

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

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F R E E D O M D A Y 1982.

- Comrade Chairman
- Honorable Members of the Central Committee
- Honorable Ministers
- Your Excellencies
- Distinguished Guests
- Dear Comrades

This is a great day in the history of my country, the country of the people of South Africa. We call it FREEDOM DAY for this reason:

On 26th June thousands of delegates from all national groups came together at Kliptown in Johannesburg to adopt the Freedom Charter, a solemn pledge that commits all revolutionaries to a struggle for majority rule, freedom, equality and social justice.

What is the story behind the Freedom Charter? It goes back a long way in our history, to the coming of the white man to Southern Africa in 1652, just 330 years ago.

From that time onwards, the men and women of all tribes resisted the invaders, fought with assegais, kleries, knives, bows and arrows in defence of land, homes and liberty.

Umkhonto we Sizwe, the army of our Liberation Movement, is the direct descendant of those warriors who of old threw themselves into battle against the cannons, machine guns and rifles of white invaders.

Defeated by the enemy's superior weapons, we were never conquered. With heads bloody but unbowed, we never gave up the will to be free.

In the words of the MK Manifesto, made public on 16 December 1961:

The time comes in the life of any nation when there remains only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa... The Government policy of force, repression and violence will no longer be met with non-violent resistance only.... The Nationalist Government has chosen the course of force and massacre, now, deliberately, as it did at Sharpville. Umkhonto we Sizwe will be at the front line of the people's defence. It will be the fighting arm of the people against the Government and its policies of race oppression.

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The ANC and its allies launched a Defiance Campaign of non-violent struggle against discriminatory racial laws. Thousands went to prison in that campaign. The racists introduced cruel penalties to stop our non-violent campaign. It was then that the peoples of South Africa adopted the Freedom Charter.

It declares that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white; yet our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a government founded on injustice and inequality.

For this call to democracy, peace and equality, the racist regime launched a monstrous Treason Trial. No fewer than 156 leaders were put on trial for treason arising out of the Freedom Charter. They were found not guilty in March 1961, after a trial lasting more than four years. Even the racist courts held back from declaring that a call for equality and majority rule could be treasonable!

Unable to convict us in their courts of law, the racists brought in a ban after the Sharpsville Massacre of 21 March 1960, when 72 men and women died by bullets from police rifles aimed at unarmed demonstrators. The ANC was outlawed, went underground and took up arms in a war that combines political and military operations.

Comrades, I recall these deaths and the violent assaults upon the people and the liberation movement to remind ourselves of the callous cruelty that the racists unleash against the oppressed when they dare to raise the banner of freedom, equality and majority rule.

Are these not legitimate demands? Are they not the same as the demands put forward by Zambians in their glorious struggle for independence and the right to determine their destiny? Is it not the birthright of every human to be free in the country of birth?

Nobody in this audience would deny the legitimacy of our claims or fail to support our struggle for liberation. Zambians have a splendid record of support for liberation movements. Zambia's position as a Frontline State and its key role in liberation wars is recognised and admired in all democratic and peace loving countries.

Zambia's policy is based on the moral principles of Humanism which rejects the exploitation of people under all forms of colonialism, racism, fascism and apartheid. UNIP's constitution before and after Independence declared that the Party would co-operate with all African National Movements which work for complete eradication of all forms of colonialism, imperialism, racialism and discriminatory laws and which fight for African Unity.

No Frontline State can be truly free while the Pretoria racists keep up the colonial system and pursue the aim of imperialist expansion. Freedom, independence, stability, progress and peace can be certain only when democracy triumphs over race discrimination, national oppression and class exploitation.

Not only moral principles and kinship ties determine Zambia's active support for our struggle. There is also awareness of the racists' threat to peace, stability and progress in Southern Africa.

Pretoria's subversive actions in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola are well-known. It provides arms and other assistance to counter-revolutionary forces in Mozambique, uses Savimbi's UNITA as a puppet force in Angola, infiltrates assassins into Zimbabwe, conducts armed raids in Zambia and conspires with capitalism to overthrow UNIP and its Government.

