

New wave of bombs hits South Africa poll

SOUTH AFRICANS, white and black, closed ranks last night after two more bomb attacks by ultra-right terrorists seeking to disrupt this week's all-race elections.

Ten people died and 41 were injured yesterday morning when a camping trailer packed with explosives blew up beside a taxi rank used by black people in Germiston, near Johannesburg.

And at least two black people were killed and 29 injured in Pretoria last night when three white men hurled a bomb into a crowded bar frequented by blacks.

The attacks followed a car-bomb

JOHN LICHFIELD
and JOHN CARLIN
in Johannesburg

The Commissioner of Police, Johan van der Merwe, said earlier that detectives were close to a "break-through" in their investigations into the bombings. But that was before last night's attack in Pretoria.

Earlier in the day, the ANC reported that passers by had made a "citizen's arrest" after a man fled from a car packed with explosives in Benoni, near Germiston. The deputy minister of law and order, Gert Myburgh, said a suspect was being questioned, but the police later denied anyone had been arrested.

South Africa is braced for further outrages today, when voting begins with elderly and disabled electors.

In the Germiston attack, police said 100kg (220lb) of high explosives had been packed into a trailer towed behind a minibus. The trailer exploded beside a group of people waiting for taxis.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks, which in South Africa is not unusual. The ANC national chairman, Thabo Mbeki, claimed yesterday that they had the hallmarks of the "Third Force", elements within the security forces accused of having orchestrated much of the township violence in the past four years.

Politicians of all parties condemned the attacks and vowed to press ahead with South Africa's transition to democracy.

Pik Botha, the Foreign Minister, told the last session of the apartheid parliament in Cape Town: "We will not allow ourselves to be scared off. I appeal to all South Africans to take part in the elections with even greater dedication and determination."

General Van der Merwe said the police force remained committed to combating terrorism "tooth and nail and will not fail in its duty to protect the birth of democracy in South Africa".

The ANC President, Nelson Mandela, visiting victims of Sunday's blast, said he had spoken to President FW de Klerk and General Van der Merwe. "I was convinced they want to put an end to the violence..."

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WELLINGTON (Reuter) — Nelson Mandela's niece was the first black to vote, thanks to New Zealand's time zone. Nomaza Paintin was among about 20 South Africans who cast their ballots at the New Zealand justice department. Married to a New Zealander, she is a daughter of Mr Mandela's late brother, Sidima Khaka.

explosion in the centre of Johannesburg on Sunday, in which nine people died. Police reported 11 other bombings, including two attacks on taxi ranks and several on polling stations, in which no one was hurt.

Politicians and security chiefs said there was no doubt the country faced a concerted and well-organised attempt — almost certainly by the far right — to disrupt the voting over the next three days. A police reward of 1m rand (£200,000) has been offered for information leading to the arrest of the culprits.



Police officers standing near the remains of a building and three cars at the site of the Germiston bomb attack in which 10 people were killed

Photograph: Corinne Dufka/Reuter

'We live with death. We will vote. We must'

John Carlin saw the carnage of Germiston — and heard how it would not halt the march of democracy

"I SAW a big ball of flame. The ground shook. Pieces of metal, human flesh and everything were going up in the air. People were running and screaming in every direction. There were bodies everywhere. I couldn't bear to look."

"It was just like a horror movie... pieces of arms, legs, motor-car and taxi were lying around. I stood on a hand."

Those were the accounts of two witnesses to the explosion at 8.50am yesterday at a taxi rank in the centre of Germiston, a small town on Johannesburg's western edge. When I arrived there an hour later I nearly stood on a foot.

It was a black left foot, with yellow toenails, torn off just below the ankle. It lay on its own in a quiet car park 150 yards away from the bomb blast. I walked on 50 yards and stumbled across a solitary brown shoe containing a blood-soaked sock.

At the scene itself, a narrow road shaded by trees, police and paramedics were picking up pieces of flesh and internal organs, dropping them into brown plastic bags. Other human remains they deposited inside a large blue tarpaulin from which a stream of blood ran down the road alongside the pavement.

Wrapped around one of the trees, like a modern work of art, was a pile of mangled, blackened metal 10ft high. The police said it was the remains of three cars and a trailer where, they believed, the 100kg bomb had been placed. Twelve other minibuses stood alongside, some badly damaged.

