

OTR/017/0138/5

STATEMENT TO THE PRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, OLIVER TAMBO: Addis Ababa.

November 16th 1984.

The delegation of the African National Congress is very happy to have participated in the 20th Summit meeting of the OAU which in our view, will go down as one of the most successful in the history of our continental organisation thus far. We consider that it was of extreme importance that the OAU succeeded ~~x~~ to overcome the problems that had bedevilled it for some time.

The importance of this was demonstrated by the serious manner in which the 20th Summit tackled the major problems confronting our continent as a whole, central among which are the issues of the liberation of Namibia and South Africa.

The positions adopted by the Summit on South Africa and on Southern Africa constitute the basis for a renewed offensive by the African continent against the apartheid regime and in support of SWAPO and the ANC. We say this because in its resolution on South Africa and the declaration on Southern Africa, inter alia, the OAU has:

1. Correctly condemned the so-called reforms in South Africa, including the amended apartheid constitution, as a manoeuvre to entrench ~~in~~ the racist system.
2. Reaffirmed that the question of the liberation of South Africa remains central among Africa's concerns, and
3. pledged itself to take practical measures further to isolate the apartheid regime, including the early convening of the Security Council, and has, moreover, strongly condemned the United States policy of constructive engagement.
4. The Summit also reaffirmed the right of the people of South Africa to take up arms in pursuit of freedom and justice and having commended the ANC, called on our people further to intensify their armed opposition to apartheid, assuring them of the practical support of the OAU to achieve this heightened offensive.

The OAU has reiterated these positions at a time when the masses of our people in South Africa are engaged in intense battles and daring confrontations with the apartheid regime. The African response to these struggles, as represented by the decisions of the 20th Summit, was indeed most appropriate and timely.

In this regard, we would like to join those Heads of State and Government and other leaders of delegations who have expressed our profound appreciation for the outstanding role played by the last Chairman of the O.A.U.,
 ✓ H.E. Mengistu Haile-Mariam, who has, despite serious problems which have confronted and continue to confront his own country and people, so successfully led our continental organisation out of the difficult situation with which we are all familiar.

✓ We can do no more here than agree fully with H.E. President Kaunda that this great son of Africa, comrade Chairman Mengistu Haile-Mariam, deserves our fullest and unreserved commendation. We would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate the thanks extended earlier by our colleague comrade Sam Nujoma for the manner in which we have been received and cared for by the Government and people of Socialist Ethiopia.

✓ As we extend our sincere thanks to our outgoing Chairman, we are also very happy to welcome and identify ourselves with the unanimous election by this 20th Summit of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere as Chairman of the OAU for the coming year.

On behalf of the African National Congress and the entire fighting people of South Africa, I take this opportunity also warmly to congratulate H.E. President Nyerere for the full and well-deserved confidence that our continent has in him as demonstrated by this timely election.

The ANC and the people of South Africa have known Mwalimu for a quarter of a century as a combatant who has stayed in the forward trenches of the struggle for the total liberation of our continent, for African Unity and for the all-round upliftment of all people.

Time does not allow us to say all that we would have liked to say about Mwalimu. Suffice it therefore for us to say—with you, comrade Chairman, at the helm of the affairs of our continent, we have every reason to be confident that our continent will regain its strength and march on to new victories.

✓ As people fighting for their liberation, ~~we~~ we have been fortunate to enjoy your guidance and assistance as Chairman of the Frontline states, in which ^{position} ~~role~~ you have played and continue to play an outstanding role to advance the cause of our continent.

We Salute the Heads of State on Discharge

For all these reasons, our people look forward to the results of this Summit in the expectation that here, Africa will reassert her commitment to contribute by practical deeds to the accomplishment of the urgent task of the liberation of Namibia and South Africa. *We are also convinced that Africa will, as before, reaffirm her support and solidarity with the people of Palestine, under the leadership of the PLO.*
// We are nevertheless deeply aware of the fact that drought and underdevelopment have imposed immensely uncertain and perilous conditions of life on the peoples of our continent.

Calamity has spread from the Sahel in the West, to the Red Sea in the East and, advancing down through the heart of Africa, has reached the confluence of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans at the Southern tip of Africa.

We know and our people are aware that in other parts of the world there are food mountains whose owners do not know how to dispose of.

In our country, food stocks are destroyed in order to maintain high prices and large profits for white farmers, while, in pursuit of a genocidal policy, millions of Africans have been and are being forced into, rather than rescued from drought stricken and underdeveloped areas, there to perish in silence.

Adding to the enormity of its crime against the peoples of Africa and humanity as a whole, the Pretoria regime has, for some years now, gone further deliberately to destroy the economies of some countries in our region.

The aim was and is literally to starve independent Africa into submission, to impose a condition of existence on our peoples which, in the hope of the racists, would force us to agree to ~~but~~ be enslaved once more, to exchange our freedom for the beggar's bowl.

