums especially the United Nations and to impose Mandatory Arms and Economic Sanctions with complete safeguards for implementation.

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