Minibus taxis are the favoured form of public transport for most commuters from the black townships. This particular taxi rank services Katlehong, a township which has seen more political killings than any other in the past four years.

Half of the roof of the building closest to the blast had caved in, the masonry was exposed and hundreds of bricks lay on the road. The shops all around bore testimony to the daily bustle here. There were two fast-food outlets, a women's hairdresser, a dry-cleaners, a doctor's rooms, "Song's Discount Butchery" and what might best be described as a witch-doctor's chemist — a muti shop. In local parlance, muti is the generic name for the potions used to ward off evil spirits, bring good luck or provide safety in battle.

The windows of every retailer had been shattered except the muti shop's. Through the window I saw rows of wooden charms, an ostrich head, animal bones, bracelets, incense sticks and jars with yellow and white powders commonly mixed with animal blood to

make muti of the kind you smear over parts of your body.

Isaac, a taxi owner whose vehicle the blast spared, laughed when I told him about the muti shop. "If you believe in it," he said, "it works. The owner of the shop must believe in it."

Isaac, a smartly-dressed, 32-year-old black man, was standing behind a police cordon, 100 yards away from the wreckage. A crowd had gathered to watch, and we struck up a conversation. Did he think people would now be too frightened to vote in the election? "No ways. No ways! We just have to go for it. They won't stop us. We're used to this, working in Katlehong. We see killings every day. We live with death. We'll vote. We must."

A white man cut into our conversation. "Arrest the bloody bastards! Arrest the right-wing leaders, Hartzenberg, Terreblanche — everybody. They said on TV last week they weren't taking part in the election and they would disrupt it. Arrest the bastards!"

"They don't care who they kill. They say they want a volkstaat. What for? How can you have a volkstaat? It's pathetic, man. It's pathetic! We've got our problems in South Africa but now we must hold hands and sort them out."

Isaac nodded. "Yes, that's right. It's time to forget the past. We know it will take time but the future will be for our children. The kids will sort it out. They don't see colour like we do."

Rob, 36, was wearing jeans and a T-shirt. He described himself as a businessman and said his four children had been going to primary school with black children for a couple of years now. "They're best of friends. I had a birthday party for one of my boys at a restaurant the other day and there were seven white kids and three black. The grown-ups, now, they're scared of blacks. But the fact is whites can't do without blacks and blacks can't do without whites."

It was time to move on. Round the corner, outside the "Pick and Pay" supermarket, there was another taxi rank. It was teeming with people. The bomb had gone off across the road three hours earlier. Life went on.

minister

A HEALTH minister yesterday backed giving free condoms to girls as young as 13 and 14 in order to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Baroness Cumberlege, Under-Secretary of State for Health, was speaking after it was revealed that North Birmingham Health Authority was providing free condoms "as a last resort" for girls aged 12 to 18 attending "Health Yourself" sessions at a youth club in the city.

Lady Cumberlege said family planning nurses should "use their professional judgement" in deciding whether to provide condoms to under-age girls.

That, amid the "back to basics" climate, was given a warm welcome by Christine Hancock, general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, who said: "It is very important that we have at least one government minister who is realistic about the problem of under-age pregnancies. We have one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in the Western world and we cannot just wish it away. It is really important that at least one government minister has publicly recognised that it is a big problem for the whole of the country."

June Clark, president of the RCN, called for family planning nurses to work not just in schools but "in places where teenagers gather — in the Virgin superstore or the Body Shop".

As one of its *Health of the Nation* targets, the Government aims to halve by 2000 the number of under-age pregnancies — currently about 8,000 a year.

However, Dame Jill Knight, MP for Birmingham Edgbaston and chairman of the Tory backbench health committee, attacked as a

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Health Services Correspondent

"disgraceful exercise" the issuing of condoms at the advice sessions run by a family planning nurse at the Shard End Youth Club in the city.

Lady Cumberlege, who had been speaking at the RCN's congress in Bournemouth, said advice and education were the main way to cut teenage pregnancies. "But in the end if a nurse recognises there are one or two teenagers who are particularly vulnerable they should give them the best advice they can and if necessary the means to prevent pregnancy."

Asked if that applied to girls as young as 13 or 14, the minister said they would be "very much a minority" but it remained "up to the nurse to use her professional judgement". North Birmingham, she said, had one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in the country, with 80 under-age pregnancies last year, two-thirds of which ended in abortion.

In a statement made later last night, Lady Cumberlege said she wanted to stress that she did not believe condoms should be made freely available to girls under 16.