The people of Southern Africa cannot live in peace and prosper under the shadow of apartheid. For this reason alone we are certain of the continued support of Zambia which has never turned its back on the liberation movement since it gained its own independence in 1964.

We have still to liberate ourselves from colonial domination. Yet in this very year we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the formation of the African National Congress. Those who founded the ANC represented all sections of the population: Lawyers teachers, chiefs, tribesmen, peasants and workers. It was the first gathering of its kind in Africa and it received support from many leaders outside South Africa, including King Lewanika of the Lozi and the Queen Mother of Swaziland.

The ANC was a pioneer. It opened a trail that other national liberation movements followed in later years. It is an irony of history that they won freedom for themselves while we remain in chains. That, Comrades, is not because our people lack courage or the willingness to die for our cause. Today, as in the past, our men and women die for freedom, as at Soweto in 1976. Today, as in the battle of Isandhlwana fought in 1879 against British army in Zululand, our young soldiers go into battle against overwhelming odds but with unflinching courage.

Friedrich Engels, one of the founders of Scientific Socialism, wrote a famous praise of Zulu Impis after the battle of Isandhlwana. This is what he said:

A few years ago the Zulus did what no European army can do. Armed only with lances and spears they advanced under a hail of bullets up to the bayonets of the English infantry - the best in the world for fighting in closed ranks - and forced them to retreat in spite of the tremendous inequality of weapons.

Have the comrades of Umkhonto we Sizwe not given proof that they can match the bravery of our ancestors? The Zulus gained a great victory over the British at Isandhlwana. For us likewise victory is certain because apartheid is a dying force, our movement grows in strength and determination, support for our cause is worldwide, and racism, like slavery, is doomed to disappear.

Let me say something about this land of apartheid, which we have sworn to liberate and purge from the evils of colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, fascism, imperialism and apartheid.

Colonialism means that only one-fifth of the population has a monopoly of power over four-fifths, that the majority are kept in an inferior position which limits them to the worst paid and hardest jobs, that blacks live in segregated areas in bad houses but are denied the right to buy land.

The racist regime spends K41 a year on the education of an African child and K620 on the education of a white child. Black parents have to pay school fees, buy books and uniforms, provide food at school for their children. White pupils receive free education.

Whites have a monopoly of skilled jobs. Only in 1981 did Africans win the right to form registered trade unions, take part in collective bargaining and undertake skilled work without legal penalties.

Apartheid means that 5 million whites claim sole control over 87% of the country while 25 million Africans are given a legal right to settle only in the remaining 13%.

Apartheid means pass laws, influx controls, slums in urban locations, ill health, ignorance, and poverty for the great majority. Who can blame us for taking up arms against the oppressor?

Apartheid means imperialism, the conquest of territory, introduction of foreign rule, the search for markets and profit-making investments. South African troops occupy Namibia in defiance of United Nations, invade Angola in violation of its sovereignty, conduct armed raids on Mozambique and Zambia, and destabilise the whole of Southern Africa.

Aggression is a sign of weakness. In spite of its military might, the racists are on the defensive. Unable to repress the rising tide of revolt among the oppressed people or stop the attacks of our guerrilla forces, the regime is falling back on desperate manoeuvres and stratagems, even to the extent of giving away parts of our country.

The transfer of KwaNgwane and Ingwavuma exposes the treachery of the racist government. This crime against the people has stirred them to new heights of anger and stiffened their resolve to fight without end for the destruction of the regime.

In Zambia, as in other African countries, people and governments call for unity. In South Africa, the racists practise disunity, separate Africans into tribal groups, partition the small part of the country left to us into ten small tribal states, encourage inter-tribal conflicts, all with the aim of turning our anger away from the real enemy.

Only a few weeks ago the so-called foreign minister Roelof Botha admitted that the Bantustans, cornerstone of apartheid, were in ruins. This is what he said:

Long ago it was thought that by 1978 the flow of black labour from the homelands to the cities would be reversed. We do not believe this any more. We must admit that we made a mistake. Today the homelands can provide employment for only 12% of the black labour pool and the balance have to find employment in the white areas.