The catastrophe that faces various countries of our continent must be confronted by all of us in Unity as an African tragedy.

While expressing our solidarity at this critical hour with our African brothers and sisters of this ancient land, we would also like to express our confidence that, relying on our continent's collective wisdom and strength as they find expression in the OAU, Africa will act to mobilise her resources and persuade her friends to help us beat back the scourge of hunger which today threatens to take the lives of millions of our peoples.

The situation in Southern Africa, as well, demands that we should also continue to bring to bear the same collective wisdom and strength of our continent to end the inhuman and pernicious system of colonial, white minority domination which continues to blight the lives of millions of Africans.

Satisfied with Summit: It is our fervent hope that this Summit meeting will look closely at this question, moved by the single objective that we should together, as Africans, sue for an urgent victory over the forces that continue to keep our peoples in Southern Africa in chains.

Since the last summit meeting, the apartheid regime ^{has} openly proclaimed itself as a regional power, arrogantly asserting that whatever the future of Southern Africa may be, that future must take into account and accommodate its interests as a regional power.

Thus Pretoria seeks to persuade the rest of the world to accept it as an immutable fact that Southern Africa is its exclusive preserve, to be shaped and governed in keeping with its wishes.

The ascendant army generals of the racist regime assert that, in any case, they have the military and economic power, as well as the will and the determination, to ensure that the peoples of our region submit to their dictates.

Earlier this year, the western friends and allies of the apartheid regime were busily engaged in a campaign to convince us that the apartheid regime had changed. They sought to project this regime as a peacemaker and not a war monger, as a reformist rather than ^a reactionary, racist and colonialist, as a legitimate partner of the peoples of Africa and not an illegitimate remnant of an historical epoch imposed on our peoples by the European imperial powers.

Botha abroad These efforts were aimed at helping the Pretoria regime to break out of its isolation and to endow it with the acceptability which mankind has denied it. Thus we saw the then apartheid Prime Minister, P.W. Botha, received in capitals of Europe. There were even stories that the same Botha was to make a triumphal tour of independent Africa to demonstrate the supposed acceptance of the racist regime by Africa as the friend of its peoples.

✓ In this ^{context} regard, we would like to take advantage of this opportunity to pay tribute to the many Heads of State and Government and other high government officials of our continent who have so readily given us audience whenever we have requested it, and *for the assistance & support received from many countries represented here.*

5.

✓ We would also like to express our appreciation for the speed with which our continent acted to extend ^{such} material and political support to us to help us beat back the enemy's counter offensive.

✓ This was particularly manifest among the Frontline States who assembled in Arusha in April this year and unanimously committed themselves to continued support for the liberation struggle of Southern Africa.

✓ The statement adopted in Arusha and at a critical moment for the ANC, with its call for an intensified offensive against the apartheid regime and increased support for our movement, marked a turning point in Pretoria's offensive against the liberation movement in Southern Africa and the ANC in particular.

✓ We would therefore like to commend the Frontline states as well as Lesotho and express our confidence that the discussions we are holding with the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland will see the whole of our region engaged in relentless efforts to realise the perspectives spelt out in the Arusha communique.

to which we have referred
 ✓ The ~~the~~ enemy efforts ^{also} sought to create the situation whereby the national liberation movement in Southern Africa would come to be seen by the rest of the world as an outdated anachronism, its strategy, particularly of armed struggle, as an obstacle to an evolving peace in our region, a movement which should be accorded support only when and if it accepted the legitimacy of the apartheid state and the Pretoria regime and agreed to see itself and behave as an opposition pressure group whose activities would be directed at encouraging a so-called process of reform, especially in South Africa.

✓ The apartheid regime and its allies, especially the Reagan Administration, consequently set themselves the task of destroying the ANC inside our country, of driving us out of Southern Africa and even tried to compel various governments of Western Europe to close down our offices in this area of the world.

designed to defend the apartheid system
 ✓ All this, which was ~~meant to ensure that no change takes place in~~ South Africa, was of course, presented as imperative to the achievement of peace, stability and progress in Southern Africa.

✓ We are happy to say that ~~at a dangerous moment~~ at a dangerous moment, when the forces of colonial and racist oppression, of aggression and imperialist domination, sought to make a strategic breakthrough, the peoples of our continent closed ranks and once more pledged by word and deed to fight on until the peoples of Namibia and South Africa are free.

*oppression
 against
 ANC*

We are therefore convinced that the assembled Heads of State and Government will unanimously affirm the positions forcefully elaborated by both the previous and the current chairman of the OAU at the opening of this session and thus re-affirm the issue of the destruction of this regime and the liberation of Namibia and South Africa as a matter that is central among Africa's concerns.

The reality of our situation is that the apartheid regime has changed neither in its nature nor in its policies and purposes. This regime continues still to seek the continued racist and colonial domination of the people of South Africa, the colonial and illegal occupation of Namibia and the transformation of the independent countries of our region into its neo-colonial dependencies.

