

Destabi/ization

A brief to the Lesotho Parliament  
by the Prime Minister, the Right  
Honourable Dr Leabua Jonathan,  
011 South AfricaVs Activities  
' against Lesotho.

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The Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Dr. Leabua Jonathan



A BRIEF TO PARLIAMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RIGHT  
HONOURABLE DR. LEABUA JONATHAN, ON SOUTH AFRICA'S  
ACTIVITIES AGAINST LESOTHO SINCE THE LAST SITTING OF  
PARLIAMENT - APRIL 1983

Mr. Speaker Sir,  
Honourable Members,

I rise to take this early opportunity to bring this House up-to-date with security developments that have taken place in the country since our last sitting.

As Honourable Members will recall, it is now sometime since relations with our neighbours have been under severe strain. It will be remembered that these took a particularly sharp turn for the worse in 1976, when in affirmation of our principles against apartheid and racism and in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution NO. 31/6A of 1976, which among other things called upon all Governments to deny any form of recognition to the so-called independent Transkei, we refused to recognise the bogus independence of the Bantustan, a stand which invited the wrath of South Africa, which has always wanted us to bow to apartheid. Honourable Members will also recall that as the scenario unfolded, we were later to be confronted with sabotage incidents in which armed bandits trained and equipped in South Africa were systematically infiltrated into Lesotho.

Mr. Speaker Sir,

Since our last sitting, our relations with South Africa have continued to deteriorate. For reasons that are still unclear to us, we have progressively been subjected to a war of words comprising of threats and intimidation from various authorities in South Africa, including from her Bantustan lackeys.

The acrimony of our neighbours took hysterical forms when they started blaming us for allegedly harbouring saboteurs of the African National Congress, whom, they said, were responsible for acts of sabotage in South Africa. We did everything possible to assure South Africa that our only commitment was to genuine political refugees who had fled from their countries, and that our refugee policy did not tolerate any use of our territory as a springboard for attacks against any state.

Our assurances were never even recognized, and South Africa started making outright demands for the handing over of certain refugees of the ANC in particular Mr. Martin Hani, whom they proposed for an exchange with the leader of the so-called Lesotho Liberation Army, thereby admitting their association with the group, which was already known to be sponsored by the South African Government through its Secret Police and Army. This sponsorship is still being confirmed even today by captured members who are in our custody.

It is to be noted here that we had at this stage already made numerous protests to the Government of South Africa concerning their violation of our two countries' commonly accepted policy not to allow our territories to be used as launching pads for attacks against each other. The answer we received after each protest has always been standard. The matter is being investigated.

After we had refused to hand over Hani as we do not exchange human beings, and because we had never been specifically shown any wrong he had done whilst in Lesotho, South Africa changed tunes, and started speaking of the presence in Lesotho of ANC military bases. Despite numerous challenges which we made for them to come and point out these bases in order to

enable us to take necessary action, they never responded, except to intensify their threats.

'i'rail of destruction left by the South Al'ri'an Defence Force on 9th December 1982: Some of thv Houses burned by Artillery.

As the threats against us reached a crescendo, and hardly a month after we had predicted a South African invasion of Lesotho, marauding and trigger-happy soldiers of the South African Defence Force using helicopters struck Maseru in the early hours of 9th December, murdering in cold-blood twelve citizens of this country and thirty South African refugees. This callous massacre of defenceless and innocent people including women and children, was subsequently glorified and hailed by the South African regime as an act of valour, and the South African Army hastily staged-managed a "display" of arms collected from spurious sources, claiming that they had

been captured from the alleged ANC bases during the raid on our capital. In a further ostentation of terroristic arrogance, the South Africans phoned our forces immediately after this attack saying that some of their men were missing, and that if we were holding them we should release them without delay, failing which they would send their airforce jets to come and release them forcefully. Of course we were not holding the missing men, who had apparently been cut off from the others. But this only shows that if we had been holding them we would have been bombarded by the South African Airforce.

Mr. Speaker Sir,  
Honourable Members,

As is now well-known, after this wanton Violation of our territorial integrity and sovereignty by foreign forces. the Government of Lesotho had no choice, but to request His Majesty to take the matter to the United Nations Security Council, which took appropriate action by its resolution 527 of 1982. The Council unreservedly condemned South Africa, and called upon it to declare publicly that it was never again going to attack Lesotho, either directly or by proxies.

The Council also demanded that South Africa should pay reparations for damage to life and property, whilst it further called on the international community to extend all necessary economic assistance to Lesotho in order to strengthen its capacity to receive and maintain South African refugees.

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Coffins of 30 South African refugees of the ANC massacred by South African soldiers during their raid on Maseru.

