

our aid in the struggle to end a crime against humanity.

So too do the people of Namibia, under the leadership of SWAPO, who are themselves carrying out an intense political, military and diplomatic struggle for their liberation.

As in South Africa, Pretoria's campaign of terror only serves to strengthen the conviction of the Namibian masses that the sooner they get rid of the murderous colonial regime which occupies their country illegally, the better.

Pretoria is today engaged in renewed negotiations with the governments of "the People's Republics of Angola and Mozambique. The ANC welcomes and supports these initiatives. They too have come about because of the failure of the apartheid regime to realise its objectives through a combined policy of aggression, destabilisation, sponsorship of bandit groups and sanctions. They are Africa's reward for maintaining its unity in the face of racist terror, for persisting in its principled opposition to apartheid, for its readiness to make all the necessary sacrifices in defence of the independence and sovereignty of its peoples.

We take this opportunity to pay due homage to the African and world forces which have stood by the governments of Angola and Mozambique over the years. In this regard, we wish to make special reference to the Frontline States themselves and others, such as the Republic of Cuba, which have extended invaluable political, military, financial and diplomatic assistance to the governments and peoples of Angola and Mozambique, who have borne the brunt of Pretoria's aggression and, true to their obligations, refused to succumb to terror.

And yet the beast in Pretoria continues to live on. South Africa and Namibia are not yet free. Peace has not dawned over Southern Africa. The developmental needs of our region grow apace. We need your support today to address all these questions in action.

Accordingly, we urge you to continue to struggle for comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against apartheid South Africa. We request you to extend such support to SWAPO and the ANC as you may find within your means. We commend you for the task you have given yourselves to mobilise for economic assistance for the SADCC ' countries. We ask that you press the point that in addition, the Frontline States need to have their defensive capacity strengthened so that they can repulse Pretoria's aggressive war machinery.

We greet all participants present here and wish the Conference itself, the War on Want Week 1988 and your Campaign on Southern Africa, the greatest success. We are pleased and honoured to declare open the War on Want Conference on Peace and Development in the Frontline States.

Progressive Federal Party, the National Democratic Movement nor the thousands of Afrikaner workers who have begun to co-operate with the democratic trade union movement and other Afrikaners and whites in general â\200\224 church people, students, intellectuals, sports people and conscientious objectors â\200\224 who say apartheid must be ended. Indeed, it is not even some Bantustan leaders who have refused to serve in Bothaâ\200\231s National Council and called for negotiations with the genuine leaders of our people.

The obstacle to negotiations is the Botha regime which refuses to heed the united voice of the overwhelming majority of the people of our country, both black and white. This regime is perfectly aware of what it has to do to create a climate conducive to negotiations, including the release of political prisoners and detainees, ending the state of emergency, unbanning the ANC and other organisations, repealing oppressive and repressive legislation, and so on.

Its failure to implement these measures is a token of its refusal to prepare for genuine negotiations. It reï\202ects its continuing conviction that it disposes of sufficient brute strength to maintain itself in power for ever through its regionâ\200\224wide campaign of state terrorism. It believes that it will succeed where Hitler failed.

The entire peoples of Southern Africa are committed to the struggle to end apartheid. To guarantee permanent peace and uninterrupted development in the Frontline States means to remove the source of war and destruction in our region â\200\224 the apartheid regime and the racist and expansionist system it upholds. In this year of the 25th Anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity, the point has once more been reaffirmed by our entire continent that it is the obligation of all its peoples to fight for and achieve the total liberation of Africa. Specifically, this means the emancipation of the peoples of Namibia and South Africa. This is a goal to which SWAPO, the ANC and the Frontline States are unswervingly committed.

Through its brutal repression within South Africa and Namibia and its campaign of aggression and destabilisation directed at the Frontline and independent states, the racists had hoped that they would impose a Pax Pretoriana on our region. They had hoped that the Namibian and South African masses and their organisations would be reduced to a condition of dormant subservience. They had hoped that the independent states would accept domination by an apartheid South Africa which defines itself as a regional power whose interests must take precedence over everybody elseâ\200\231s.

Today it is clear that all these schemes have failed. Only in the last few days, within South Africa and in spite of a virulent state of emergency, we have gone through a massive political struggle in which millions of our people participated. Hopefully, this historic reafï\201nnation of the will of our people to liberate themselves, has laid to rest the bucketful of jeremiads, some of them falsely ascribed to our movement, which sought to convince everybody that our struggle has been defeated, the peopleâ\200\231s organisations smashed and the spirit of the people broken.

