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Box 2 Lindeberg Gard
Oslo 10 Norway

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ANC 'still sees itself as liberation organisation'

DURBAN. -- The African National Congress continued to see itself as a national liberation movement as South Africa was still being ruled by a White minority, an ANC spokesman, Mr Mohammed Valli Moosa, said in Durban yesterday.

Addressing a media briefing on the eve of the ANC's 48th national conference, Mr Moosa said South Africa's White minority still held political and economic power, which were features of a colonial society. "So we continue to see ourselves as a national liberation movement."

One of the aims of the conference was "welding together the dispersion of the ANC's forces" into a unified force. This would give the ANC the "sharp edge" so needed in the period we're entering in-

to".

Mr Moosa said the ANC saw itself as the organisation which would take SA to "liberation".

At the same time, however, the developing political situation had already given the ANC features of a political party as it had established branches and membership.

"We want to ensure we have the capacity to win any elections which may come up at any time."

On negotiations, another ANC spokesman, Mr Simon Makana, said these should involve not only the ANC, but all democratic forces and all other people in South Africa.

The ANC's conference would not adopt a final constitution for a new

South Africa, but would draw up broad, basic elements of the constitution it would like to see.

The ANC had already drawn up models of a draft constitution, but wanted to involve as many people as possible in drafting a final document.

On the question of violence, Mr Makana said that without a resolution of the current political violence, the negotiation process was under threat.

The conference would aim to find the real causes and sources of violence and how these could be addressed.

Violence had become a "national disaster" for all South Africans, he added.

About 100 journalists attended yesterday's media briefing, but up to

Prisoners agreement

AGREEMENT has been reached between the ANC and the government on the release of political prisoners.

A statement issued by State President De Klerk yesterday said: "At a

meeting between the Minister of Justice and of Correctional Services, Mr Robie Chetsoo, and the representatives of the National Executive Committee of the ANC on June 30, it was agreed that, with regard to prisoners imprisoned within the RSA, finality has now been reached in terms of the process of release set out in the Groote Schuur and Pretoria Minutes."

"It was also agreed that the results of the process were acceptable to both sides."

"It was also agreed that no further applications for the release of prisoners in terms of the Groote Schuur and Pretoria Minutes received after 15 July 1991 would be considered."

"This was because the number of applications, especially those submitted by prisoners direct, has already diminished considerably."

"Most of these direct applications in any event do not qualify for the application of the categories and guidelines relating to political offences."

"However, applications submitted after 5 July 1991 will be considered if the delay was not due to the fault of the prisoner or his representative."

"Prisoners whose applications for release have been refused by the government will still have the right to approach the advisory body of judges, established in terms of the Groote Schuur and Pretoria Minutes, for further advice to the government."

"The release programme in terms of the Groote Schuur and Pretoria Minutes has now virtually run its course, resulting in the release of more than 1040 prisoners."

"The government is confident that other issues such as prisoners in neighbouring independent countries could suitably be discussed amongst responsible parties. The government is prepared to play an intermediary role."

ANC committed to peace talks: Jordan

THE ANC last night threw its weight behind the negotiation process ahead of its 48th national conference in Durban, with the organisation's head of publicity, Dr Pallo Jordan, saying all members were committed to the peace talks.

"There is no one in the ANC, no matter how you might wish to characterise them, who is not committed to the negotiation process and exploring it to the full. There is no one in the ANC who would, on election, not try to reflect the views that are expressed in the debate and resolutions that emerge from the conference that is the supreme policy making body," Dr Jordan told SATV's "Agenda" pro-

gramme.

"So, no matter what I would think, or anybody else, if the resolution goes in any one particular direction, it would be my duty to reflect those resolutions."

Dr Jordan also charged that differences in the organisation were subject to general decisions.

"When you participate in conference, at the end of the day your private opinion, whether you might be called a hard-liner or anything else, is not the relevant thing. It is the decision of the conference that you are obliged to follow. And I think most of our people have lived by that decision."

On the crumbling of sanctions and the Organisation for African Unity's

stance on the issue, Dr Jordan said policies came up for review, but he would not state categorically whether the organisation would change its attitude.

"We have always regarded sanctions as one of the instruments to bring about the end of apartheid. Now, lots of apartheid legislation has been repealed, but still I don't have the vote, Mandela does not have the vote. 75 percent of the population does not have the vote. So, sanctions are a very difficult question."

At the recent OAU conference in Abuja, Nigeria, it is understood the organisation's director of international affairs, Mr Thabo Mbeki, proposed a selective lifting of economic pressure. — Sapa.

300 media representatives are expected at the conference this week.

Delegates and guests continued to pour into Durban yesterday to attend today's official opening of the organisations' first national conference inside the country since 1958.

The ANC wanted to involve Whites as much as possible in eliminating apartheid and establishing a non-racial South Africa, said Mr Makana, who is a member of the ANC's national executive committee.

"It should be our task to talk to our White compatriots because we need to resolve this problem together," he said.

The ANC wanted to say to South Africans: "We want you to start applying your minds to the question of the shape of the constitution."

The world was focusing on the ANC's national conference as it was a "historic moment in the history of the country".

The conference was being held in a climate of legality, a time when everyone was talking of finding a negotiated settlement to the problems in South Africa.

The conference would address the issues that affected the ANC, the people and the future of the country.

The main areas of discussion would be the ANC's tactics and its strategy in the era of negotiations, Mr Makana said.

The ANC was not planning to come up with "unchangeable" policies as policy formulation was an ongoing issue.

A key issue would be restructuring and rebuilding the ANC and consolidating its component parts. — Sapa.