Deep gratitude must be extended to His Majesty for pioneering our case before the Security Council. We also have to thank the Permanent Members of the Security Council, none of whom vetoed the resolution, and the ordinary members of the Council who were also unanimous in adopting it. That the resolution was passed with unanimity by the Eastern, Western and Non-Aligned countries in the Council, is a clear measure of the international communitys unity against South Africals naked militarism in our sub-continent, and should serve as a great inspiration for us all.

Honourable Members will not be surprised to know that South Africa, in its typical defiance of the United Nations in particular and the Interna-

tional Community in general, has neither made a public undertaking never to attack us again, nor has it paid any reparations for damage to life and property. Instead, it has threatened to repeat its attack, and has publicly refused to pay damages. We are aware that even after the resolution, some Western countries have individually made a follow-up meaning: to ensure that South Africa does in fact desist from flexing its muscles on a small and defenceless country like ours, but that South Africa has defied these approaches. In much the same way as it has defied the Security Council resolution itself. We are yet to see what South Africa's attitude will be to the efforts of the United Nations Secretary General, whom I have asked to act as intermediary between us, as our own efforts to reach understanding with it have failed. I made this request through Mr. Farah during his mission here, and I repeated it personally to the Secretary General during my meeting with him in New Delhi.

This House will nonetheless be pleased to know that as has already been reported in our mass media and elsewhere, in terms of the resolution 527 referred to, the United Nations Secretary General has already sent a mission here, led by Mr. Abdulrahim Farah, to assess the damage done, and to make recommendations on the assistance which we require. The Mission's report is already out, and has recommended urgent assistance totalling US \$46 million for security, maize-storage, employment, electricity, the new international airport, emergency medical services and the establishment of a fire brigade. All friendly countries and organizations have shown sympathy and support for the Farah report, and some have already made their pledges. Our traditional friends, the British for example, have already indicated their willingness to assist.

The Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr. Shridath Ramphal, has appealed to Commonwealth countries to help us. whilst the OAU has also urged member countries to come to our assistance. The Non-Aligned Movement, in its final political declaration at the recent Summit in New Delhi, India, for its part appealed to the International Community and to members of the Movement in particular, to extend the necessary assistance to us. In similar manner, the Scandinavian and many other countries have already shown readiness to help.

For our part, we have not passively awaited international assistance, and as Honourable Members may already be aware, I have established a fund to canalize national effort towards relief action. The fund will now also be used to cover the effects of all other similar attacks. Contributions received in the fund so far total over M50,000. With the good support which is building up from all sectors of our population and from people of goodwill generally, I am confident that the figure is yet to rise even higher. Following the Maseru massacre, Mr. Speaker, Sir, it did not take long before it became apparent that our neighbours were not fully satisfied with their godly achievement. In the early hours of 27th January this year, the opening day for the meeting of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), which sat in Maseru, and which had also attracted the disfavour of South Africa as a result of statements of condemnation which had already been made by Foreign Ministers of member countries against the December raid, our neighbours insulted the international community which had gathered for the occasion by attempting to blow up a donor-funded abattoir project in Maseru on the banks of the IVIohokare River which forms part of our border with South Africa. This was soon to be followed by an attempt to blow up a water reservoir serving the capital.

. A striking consistency was that in all these incidents, the South African authorities have been very quick to attribute responsibility to the so-called Lesotho liberation Army, which we now know to be an anonymous force for a sec-



tion of the South African Army, operating in the same way as the so-called MNR in Mocambique and UNITA in Angola.

More recently, however, we have seen an intensification of attacks on civilian targets, particularly in the district of Berea. This has been followed by a number of apparently synchronized acts of aggression in various places, including at the Roman Catholic Mission in Pitseng, which was bombarded with grenades, bazooka and mortar fire, resulting in considerable damage to property and in the death of one member of our Paramilitary Force who had been there for the protection of the Mission, following intelligence reports that it was one of the missions that were going to be attacked.

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The inside of a boys dormitory which was one of the houses attacked during a raid on the Pitseng Roman Catholic Mission (above photo), and remains of ammunition found on the scene (next photo).

This attack on the mission is most surprising because it does not have any political justification. Similar attacks are usually justified as pre-emptive strikes against ANC bases. But as in the case of Maseru, there are no ANC bases in the Pitseng Mission. Perhaps we should not be puzzled by this attack on a Church institution, for it was not the first. We necessarily link it. with the attempt to burn down the Catholic Cathedral in Maseru with petrol bombs some years ago, which incident resulted in some people being put, before the courts of law. But why, we ask, is it always the Catholic Church, which is the victim of terrorist violence? Could it perhaps be

because the Catholic Church is being associated with the present Government, or could it be because of the Church's outspoken and principled rejection of apartheid, and its known record in resisting Bantu Education? Whatever the reasons may be, I want to state in no unclear terms that we shall not at any time ever be intimidated from protecting the Church, and our resolve to do so will in fact be doubled.

