

Guardian 11/6/86

# South Africa on brink of renewing general emergency

From Patrick Laurence  
in Johannesburg

The President, Mr P. W. Botha, yesterday appeared to be on the brink of re-imposing a general state of emergency after a standing committee failed to resolve the parliamentary deadlock about moves to grant sweeping new powers to police.

Two landmine explosions in the eastern Transvaal yesterday — the 15th blast since landmines were first deployed by guerrillas of the outlawed African National Congress last November — added grist to pressure from white ultra-right wingers on the Government to take firm and decisive action.

Coloured and Indian MPs on the standing committee stood firm in their demand for the introduction of safeguards to two bills empowering the Minister of Law and Order, Mr Louis le Grange, to declare a local state of emergency and for police officers from the rank of lieutenant-colonel upwards to order the detention of any person for 180 days.

President Botha could still ramrod the bills — minus the safeguards — through Parliament because of the in-built majority of his ruling National Party in the President's Council, one of whose tasks is to arbitrate where there are differences between the white,

coloured and Indian chambers. But, he is unlikely to be able to do so before next week's 10th anniversary of the 1976 Soweto revolt.

The Government is anxious to equip its security forces with extraordinary powers to contain the anticipated intensification of the rebellion as the anniversary approaches. It is reluctant to rely on existing

**TWO BLACK** South African trade unions yesterday wrangled about who was responsible for clashes at the Hlobane coal mine last week in which 11 people were killed. The United Workers' Union of South Africa, whose membership comes mostly from the Zulu tribe, said that its workers were attacked by men of the National Union of Mineworkers who had threatened to burn them to death if they defied a strike call. The NUM denied the charge. — Reuter.

security legislation because recent Supreme Court decisions have, in broad terms, upheld the rights of detainees against the police officers acting under these laws.

A decision on what course of action to take is almost certain to be made at a Cabinet meeting today. The possibility of

the Government opting for re-declaration of a general state of emergency under the Public Safety Act was foreshadowed yesterday in a frontpage report of the influential Afrikaans newspaper, Beeld.

The Government declared a general state of emergency last July but lifted it in March, partly because of international pressure. It hoped to circumvent renewed world pressure through the now stalled amendments to the Public Safety and Internal Security Acts.

Three people — one a white schoolboy — were injured yesterday in landmine blasts near the farming town of Volksrust. They were the sixth and seventh landmines to explode in the eastern Transvaal in the past six weeks.

The schoolboy, Martin Coetzer, aged 18, was flown by helicopter to hospital in Johannesburg. He suffered multiple fractures and part of his right foot was blown off when the light lorry he was driving detonated a mine.

Intra-Black fighting broke out late yesterday in Alexandra on the edge of Johannesburg.

The fighting was triggered when the president of the Alexandra Student Congress, Mr Mahlomola Mabizela, was shot dead by unknown gunmen.