The mass political struggle will continue in many forms, regardless of what the racist regime does. And so too will the armed struggle â\200\224 and that without any apology â\200\224 because we assert our right to resist and overthrow tyranny in much the same way as the peoples of Europe asserted their right to, and actually took up, arms to resist and overthrow the tyranny of Nazism and fascism. As the people of Europe hailed the British government of the day for coming to their aid rather than denounce them as terrorists and murderers, so do we too salute those governments which have come to

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Statement of the President of the African National Congress

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Oliver Tambo

at the War on Want Conference

â\200\230Peace and Development in the Frontline Statesâ\200\231

London: 9 June 1988

Chairperson,  
Distinguished delegates and participants  
Ladies and gentlemen:

First of all I would like to thank the General Secretary of War on Want and the rest of his colleagues for inviting us to open this important conference which seeks to address the inseparably-linked issues of peace and development in the Frontline States of Southern Africa.

These are matters in which the African National Congress and the struggling people of our country are deeply interested. They constitute a critical front in the overall struggle against the evil system of apartheid. Every victory we score in these areas is a blow against racism. Every step forward in the struggle to secure peace in our region and to improve the lives of the peoples of the independent states of Southern Africa, to reduce their dependence on apartheid South Africa, brings nearer the liberation of the peoples of Namibia and South Africa.

We would like to take this opportunity to pay homage to the farâ\200\224sighted leaders of our region who, eight years ago, decided to establish the Southern African Development co-ordination Conference, the SADCC. This has not only become an important instrument in the struggle against underdevelopment, but also a source of pride which reinforces the confidence of the peoples of our region in their ability to shape their destiny together, in solidarity with one another and as equals, a successful expression of the exercise of the right to selfâ\200\224determination.

We are greatly encouraged that War on Want, representing the ordinary British people, decided to focus on Southern Africa during this year. This confirms the view of the millions of beleaguered people of our region that there, are in this country, staunch

supporters of our cause, firm allies against racism, apartheid and war on whom we can depend regardless of what their government and the City of London might choose to do, or not do, about these questions. We thank you most sincerely for your continuing concern and involvement in the struggle to end the apartheid crime against humanity and will make certain that our own people are aware of your invaluable solidarity. For it is precisely such knowledge which helps to strengthen our own resolve to persist in our efforts to free ourselves and our region from the terrors of oppression, repression and war.

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Those of us who come from Southern Africa know the true meaning of mass abject poverty. We have all seen with our own eyes, and perhaps experienced personally, what it means to go without food and to wake up from sleep that has been tormented by nightmares deriving both from hunger and the knowledge that the new day was as much without hope as the last. We have seen the frightened and pleading eyes of both the young and old, reduced to an animal condition by want and deprivation. We are familiar with the tragic spectacle of children, mothers and fathers rummaging through refuse heaps in search of morsels of food that had been thrown away because they were no longer wanted.

Stomachs distended to the point of bursting; eyes protruding sightless from deep sockets; legs so thin you wonder how they manage to support a body that is itself covered by scabs and festering sores: all this the result of man-made conditions that condemn millions to a life of hunger, homelessness, disease, ignorance and absence of protection from cold, heat, rain and the parching winds of the winter's end.

When we speak thus, we talk of the South African and Namibian child who is a victim of malnutrition and kwashiorkor because the robber barons of the glittering city of Johannesburg and the well-fed white politicians that make policy of the beautiful city of the ironically-named Cape of Good Hope have decreed that this should be so. We

talk of the Angolan and Mozambican child who cannot grow up healthy in mind and body and mature into adulthood, because the robber barons of the obscenely opulent city of Johannesburg and the immaculate generals of the tangled city of Pretoria have decreed that this should be so.

Within South Africa, the apartheid economic system is predicated on the impoverishment of the black majority and enrichment of the white minority. Sitting at the top of the pile are huge corporations owned by a handful of immensely wealthy white businessmen whose purpose in life is further to enrich themselves without any regard whatsoever to the welfare of the masses of our people. Continuously in search of profits, they seek the domination not only of South Africa but of the rest of Southern Africa as well.

The notion advanced by the Pretoria regime in the past, of a so-called constellation of Southern African states had, among other things, the objective of ensuring this economic domination of our region as a whole. Big capital and the apartheid state had the aim, which they have not abandoned, to replicate throughout Southern Africa the mercilessly exploitative economic relations they have imposed on our country and people.

