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The following is a fax we received this morning from South Africa concerning the present situation of the community of Braklaagte. The return of the residents of Braklaagte to their homes should be seen as a major victory.

OXFAM-Canada has been supporting the community of Braklaagte for many years. Chief Pupsey Sebogodi recently toured Canada for three weeks to put pressure on the South African government to reverse the forced incorporation of Braklaagte into Bophuthatswana. Pupsey toured First Nations territories, including the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en in BC, and the Sarcee and Lubicon in Alberta. He also visited Calgary, Halifax, Vancouver, Edmonton, London, Toronto and Ottawa.

Pressure from Canadians during Pupsey's tour, which included a postcard campaign, various media work and public events, all contributed in helping secure this present victory!

BRAKLAAGTE REFUGEES TO RETURN HOME

The community of Braklaagte, up to 6,000 of whom were forced to flee their land after attacks by vigilantes and Bophuthatswana security forces in January, will be returning home on Saturday 13th July 1991.

A service will be held in the Anglican Church in Ikageng (Zeerust) at 10 am before buses leave to take the community home at about 12.30.

BACKGROUND TO THE RETURN DECISION

The people suffered great hardships over the months of their exile in Ikageng, but refused to return, fearing further harassment from the Authorities in Bophuthatswana.

Since April 10th, a number of meetings have been held between the community's representatives and the local Bophuthatswana Authorities in Lehurutshe to negotiate their return. The meetings were facilitated by the local representative of the S.A Ministry of Law and Order, Mr Du Plessis. From the Bophuthatswana side, Mr Mfundisi of Lehurutshe and the District Magistrate, Mr Makabanyani attended. The Braklaagte Delegation included Pupsey Sebogodi and the Lawyer Clive Plaskett. An agenda stating conditions for return was drawn up at the meeting on April 10th. These conditions included: (1) A guarantee from the Bophuthatswana Authorities that all the residents including those that fled after earlier incidents would be able to return and not suffer further harassment.

- (2) A guarantee that chief Pupsey Sebogodi, the leader recognised by the community would be able to return, and not be harassed.
- (3) A guarantee that Bophuthatswana would re-open all schools in the community which closed in June 1989, for the forthcoming school term, (3rd).
- (4) A guarantee from Bophuthatswana that the community can hold a mass meeting at Braklaagte, convened by neutral persons, to discuss issues of leadership and administration.

In addition, in the event of further incidents which could result in the fleeing of residents into South Africa, the South African Authorities have undertaken to recognise the refugees as South African citizens, and take care of them.

Since these conditions have now been met, the community has agreed to return.

SENT TO US BY THE TRANSVAAL RURAL ACTION COMMITTEE (TRAC)