

STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL
CONGRESS, OLIVIER TAMBO, TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON THE QUESTION OF APARTHEID: NEW YORK, NOVEMBER
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Mr President,

Your Excellencies,

Comrades representatives of the Liberation movements,

Friends, ladies and gentlemen:

The International Year of Mobilisation for Sanctions against South Africa is coming to the end. When it closes it will mark also the end of two decades of struggle by this Organisation and the international community in general, to implement the resolution adopted by the General Assembly this time, 20 years ago, to impose sanctions against South Africa.

Lie would like to take advantage of this opportunity, from this rostrum to convey the profound appreciation of the African National Congress and the struggling people of South Africa to the world community and to the United Nations Organisation for this surely unprecedented campaign of solidarity.

Certainly, Mr President, the apartheid regime is today more isolated than it was 20 years ago. Thanks to this campaign of solidarity, South Africa's international relations are more limited than they otherwise would have been. To that extent, through its consistent pursuit of the purposes clearly spelt out in the General Assembly sanctions resolution of November 6th, 1962, the international community has succeeded to weaken the Pretoria regime.

But we have to admit the fact that during the last two decades apartheid South Africa has continued to increase her economic and military strength. Because it is convinced that it is moving from positions of strength, the Pretoria regime has continued to defy world opinion on a whole series of issues.

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This regime continues to sabotage all efforts directed at securing the independence of Namibia. It has arrogantly occupied large parts of the People's Republic of Angola and refuses to heed all demands on it to end its aggression against Angola. It responds to the international outcry evoked by its aggression against other independent states such as Mozambique, Lesotho, Seychelles,

Zimbabwe, Botswana and Zambia by further escalating its offensive against these countries.

Inside South Africa it displays an unswerving commitment to the defence and entrenchment of the apartheid system and the repression of the democratic forces. To the latter end, the apartheid regime feels itself under no constraints and hence can carry out such dastardly acts as the assassination of Ruth First.

As we enter the third decade of the campaign by this Organisation for the total isolation of this criminal regime, we must pose the question - whence this arrogance and obstinacy?

This arrogance and obstinacy is of course directly traceable to the fact that a handful of powerful countries has continued to give aid and comfort to the Pretoria regime. Among these partners in apartheid are of course the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, Israel and a few others.

It is not the first time that we or other representatives of the international community are making this observation, nor will it be the last. Let us repeat this observation because it is true. We repeat it also because its recognition as a fact should suggest to us and the rest of the world what ought to be done.

It would seem obvious, Mr President, that we must make a determined and united effort to persuade these Western countries to terminate the ignoble relations that they maintain with apartheid South Africa.

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In the first instance, we need to give maximum encouragement to the Anti-Apartheid Movements in these countries as well as other organisations and groups that have joined the struggle against the racist South African regime.

Secondly, this movement of solidarity within these countries needs to be encouraged and where possible assisted to expand even further, to reach ever greater numbers of the ordinary people who, we are certain, have no love for the apartheid system. Through their organisations and in the greatest possible numbers, the masses of the people must themselves begin to impose sanctions against South Africa.

Already many important initiatives have been taken in this regard including the consumer boycott, withdrawal of investments and accounts from companies and banks that have dealings with South Africa, boycotts by sportspeople and other cultural workers and so on. With a few notable exceptions, such as that of the Australian workers, we have as yet failed to galvanise the international trade union movement to take meaningful and sustained action in terms of refusing to handle South African imports and exports, ships and aircraft.

We need to intensify the offensive against the transnational corporations that help to bolster the apartheid regime. In this regard, we need to encourage and extend the initiative already taken for example by the Federal Republic of Nigeria making it clear that it is not possible to conduct business as usual both with South Africa and with the rest of the anti-apartheid world.

We are of course aware of the fact, Mr President, that the allies of the apartheid regime will seek to use the current international economic situation to blackmail many countries in an effort to stop them from adopting such measures. But commitment to principle and a willingness to sacrifice for a just cause should drive us to withstand such pressures.

The overwhelming majority of oil-producing countries have imposed an oil embargo against apartheid South Africa. And yet, thanks to the activities of the oil companies, this commodity continues to reach South Africa. Clearly other measures are necessary to ensure that the world does not continue literally to oil the wheels of apartheid.

In this regard, we would like to take advantage of this platform to encourage the Government and people of the Netherlands to translate into policy what seems to be the express view of the majority of the Dutch people, that the Netherlands should impose an oil embargo against apartheid South Africa.

In its relations with the major Western powers we consider it necessary also that the rest of the world should continue to draw the attention of these powers to the fact of the unacceptability of their behaviour. The point should be made clear to them that through their activities they have contributed significantly to the lowering of the prestige and authority of this Organisation, with adverse consequences across the entire spectrum of multi-lateral relations among the peoples.

Thanks to the support of these same Western countries, racist South Africa continues to enjoy membership of various international organisations, among them the International Monetary Fund. Accordingly, South Africa still enjoys the benefits that accrue from such membership, as the recent case of the IMF credit has shown, and we wish to reiterate here that such membership is illegitimate in as much as the Pretoria regime has not the slightest right to claim to represent the people of South Africa.