The hostility of the apartheid regime to the SADCC derives from this and reflects Pretoria's determination to ensure that the independent states of our region do not succeed to reduce their dependence on racist South Africa. In keeping with this, the Botha regime would like to ensure that the rest of our region continues to rely on the South African railways and harbours for the movement of its imports and exports. We must therefore expect that this regime will continue to view as inimical to its interests the development or re-opening of the various rail routes that link the countries of our region to the sea, including the Tanzanian-Zambia Railway Line, the Beira Corridor and the Benguela Railroad.

Needless to say, the racists also expect that the more economically dependent free Africa is on South Africa, the easier it would be for these countries to submit to Pretoria's political and military domination, precisely to ensure the continuation of the apartheid system within South Africa. Consequently, it should be clear that the questions of the economic independence and progress of the liberated countries of our region cannot be separated from the struggle for the emancipation of the people of Namibia and South Africa.

In this regard, we need to emphasise the point also that the development and defence of our region are inextricably bound together. South African aggression against the independent states of our region is an established reality. Some of the targets of this aggression are precisely those elements in the social and economic infrastructure which the rest of the world is assisting the SADCC countries to build.

When it was banned, the ANC was, like the UDF and other organisations, committed to the path of non-violent struggle. We only engaged in armed struggle almost two years after the imposition of that ban, having tried very hard, even after the ban, to find ways and means of continuing a non-violent struggle. We are still banned. Mere membership of the ANC is a treasonable offence. The press is prohibited from publishing anything that tells the real truth about the ANC, its aims, objectives and activities except to the extent that any such publication has the effect of denigrating and besmirching our organisation.

How then is the ANC expected to exercise this non-violent option! When the UDF and other organisations are prohibited from engaging in any non-violent political activity whatsoever, what alternative forms of struggle remain open to them?

In the end, all we are being told is that we must submit and accept to be co-opted into Botha's apartheid constitutional schemes. Inside the country, we are prohibited from engaging in any political activity. Next we are told that armed struggle is self-defeating and we should give it up. We are also told that sanctions are counter-productive and we should abandon them as a weapon of struggle. In simple terms, we are being advised to give up the struggle, to surrender. We might, out of politeness, say thank you for the advice. But it is not the type of counselling that any one can seriously expect us to accept.

We also need to make the point here that it seems to us that special rules are being written for us with regard to the issue of armed struggle. Whereas it is viewed as perfectly legitimate for the UNITA bandits, the Nicaraguan Contras and the so-called Afghan Mujahedeen to use violent means in pursuit of their political objectives; whereas it is viewed as an honourable thing to train, finance and arm these groups even with surface-to-air missiles; for us to carry out the most controlled campaign of armed resistance is denounced sternly as terrorism and murder. A so-called principle is even elaborated specially to apply to us, namely that it is impermissible to use military means to achieve political objectives, and therefore that, in waging armed struggle to achieve our liberation, we are acting in breach of this principle.

Of course it is argued, and will continue to be argued, that negotiations are the most preferable way to end apartheid. The ANC agrees. It agrees and therefore would welcome any genuine negotiations aimed at the transformation of South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial country, in which the political and human rights of all South Africans would be assured and in which all South Africans, without discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ethnicity, creed or sex, and without being defined according to any of these categories, would have the right to elect a government of their choice.

The only obstacle to such negotiations is the Botha regime. It is neither the ANC, the UDF and its affiliates nor the South African Communist Party. It is not SACTU, COSATU or NACTU. It is neither the South African Council of Churches, the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference, the Call of Islam, other Muslims and people of the Jewish and Hindu faiths who are engaged in the struggle against apartheid. It is not Nelson Mandela and the other political leaders and activists who are imprisoned and detained by the Pretoria regime.

The obstacle to negotiations is neither the National African Federated Chambers of Commerce, individual white business people who have come out against apartheid, the

It is also patently obvious that increasing pressure against the apartheid regime, including the pressure brought about by the actions of the international community, has resulted in the break-up of the white power structure and not its consolidation within any laager. That laager was strongest precisely during the period when the threat of sanctions was minimal and the struggle within the country at a relatively low level. The number of white South Africans who are seeking a way out of the crisis brought about by the apartheid system has never been greater than it is today, thanks to the intensity of the internal and international struggle against the Pretoria regime.

Once more, it is being argued that economic development within South Africa and population growth will, in themselves, lead to the destruction of the apartheid system. Yet the point has been demonstrated over and over again that it was during the period of the strongest growth of the South African economy, during the Sixties and the Seventies, that the apartheid regime and the racist system were at their strongest and most vicious.