Another development was the arrest in Maseru of a number of bandits who were trying to blow up electricity pylons, and their arrest led to that of a group of South African Policemen. It had already become known, through our intelligence services, that South African Policemen and soldiers posing as tourists were swarming into our hotels on various sabotage assignments, in Lesotho. This group was thus detained for questioning, although unfortunately they were subsequently released, under dubious circumstances which heighten our already serious concern that South Africa has infiltrated even our Government Ministries and departments, whose officials are being used as agents in the offensive against our country. The matter is still, however, under a formal inquiry.

Subsequent cleaning-up operations in Maseru led to the injury of a member of the Police Force, who was shot by fleeing saboteurs, and is presently in hospital. The shooting of this officer itself raises concern as it is not clear what follow-up action was taken, because he was not alone but was accompanied by others. I have also called for a satisfactory explanation on this matter.

Mr. Speaker,

Perhaps the most serious of these latest incidents was the Battle of Ongeluk's Nek, in the South-Eastern border. When on 26th March over fifty armed invaders from South Africa attacked a base of our Para-Military Force.

The leader of the invaders was identified as one Major Mackenzie, a white man of the South African Defence Force, who is well-known by our forces in the area. Also seen in combat were a number of other whites.

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Part of Arms and Ammunition captured by Lesotho forces at Ongeluk's Nek along the border with the Transkei area of South Africa.

The attack lasted from about ten o'clock in the morning to about half past four in the afternoon, when the invaders were finally repulsed and substantial stocks of arms and ammunition captured. In the trail of the battle, a dead body of one of the invaders was found on the Lesotho side of the border, and about twenty others were seen either dead or wounded, on the South African side of the border. It was later learned that bodies of three white men were also discovered on the South African side in the vicinity of the battle area.

In another development, our forces at Hendrick's Drift in the Northern border, intercepted a group of armed men crossing into Lesotho from South Africa. Two of the men were killed, and a quantity of arms and ammunition captured. The rest of the group escaped back into South Africa.

Only a few days ago, a Pararmilitary Force base at ( )xbow, also in the North, was attacked in the early hours of the morning; with the resultant death of one member of the force. This past weekend, a passenger bus of the Lesotho National Bus Service carrying passengers was attacked with automatic rifles by a group of people who ambushed it on its way from Ficksburg to Mapoteng. The bus was full of passengers including women and children. Twelve of the passengers were admitted to hospital, At Tale in the Leribe District on Saturday night. a Local Court building was attacked and destroyed by armed men, and fortunately there were no casualties. Both incidents are under investigation.

Mr. Speaker Sir,

The offensive against our country does not appear to be limited to armed attacks. but is being extended to the economic sphere, as exemplified by the current campaign to discourage tourists from coming to Lesotho, thus to cripple our tourist industry.

On the other hand we have also witnessed the intensified harassment of our people going into South Africa, at border posts such as Ficksburg. This is in stark contrast to the courtesy with which South Africans coming into Lesotho are treated at our border posts. Similarly, the intensified restriction of entry into South Africa of people from Lesotho, including many civil servants is another disturbing feature. Whilst this is a manifestation of harassment, it could also be a shrewd way by South Africa to disguise its agents in Lesotho by giving the impression that they are not wanted in South Africa. whereas they are in fact on its payroll. We know it for a fact that South Africa has built a network of agents in Lesotho, and realizing that direct military intervention such as that of 9th December will always evoke international outcries, they are now using: their economic power to offer bribes and other lucrative rewards in return for spying activities.

Targets of recruitment are traders, civil servants, politicians, chiefst members of the armed forces and generally all people who can in one way or another give important Government, political and security information. These people are also assigned to identify homes of ANC refugees and of civil servants who are strongly committed to the present Government or are known to be strongly anti-apartheid. Similarly, they are to identify homes of Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament. Basotho National Party Committee members, etc., for elimination by the South African death squad, which has been described by a former South African spy, Gordon Wintex in his book INSIDE BOSS. Hence the mysterious deaths in Lesotho, and the reports of white people having been seen amongst the group which attacked the Pitseu Mission. We have concrete proof of these activities, and as I speak we have in our hands captured killers who have confessed that thev

have been trained in South Africa and had been given arms to come to execute murders in Lesotho"