In essence what we are proposing is that new initiatives should be taken especially to ensure that the Western countries do in fact join the campaign to isolate apartheid South Africa. The governments of these countries must be made to feel the weight of public opinion in their own countries, internationally and indeed from within South Africa itself.

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When this session of the General Assembly began its work, distinguished representatives of many countries spoke on the cardinal question of the reduction of nuclear stockpiles, disarmament, the relaxation of international tensions and world peace. Reflecting the concern of millions of people to save humanity from a nuclear holocaust, a powerful peace movement has spread across the globe.

The peoples want a just and lasting peace.

In no less a measure, our people and the peoples of Southern Africa want a just and lasting peace. As Africans we cannot talk of the threat of nuclear war and not talk of Pretoria's nuclear capability.

We cannot talk of aggression and international tension without referring to the actuality of Pretoria's role as the aggressor, the source of tension in our region.

The fact of the continued existence of the apartheid regime has an important bearing on such questions as the demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean and the South Atlantic. Self-serving arguments that the apartheid regime, the enemy of freedom everywhere, is a guarantor of the freedom of the seas, including the so-called Cape sea route, point, on the contrary, to problems that might arise in future exactly because this international pariah lies athwart such an important international highway.

Inevitably, the struggle for world peace must encompass all these questions and can only proceed from the position that the fundamental and indeed exclusive conditions for the realisation of the peace objective in Southern Africa is the destruction of the apartheid regime.

Once more, in the pursuit of this peace objective we shall have to continue to contend with efforts by western circles not only to strengthen apartheid South Africa militarily but also to integrate here within NATO's global strategy, / After all it is an open secret that South Africa continues to receive Western war material despite the mandatory arms embargo imposed by the Security Council.

Even as we speak here, the U.S. Administration is resisting all

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attempts by many U.S. citizens, including elected representatives, to stop the supply of enriched uranium to South Africa. It is safe and rather disturbing that even today's France seems committed also to supply Pretoria with enriched uranium.

Recent and current efforts by the Botha regime and its allies to present this regime as an agent of progressive reform will of course end in dismal failure because factually all reform on which Pretoria has embarked is designed not to abolish apartheid but to entrench it and to intensify repression.

Much of what is happening in South Africa is known to this General Assembly. Your Excellencies know for instance of recent schemes of the Pretoria regime to deprive almost a million South Africans of their citizenship. You know too of the so-called Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill currently being discussed by the racist regime, which our people inside the country have correctly dubbed "the genocide bill." All of this and more besides represents reform of the apartheid system to make it more efficient, more oppressive and exploitative.

Similarly, this General Assembly knows of efforts to streamline and extend police and military legislation, to tighten control of the press even further as well as the continued detention, torture and banning of many patriots.

Today we have reached the extra-ordinary situation where the police have the power even to prohibit public funerals, alternatively to tell the bereaved what hymns to sing at the graveside, what sermons to read,

what to include in a funeral oration and what to exclude.

We have this year, Mr President, been observing together with our friends throughout the world, the 70th anniversary of the African National Congress. The mere fact that over all these decades and especially the last 30 years, when the supporters of Hitler have been in power in our country, successive white minority regimes have failed to destroy the ANC, indicates the steadfastness of our people in their pursuit of liberty.

These heroic masses continue to display this steadfastness in many battles

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that are continuously breaking out throughout South Africa, involving all sections of our people. Nothing the enemy does will stop this struggle or deflect it from its goal of seizure of power by the people and the construction of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa as envisaged in the Freedom Charter.

Thus shall we not only liberate ourselves but also make our contribution to the world-wide struggle for independence, democracy, social progress and peace. In the coming period we shall continue to rely even more on the support of this Organisation, its member states and the millions of people throughout the world who are the international bedrock which underpins our continuing offensive and helps to guarantee the inevitability of our victory. To all these allies in a common struggle, we extend our sincere thanks for the material and political support they have continued to render the ANC and the struggling people of South Africa.

We cannot close, Mr President, without addressing a special word of support and solidarity with SUAPO and the people of Namibia, the PLG and the Palestinian people, the Polisario Front and the Saharawi people and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front - FOR and the people of El Salvador and other peoples struggling for their national liberation.

Our common experience with these sister peoples under extremely reactionary regimes, all of them supported especially by the United States, and our common commitment to the cause of liberation must inevitably mean that we suffer together. But equally a victory on one front reinforces the struggle on all other fronts. Nothing can break the ties of solidarity that unite us.

During this coming period, perhaps more than ever in the past, we shall, Mr President, depend on your support and encouragement as well as the support and encouragement of His Excellency, the Secretary General, His Excellency, the Chairman of the Special Committee on Apartheid and other officials of this Organisation.

Together we have the ability to defeat those who would subvert the United Nations, its Charter and its decisions. The apartheid regime stands out among such subversive forces, and we have a joint responsibility to rid mankind of this criminal regime.

Thank you, Mr President.