To take care of the rapid growth of the African population even at that time, the apartheid regime carried out a vast programme of forced removals of the African people into the Bantustans and resettlement camps. The fact of the matter is that the process of forced removals continues to this day, as does the policy of internal control. To argue otherwise is to seek to camouflage the brutal reality of the continued enforcement of the apartheid system.

At this point, we would also like to advise, in all humility, that it does not contribute to the ending of the South African tragedy to have senior British politicians take on board and reiterate the false images of South African reality which the Pretoria regime propagates in its attempt to justify the existence of the apartheid system. One of these is the notion that the substance of the politics of our country is determined by the jostling of various tribes for a place in the sun.

What defines the substance of the turmoil in our country is the confrontation between the forces of democracy on the one hand and those of racism on the other. The fact that the regime hires a few blacks to fight and even die in defence of the apartheid system does not and cannot take away from the legitimacy of the struggle to end apartheid and to create a common South African nationhood.

With your permission, we would like to say something about the question of armed struggle. We have been urged to return to the path of non-violence and are told that armed struggle is both wrong and self-defeating.

We would like to reiterate that the option of armed struggle was imposed on us. It came not because we had any love for violence, but because the path of non-violence was closed by the Pretoria regime. As we explained at the time, now more than two decades ago, the choice we were presented with was to fight or submit. This much has recently been conceded by a leading spokesman of the Botha regime - Cabinet Minister Stoffel van der Merwe. Over the years, and up to this day, the apartheid regime has continued to present our people with that choice. The banning of the UDF and other organisations, and the restrictions placed on the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), on February 24 of this year, are no different in their substance and intention from the ban imposed on the ANC in March 1960.

It would therefore seem only natural that what has been constructed at such enormous cost has to be defended against those who do not want to see the peoples of our region develop, namely the Pretoria regime.

This region is truly at war. Virtually no country has escaped the deadly forays of Pretoria's army of aggression. In Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana, Mozambique, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and even further afield in the Seychelles, as well as Namibia and South Africa itself, hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost, thanks to the wilful campaign of state terrorism launched by the racists, designed to transform the independent countries of our region into client states.

Many of us present here are undoubtedly aware of the extent of destruction sustained by the independent countries of our region as a result of Pretoria's continuing campaign of aggression and destabilisation. The documents distributed to the participants contain many facts and figures of those who have died, been displaced and reduced to helpless and starving beggars as a result of this campaign.

Beyond the statistics lies a tragic story of human suffering of massive proportions. Merely to meet the current needs of the millions who have borne the brunt of Pretoria's criminal policies requires enormous resources. To help develop our region so that it actually reduces its dependence on racist South Africa obviously necessitates the transfer of resources on a scale which recognises the special needs of the peoples of Southern Africa which derive from the political situation in our region.

We also need to reiterate the point here that the peoples of Southern Africa have firmly rejected the attempt of some major Western powers to set against each other the demand for sanctions against racist South Africa and the need to provide development assistance to the independent states. This is clearly an attempt to avoid the imposition of sanctions which the peoples of our region recognise as an important weapon in the struggle to end the apartheid system and therefore eliminate the source of violence, war and instability in Southern Africa.

Black Africa and black South Africa are aware of the impact of sanctions against apartheid South Africa on them. On this we do not need to be lectured. We were as aware of the impact of sanctions on us when we called for them in 1959 as Zambia and Mozambique were aware of the impact on themselves of the sanctions they imposed on rebel Rhodesia. We appeal that the newly-found and rather strangely expressed sympathy for our peoples should not be used to defeat precisely the objective we seek to achieve, and to give justification for the continuation of policies that are directed against our emancipation. It would be useful that we were credited with at least a modicum of intelligence, enough to enable us to determine where our true interests lie.

Everything the apartheid regime has done points to its extreme sensitivity to the threat of effective sanctions. Arguments to the contrary cannot be sustained by any evidence. The notion that economic sanctions would force white South Africans into a laager is also not supported by experience.

It is perfectly clear to us that effective sanctions would reduce the capacity of the Pretoria regime to maintain the apartheid system, continue the colonisation of Namibia and carry out wars of aggression against independent Africa. In his budget speech about three months ago, Pretoria's Finance Minister openly admitted this, stating that the reality of sanctions has obliged the regime to scrutinise the affordability of its programmes.