Mr. Speaker Sir,

Honourable Members,

When I was in New Delhi, India, for the Non-Aligned Summit recently, I took the opportunity to brief Non-Aligned Countries and the Liberation Movements on the situation obtaining between Lesotho and South Africa. I found a great deal of understanding and sympathy among the leaders of these countries and Movements, who all categorically condemn South Africa's aggression on our country. Their condemnation was also reflected in the final political communique issued at the end of the Summit. The same understanding and sympathy has already been shown by the Commonwealth countries as well as by the Organization for African Unity, and, needless to say, by the United Nations. We have also received support from the people of South Africa, not only through the African National Congress but also from people like Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and the Inkatha Movement, who have been with us and even sent representatives to the funeral of the late Jobo Rampeta. Chief Buthelezi has also sent messages of sympathy after all the attacks we have had, including those at Ongeluk's Nek and Hendricks Drift. This support and solidarity should be a source of encouragement to the people of Lesotho who are victims of South Africa's onslaughts.

Mr. Speaker Sir,

We join hands with His Majesty in urging the nation to realize that what we are now faced with is a war with South Africa, and we need to bury our differences in order to face the onslaught against our country effectively. We must be strengthened by the fact that we have done nothing wrong, except to refuse to bow to apartheid blackmail, a refusal which is now a tradition for us. We are not the first to resist apartheid. Our forefathers also resisted apartheid, and in consequence of their resistance refused to join the 1910 Union of South Africa. Our unity must ensure our victory against South Africa's destabilization, and, like Churchill said in the British House of Commons on 13th May 1940, we must fight for,

"Victory at all costs, Victory in spite of all terror, Victory however long and hard the road may be; for without Victory there is no survival?"

With all the world except South Africa itself on our side, our victory is doubly assured.

The present phase in our national history undoubtedly calls for great sacrifices, as will be seen from this year's budget which will be presented to the House in due course. The destabilization offensive with which we are faced necessitates the diversion to security of substantial funds which should otherwise be allocated for development. This is unavoidable if we have to guarantee the barest measures of security for our people and their property. The Farah report following the Maseru massacre recognizes the need for our security to be strengthened, and it is imperative that we should ourselves also make efforts towards this end, instead of merely hoping for international assistance.

Mr. Speaker Sir,

Honourable Members.

In 1981 when South African attacks on Lesotho started to concretize into their present form, the OAU urged member countries to establish diplomatic presence in Lesotho, calculating this to be a deterrent against South African activities.

For the same reason, all Non-Aligned countries are willing to establish diplomatic relations with us. though they may not all do so on a residential basis. Relations with countries like the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, which are members of the United Nations Security Council, are also in the pipeline.

The reason for our willingness to establish relations with these countries is that South Africa, upon realizing that it cannot control us, is now using various ways and means to throttle us and make life for us impossible. In this a situation we have the support of all the countries of the world.

Right now the situation is living hell whereby the movement of our goods through South Africa into Lesotho will be virtually impossible. This relates to goods in general, and it appears. to military equipment in particular. South Africa has subjected us to a requirement stating that we must seek their approval for the transportation of defence equipment over South African territory, This means that, we are confronted with a situation whereby South Africa can actually make it impossible for us to obtain defence equipment from other countries, as we are land-locked and completely surrounded by it. As I speak, we have a consignment of defence equipment which is stuck up in the Durban harbour and which we are not able to get despite protracted negotiations with South Africa. It is against this escalating arrogance towards our national sovereignty that increased contacts with as many countries of the world will serve us.

Queues of Lesotho unable to cross into South Africa following a blockade on its south.

Mr. Speaker Sir.

I do not intend to make this statement without making reference to a matter which I know is already exercising the minds of Honourable Members. and that is, the entire nation. This is the matter of general elections.

The Speaker, in his remarks during the opening of the present sitting. did touch on the question of electoral legislation to be tabled during this sitting. I am pleased to confirm that one of the bills to be presented in this sitting is The Parliament Bill, which as I promised, is now ready to come and receive the blessing of the House. As soon as it has passed, the way will be opened for all other steps leading to the process of elections. Let me, however, re-state that it is the understanding of the Government side. and I trust, of the Opposition as well, that political competition without Violence should continue to be the norm for elections and the political process generally. As I have said in pitsos and other fora, violence leads to bloodshed, and the blood of the Basotho people is costly. Everyone of us should therefore pledge to ensure that the coming elections will be peaceful, free and fair. if they are to be allowed to continue, and if they are to be a democratic expression of popular will.

Mr. Speaker Sir,

Honourable Members,

I have in very brief terms attempted to give the House a picture of the many developments which transpired duringr our recess. I hope that the brief I have given will suffice to give Members an indication of where we are, and where we are going.

I undertake to keep the House informed and to report from time to time as developments unfold further.

LONG LIVE ( )UR FATHERLAND!

THANK YOU.

11th April, 1983.

