

hulM/045/0004/15

NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON THE REPATRIATION OF S.A EXILES

STATEMENT OF ACTION

On 21-22 April 1990, representatives of religious and service organisations who have begun to address the issue of repatriation met a delegation from the African National Congress (ANC) (SA) at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka, Zambia, on the invitation of the ANC Department of Religious Affairs.

AIM:

To exchange information on the work already engaged in and to identify challenges related to the return of all exiles to South Africa, in a dignified manner with their security guaranteed and ensuring full integration into the community.

The consultation was briefed on the work of the ANC Repatriation Sub-Committee, the ANC Department of Religious Affairs, the UNHCR, South African Council of Churches-South African Catholic Bishops Conference Task Force on Returnees, and the Muslim Judicial Council.

The consultation deliberated on the following issues:

1. PROTECTIVE LEGAL GUARANTEES

To ensure the return of exiles in safety and dignity guarantees for their protection should be established before the process of return can be fully realized, in this connection the meeting recommended that:

- 1.1. All political prisoners must be released immediately and unconditionally, and the question of indemnity against prosecution for all returnees should be taken up, demanding a speedy implementation by the Apartheid regime.
- 1.2. The availability of legal services should be ensured in order to look at any loopholes, if any, in the Act that would seek to address the issue.

- 1.3. A monitoring mechanism should be worked out to check on any violations of such guarantees as may be given.
- 1.4. International agencies that have a proven record in providing such monitoring services, such as the UNHCR, should be considered.

Noting that the presence of the UNHCR inside South Africa might create a misunderstanding vis-à-vis the Isolate Apartheid Campaign. It would therefore be necessary that people are sensitised on this issue so as to make sure that such involvement does not create an impression of a change of policy. In this regard the ANC would undertake to do same in respect of the Frontline States, OAU and the UN.

2. REINTEGRATION

To effectively resettle all returnees there is a need to look into the issues of social welfare, health, education, shelter and employment.

- 2.1. Welfare: the welfare of all returnees and especially the aged, children, unaccompanied minors, single parents, the sick and the disabled, must receive special attention.
- 2.2. Counselling: the need for the training and role of counsellors was emphasized.
- 2.3. Health: special care should be given to health requirements and needs.
- 2.4. Shelter: attention of the consultation was also focussed on the gravity of this problem. The provision of land and decent housing remains the responsibility of the Pretoria government, we will however actively campaign to meet the needs of all our people.
- 2.5. Employment: research on employment opportunities and skill profiles has to be undertaken immediately.
- 2.6. Education: consensus was reached on the seriousness of the education crisis in South Africa and the implications it has on returnees. The meeting agreed that a special consultation on the extent of the education crisis and the way it impacts on the repatriation process be convened.

3. COMMUNICATION

- 3.1. The consultation appreciated the importance of communication links between all the parties involved. Structures should be established to meet this need, e.g work stations.
- 3.2 To raise awareness on life in exile organisations are urged to utilize the alternative and own media.
- 3.3 The possibility of an extended focus on the experience of returnees should be considered by the religious community in South Africa.

4. FINANCE AND LOGISTICS

Urgent consideration has to be given to:

- 4.1. Census on people to be repatriated.
- 4.2 Budget compilation.
- 4.3 Transport from area of exile to final destination.
- 4.4 Fundraising:

All options of raising funds should be explored.

Emphasis was placed on generating funds from our people inside South Africa, which will also be a mobilising strategy.

Our traditional allies will be approached

Note was taken of the offers made by big business who have not been supportive of our struggle.

The ANC was requested to provide direction to affect policy on responding to the offers made.

5. STRUCTURES AND ORGANISATION

The meeting noted that the Democratic Movement as a whole is interested in the issue of the repatriation of South African exiles, and it is therefore necessary that it be involved in the creation of whatever structural bodies that will be deemed necessary for the execution of this task. In the light of this, the meeting recommends:

- 5.1. that a National Returnees Consultative body be set up
- 5.2. that such a body include all interested parties