"I'm sorry that my remarks have been taken out of context," she said.

"North Birmingham has an extremely high level of teenage pregnancies and those nurses who are working there to reduce it deserve our support. It is certainly not my view that contraceptives should be freely supplied to under-age girls and I believe that wherever possible parents should be fully involved in the advice given to their children."

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Sir Patrick Mayhew, left, and Dick Spring at the Anglo-Irish intergovernmental meeting in Belfast yesterday

Photograph: Crispin Rodwell/Reuters

IRA mortar attack mars Irish talks

Adams warns peace initiative 'in danger of going into crisis'. David McKittrick reports

AN IRA mortar attack injured a soldier in Crossmaglen last night as Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president, warned that the peace initiative in Ireland was "in danger of going into crisis".

The attack caused minor injuries to a soldier at the joint Army-RUC base in the south Armagh town, which is currently undergoing extensive renovations following damage caused by previous explosions.

Mr Adams was speaking after a day of widespread questioning of Sinn Féin's and the IRA's professed commitment to a peace process following the IRA killings of two Protestants in Co Londonderry on Sunday. The keynote was struck by Cardinal Cahal Daly, the Catholic Primate of all-Ireland, who de-

scribed the killings as morally outrageous, inexcusable and senseless.

The deaths overshadowed yesterday's Anglo-Irish intergovernmental meeting in Belfast, which was co-chaired by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Patrick Mayhew, and the Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring.

The two men died when gunmen opened fire on their car in the village of Garvagh. They have been named as Alan Smith, 40, and John McCloy, 28. Mr Smith, a former member of the Ulster Defence Regiment, survived a previous attempt

on his life when a bomb exploded under his van last March.

The IRA claimed the men were members of the Ulster Defence Association, but this was denied by their families, by security sources and by the UDA itself. RUC sources indicated the shootings may have been a case of mistaken identity.

Speaking after yesterday's meeting in Belfast, Dick Spring said he still hoped that those who espoused violence would realise sooner rather than later that they would not achieve their aims by force. Both he and Sir Patrick said work was going

on behind the scenes to pave the way for inter-party talks, though Irish sources left the clear impression that little political movement was likely in advance of the European elections in June.

Mr Adams's warning, meanwhile, was accompanied by his now-familiar calls on the British government to show more flexibility. His use of the word "crisis" was new, however, and may signal his fear that the peace process, which has clearly lost momentum, might be in real danger of going off the rails completely. The Garvagh shootings represent a significant widening of the IRA net. Loyalist violence has also increased appreciably in recent weeks, awakening fears that a serious escalation is on the cards.

proved by Mr Mayhew.

Alan Williams, Labour MP for Swansea West, who spotted the alleged deal in a footnote to the Duchy of Cornwall accounts for the year ending 31 December 1992, said last night: "This is the royal equivalent to paying your electricity bill in advance before the VAT man arrives."

'Self-defence' man detained

Joseph Elliott, 20, was sentenced to six months in a young offenders' institution at the Old Bailey for breaching a two-year probation order he was given in 1992 for burglary on a house in east London.

Elliott was cleared of murder and manslaughter last July after the death of Robert Osborne, a musician who had tried to stop him slashing tyres. He pleaded self-defence.

Spitfire found

A Spitfire was found buried in a field in Chilham, Kent, with the remains of its pilot. Local people remember it crashing in 1941. They thought the pilot had bailed out.

Mother freed

A 22-year-old woman whose 3-month-old baby suffered brain damage after she flung her to the floor was given three years' probation after Grimsby Crown Court was told she had lost custody of both her children. She admitted cruelty.

Ammonia attack

Stephen Battram, 38, of Selby, North Yorkshire, who sprayed ammonia at two policemen as they tackled him about a burglary, was jailed for 10 years.

Gas blaze

Ten fire crews were battling a fire at a Calor Gas storage depot in Fareham, Hampshire, in which shrapnel from up to 600 exploding canisters shot into the air "like bullets". Two 12-year-old boys were questioned.

'Children bullied'

More than a quarter of primary school children in Sheffield are bullied during term and 10 per cent once a week. At secondary school, 10 per cent are bullied, researchers at Sheffield University said in a study for the Department for Education.

Car tragedy

A woman accidentally ran over and killed by her mother as she left a family birthday celebration in Newbold, Rugby.

