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ANC STATEMENT

VIOLENCE IN THE PWV REGION

July 26, 1990

Today, 26th July 1990, an Inkatha leader addressed a meeting at Unit Number 1 of Jabulani Hostel. During the course of his address, it is reported that he incited his audience to launch physical attacks on persons wearing or displaying the hammer and sickle insignia or other emblems associated with the South African Communist Party.

On the same day, reports reaching us indicate that, at Jeppe hostel, other spokesmen for Inkatha are organising Inkatha sympathisers for a second attack on Sebokeng township on August 4th. It is alleged that the police are deeply embroiled in these preparations and have assisted in arming the hostel dwellers for this second attack.

Further reports allege that the residents of hostels in Soweto are being mobilised to launch attacks on anyone opposed to Inkatha or who appears not to support it. There are also charges that people are being forcibly enrolled as members of Inkatha in both the Soweto hostels and those in Jeppe.

The ANC is particularly alarmed by these reports and wishes to bring them to public attention.

As the criminal actions of vigilantes in Sebokeng this weekend demonstrate, there is a sinister and well-orchestrated campaign afoot to spread the violence that has plagued Natal beyond that province. The persons behind this plot are receiving active assistance from elements in the police. The purpose of this unholy alliance is to terrorise the people in the most militant townships into submission, destroy and disrupt the people's organisations, and to undermine the prospects of the forthcoming meeting of August 6th.

It should be a matter of grave concern that while the South African government speaks of peace to the peoples of the world, inside South Africa elements of its security services are deeply implicated in fomenting violence and participating in carnage.

The charges of police involvement with Inkatha vigilantes are too numerous to be ignored. Thus far no action has been taken against the criminals who caused such mayhem in Sebokeng on Sunday July 22nd. After repeated warnings that violence was imminent, instead of disarming the Inkatha supporters, the vast majority of whom were bussed in from outside Sebokeng, the police escorted them to their rally and through the township. Rather than subduing the attackers, the action of the police targeted residents of Sebokeng who tried to defend themselves.

Despite the fact that the police had every opportunity to identify the perpetrators of this violence, not a single person has yet been arrested or charged for the crimes committed in Sebokeng this weekend.

Emboldened by such inaction, the Inkatha vigilantes yesterday attacked a trainload of commuters, resulting in the hospitalisation of at least twenty. Again, the police had been warned in advance that these attacks were imminent. The reports of today's activities indicate that further attacks are being planned even at this moment.

The inaction of the police in Sebokeng; their alleged involvement in the incidents in Jeppe; their demonstrable unwillingness to arrest and prosecute the warlords and inciters of violence, are of a pattern with those of Natal.

Under the prevailing circumstances the people must reserve their inalienable right to defend themselves when attacked. The responsibility for any violence that ensues, as a result, devolves squarely on the police.

The African National Congress demands that President de Klerk take immediate steps to put an end to the violence by:

- Ordering the arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators of the Sebokeng massacre;
- Ordering the immediate suspension of the police officers who stood by while the vigilantes attacked people in Sebokeng;
- Taking action against those fomenting violence in the PWV area;
- Instituting an independent inquiry to investigate the violence of the weekend and the attempts to spread the violence beyond Natal.

For further information contact:

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