Nothing has changed in the balance of forces within the ruling group and within the oppressor nation to compel the Pretoria regime to change its fundamental objectives. Indeed its proclamation of itself as a regional power constitutes an assertion of its determination to pursue these objectives.

We could expect nothing else from the South African racists except increased ~~stubbornness and~~ aggressiveness while a government as powerful as that of the United States of America stands four-square behind the apartheid regime. There could be no other result to the policy of the United States and the rest of the Western world which see the Botha-Malan regime as the guarantor of their interests in South and Southern Africa, and racist South Africa as their natural base for operations intended to strengthen the positions of the West in Africa, South of the equator.

Internally, everything that the apartheid regime has done and is doing, demonstrates its intention to entrench, consolidate and defend the apartheid system by increased repression and violence. Such is the meaning of the new amendments to the apartheid constitution which our people and the rest of the world have correctly rejected as null and void.

Such is the purpose of instituting an executive presidency and placing the military establishment at the head of the apartheid state structure.

This year alone the racist forces of repression have shot down and killed in cold blood no less than 200 South African patriots and many more ~~have~~ have been injured and maimed.

Dozens of leaders of our people have been arrested and detained, some of them

only a few days ago. The army has been brought out on a massive scale in an

effort to bleed and terrorise our people into submission. (to p.p.87)

effort to bleed and terrorise our people into submission.

At the same time, the Pretoria regime has been very loud in projecting itself as the representative of progressive reform in our country. What it calls reform is nothing but a set of measures designed firstly to create the conditions for the formation of puppet groups from among the black oppressed, which would be used as cannon fodder for the defence of the apartheid system.

Secondly, these so-called reforms are aimed at deceiving the rest of the world into believing that ^a process of change is afoot, and thus to encourage the international community to assist the Pretoria regime to strengthen its positions at home and abroad.

To the question, has the apartheid regime in fact strengthened its positions inside South Africa, the answer, even to the most casual observer, is and must be a definite and unequivocal NO!

Through struggle, the masses of our people are inexorably changing the balance of strength within our country in favour of the forces of national liberation. That, indeed, is the reason why the apartheid regime seeks to externalise the conflict raging in South Africa, adopt new constitutions and deploy military regiments against an unarmed people.

The political and military struggle in our country has reached new levels of intensity. Twice within a period of a month, the industrial heart of South Africa, centred on Johannesburg, has been paralysed by general strikes, with the second held only last week.

Mass popular struggles have also continued to rage in other parts of the country. In the last nine months to-date, our country has seen more activities by our popular army than in the preceding equivalent period. Our National democratic movement is posing, in struggle, the question of wresting power from the white minority regime, enunciating openly and carrying out practically, the task of destroying the capacity of the illegitimate apartheid regime to rule our country.

Despite intensified enemy repression and indeed because of it, the perspective ahead of us is one of a heightened military and political offensive on our part. The mass industrial action which brought the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal area to a standstill only last week will be repeated in other parts of the country.

The masses of our people in other black localities will continue to stand as firm as those of Sebokeng Township did when they were invaded by 7000 armed killers in uniform.

The sister units to those that have carried out armed operations in Johannesburg, Durban, Roodepoort, Krugersdorp and elsewhere, will act further to widen our military offensive and escalate the armed struggle to reach new levels of intensity. *// These developments confront the apartheid regime with the threat that its entire state machinery will grind to a halt.*

Therefore, the masses of our people are daily demonstrating in action their determination to liberate themselves as a matter of great urgency.

Equally, the Botha-Malan regime is desperately trying to shore up its tottering positions also as a matter of great urgency. The re-election of Ronald Reagan to the Presidency of the U.S.A. can bode nothing but ill for us and the peoples of our region. This situation makes it obligatory that the OAU responds in a determined and appropriate manner.

We would like Africa to emerge from this august summit with a clear call reaffirming her positions against the apartheid regime and in support of our liberation movement and struggle.

We would like Africa to proclaim from here, the headquarters of the OAU, a practical programme of action to extend material and political support to ~~us and to its member states in Southern Africa~~ us and to take new initiatives further to isolate the apartheid regime.

We wish to see Africa further extend her support to the people of Namibia under the leadership of SWAPO, to the people of Angola whose land is still occupied by Pretoria's forces of aggression, as well as to the Front Line and other independent states of Southern Africa, victims of the expansionist policies of the apartheid regime.

We wish to see the whole of Africa deeply and practically engaged in the struggle to liberate Southern Africa—to liberate her sooner rather than later, today rather than tomorrow.

The African National Congress and the people of South Africa are more than ever determined to hit at the enemy with everything in our power to achieve victory.

To accomplish this goal, we consider no sacrifice too great and no task too onerous or demanding in our quest to attain the noble goal of the national emancipation of our people and the total liberation of our continent.

We draw great strength from the fact that we can rely on the great peoples of our continent to fight side by side with us to achieve these goals.