MP to retire

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn, 61, the Tory MP for Perth and Kinross, is reported to be retiring from politics at the next election.

Tory MPs hint at rebellion over further defence cuts

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

THE DEFENCE White Paper to be presented to Parliament today has been undermined by the threat of deeper cuts in back-up forces, Opposition leaders said last night.

Tory MPs said they will be holding their fire, until they are told the details, but they were alarmed at reports that 10,000 back-up troops could be cut with 15,000 civilians.

"I support many of the things they are looking at, but if they proposed cutting 10,000 uniformed troops, I could not vote for the Government," one former defence minister said.

The defence White Paper will outline the impact of the Options for Change — brought in after the Cold War ended — but will offer no details on the fresh package of cuts in defence support services, called "front line first", to be presented later this week to ministers.

Malcolm Rifkind, Secretary of

State for Defence, said yesterday the review would not weaken the front-line capability of the armed services. He told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme: "It is quite possible that some jobs will go... but they will not be front-line jobs."

"They will not be the people who actually have to do the fighting. It will only be [done] if we can be satisfied that the quality of work can be done in a way that involves the use of less manpower."

The wide-ranging plans include the closure of many defence bases, the leasing of heavy equipment and entire fleets of vehicles, the merging of defence colleges, slashing ranks in the armed services and the closure of recruitment centres.

Some Tory MPs would oppose

the closure of firing ranges and TA centres in towns. The flashpoint with the opposition parties could come over the threatened closure of the Rosyth naval base. Mr Rifkind said there were no plans to close the dockyard, but he confirmed the naval base was under review.

The Rosyth naval base campaign group last night warned it would fight the closure, which could cost 15,000 jobs. Menzies Campbell, the Liberal Democrat spokesman on defence, said: "The 'front line first' review has undermined the defence White Paper."

He called for the Ministry of Defence to make alternative savings by withdrawing from Germany to Britain the entire force of 78 RAF Tornado ground attack aircraft and 40 Harrier jump jets. He said their role, to attack Warsaw pact forces in Europe, had gone with the end of the Cold War.

Speed limiter on M2 crash coach 'was disconnected'

A SPEED-LIMITER on a coach which crashed, killing nine American tourists and the driver, had been tampered with and disconnected, an inquest jury was told yesterday.

The coroner, Richard Sturt, told the inquest in Dover that the limiter was supposed to restrict the coach's speed to under 70mph, but the vehicle's tachograph showed it had been travelling at 78mph. The anti-lock braking systems on the coach were also faulty, he added.

Mr Sturt was outlining evidence to the jury at the inquest into the 10 deaths. The coach crashed in wet weather on the M2 near Faversham in Kent last November. The tourists were on trips to Canterbury and Leeds Castle as part of a package holiday.

Mr Sturt told the jury: "You will hear from witnesses who say they

saw the coach driving at 70mph. However the coach tachograph shows a top speed of 78mph. Both the anti-lock brake systems at the front of the coach were faulty, and so was the warning light."

He added that the vehicle was only fitted with single-glazed windows.

Mr Sturt said the coach driver, Leslie Golds, 54, was "one of the most experienced drivers" employed by the Travellers Coach Company of Hounslow, west London. But he had exceeded his driving hours and the night before the crash had just four and three-quarter hours' sleep. It was Mr Golds' first time behind the wheel of that particular vehicle after a last-minute switch, he told the jury.

Mr Golds, of Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire, died of crush injuries and a ruptured liver after the coach hit a van driven by Robert

Marshall, of Thamesmead, south-east London. The coach slewed off the motorway and tumbled down an embankment.

The victims included Harry Faull, 65, a high school principal, and his wife, Carolyn, a teacher, from Dearborn, Michigan, both of whom died from crush injuries. Two sisters, Deborah Becnell, a lawyer, from Lafayette, Louisiana, and Frances Hubbard, 52, a housewife, from Houston, Texas, died from crush fractures to the skull, rupture of the heart and asphyxia from crush injuries to the chest. They had taken the trip with another sister and their mother, both of whom survived.

Mr Sturt said 40 witnesses would be called during the five-day inquest, including survivors. The hearing was adjourned to today. Technical evidence is expected to be heard tomorrow.

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WEATHER

NOON FORECAST

WIND: ... COLD FRONT ...

26 April 1994

FORECAST: England and Wales will have plenty of dry, bright weather, although

Military
Cross

Big savings