The liberation movement has denounced Bantustans as a fraud, a policy of divide and rule to stop the growth of a united South African nation. My movement pledged to restore the land and national rights to the people. Transfers of South African territory to neighbouring states violate our claim to the whole country and is not acceptable.

In forcing through this one-sided transfer of our land, the regime seeks to create a wedge between our supporters and ourselves. The strategy of carving up our country is an attempt to create new buffer states, to compensate for the loss of the protective shield provided in the past by Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe while under colonial rule.

For the same reason the racist prime minister Pieter Botha told a white audience in Springbok in Namaqualand, near the Namibian border, that South African whites had to live with the realities of Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Angola. They could not justify to the outside world the fact that millions of South Africans did not even have the right to control the pavements outside their houses.

But the policy of creating buffer regions will fail as it failed in the past. By liberating themselves from foreign domination, the peoples of Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola have drawn a noose around the racists' neck. That noose will be tightened regardless of the enemy's attempts to escape from the coil by resorting to manoeuvres, assassination, armed invasion, sabotage and bribery.

On June 25th 1975 Mozambique proclaimed its independence under the leadership of Frelimo after the collapse of Portuguese colonialism. The People's Republic of Angola was born on November 11 1975 and Zimbabwe became independent on April 18, 1980. These three countries continued the struggle which brought independence to Zambia on October 24 1964. Namibia is on the threshold of her independence. South Africa will not be far behind. We take this opportunity to congratulate Frelimo on the 20th Anniversary of the formation of Frelimo and the 7th Anniversary since independence of Mozambique.

The great obstacle to independence, peace and security in Southern Africa is the refusal of Western Imperialism to withdraw its huge investments in the apartheid state. The racist regime could not survive without the large-scale support of its trading partners.

The racists provide a profitable field of investment for Western capitalists, a market for Western industrialists, and a strategic base for Western militarists. It is for such reasons that Western powers protect the racist regime in spite of United Nations resolutions calling for a total boycott.

Like Israel, which has the protection of United States, South Africa defies international opinion because of the support it received from big capitalist powers which profit from the armaments industry, depend on it to save themselves from economic collapse, and look to it to stop the birth of progressive governments.

The arms race, the enormous expenditure on destructive weapons, the threat of a nuclear war hang like a sword over the heads of the human race.

Our liberation movement, headed by the African National Congress, stands united with progressive peoples everywhere against the arms race, militarism and nuclear war.

Our main contribution to the peace movement is to defeat the racist regime, which for all practical purposes is part of South Atlantic Alliance, the counterpart of the North Atlantic Alliance.

On this day, Freedom Day, all sections of the Liberation Movement, at home, in training camps, and abroad pay tribute to our heroes who have fallen in battle, who rot in fascist prisons and who have gone to the scaffold like the heroic Solomon Mahlangu.

We take this opportunity to pay tribute to the international protest that compelled the regime to commute the death sentence passed on our three comrades, sentenced to death for their part in the struggle, to life imprisonment.

We also pay tribute and express our deep gratitude to the people of Zambia, UNIP and its Government for their unfailing support. In particular we honour that great leader, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, our constant and most dependable ally.

The liberation of South Africa is the task of South Africans. We have shouldered the burden and shall continue to carry it regardless of dangers and difficulties to ultimate success.

Yet we have a moral right and strategic claim to invoke the support of all Africa, especially the neighbouring states.

We therefore call with confidence on front-line states, neighbouring countries, the OAU and the international community to provide political, moral and material support to our organisation, the African National Congress in its just struggle for freedom majority rule, and for an end to apartheid, fascism, invasion and destabilisation of neighbouring countries.

Long live unity of the peoples of the region against apartheid regime!

Long live Zambia and its illustrious tested leader President Dr. Kenneth Kaunda!

Long live unity between our peoples and organisation's!

One Zambia one nation!

Victory is certain!

Power to the people!

Amandla ngawethu!