

CAMP 63/0021/2

ANC WOMEN'S SECTION DELEGATION ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN'S DAY - MARCH 8TH, 1983, IN ALGIERS, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

Cde Mittah Seperepere - Leader of delegation  
Busisiwe Cekisane

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Madam Chairperson,  
Dear Sisters and Friends,

Allow me and my colleague, on behalf of the ANC (SA) Women's Section and the millions of oppressed but fighting women of South Africa, to convey to you, dear sisters and friends, warm and revolutionary greetings on the occasion of March 8th - International Women's Day.

We feel greatly honoured indeed by the invitation extended to one of our outstanding women leaders of our Movement - Winnie Mandela - by the National Union of Algerian Women to this important gathering.

Dear Sisters and Friends, I stand here representing that courageous woman who is a symbol of the African woman under apartheid. Like many opponents of the apartheid policies, Winnie is subjected to daily harassment, persecution, and psychological torture by the racist Pretoria regime. Many attempts on her life have been made. For 19 years of the last 20 years she has either been banned or in prison. In 1977 she was banished to Brandfort a remote town 200 miles from her home in Johannesburg. She is restricted by law to her new home - her prison, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., but the attempt to crush her burning spirits for the liberation of her people has failed completely. These are the restrictions which have deprived Winnie Mandela the right and opportunity to be with you at this very important meeting.

Dear Sisters and Friends, today as women of the world commemorate the 73rd Anniversary of International Women's Day, the cloud of a threatening catastrophe is becoming darker and darker every day. World peace is threatened more than ever before. Increased international tension is marked by the arms build-up, continued military conflicts in certain parts of our globe, and aggression against and interference in the internal affairs of free developing countries by the imperialist and their allies - military juntas in Latin America, Zionists in Israel and racists in South Africa.

Today, peace is the burning issue for all freedom loving people of the world and Africa. The imperialists are gambling with the interests of all humanity for their own selfish ends, with utter contempt for the rights and aspirations of nations. They are trying to portray the liberation movements like the ANC as 'terrorists' organisations. They are trying to halt the inevitable progressive changes in the world and to again become rulers of our destiny.



The more aggressive and fascist circles of imperialism, headed by the warring cow-boy Reagan, are today linking their nuclear war policies to the question of national liberations. This is most clearly illustrated in Southern Africa, where the South Africa regime has come out into the open as the unmasked bandit of imperialist terrorism - plundering, murdering, and destabilising on a scale it would never have dared to attempt without the backing of U.S imperialism under Reagan and his fascist war-mongers.

The deadly intentions of Reagan were clear when shortly after the tour of Southern Africa by Georges Bush, the US Vice-President, the racist South African foreign minister Pik Botha admitted to the existence of an agreement between his regime and the US of America to station US cruise missiles in South Africa. This agreement casts the shadow of death not only over South Africa itself, Angola, Mozambique and other Frontline States, but over three quarters of the entire continent of Africa. This invisible supersonic murder weapon has a range of 2,600km, the distance from Cape Town to Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania.

This agreement was followed immediately by the infamous multi-million credit granted to South Africa by the US controlled International Monetary Fund - a loan to further finance the South Africa regime's policies of war and aggression.

Today the ANC leads the people of our country in a struggle for liberation, a liberation for peace and justice. The armed struggle waged by Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the ANC, is the necessary pre-condition for lasting peace and real justice. The women of South Africa are today a vital and determined force in our war of national liberation. They are taking up the gun in increasing numbers for liberation against those who have had a monopoly on the use of the gun for our oppression, repression and super-exploitation. Our war is a just one, it is a people's war. Our objective is peace for our people, the people of Africa and the people of the whole world. Our struggle for the total overthrow of the apartheid regime is an integral part of the struggle for the emancipation of women.

We have decided to take up the gun not because we are war-mongers, but because for 59 years the ANC had used peaceful methods of struggle, but the grievances of the people had fallen on deaf ears and their oppression and exploitation became more intensified in particular against black women.

Our non-violence was answered with brutal violence by the enemy. The plight of the black woman in South Africa is characterised by the 3-fold oppressions she suffers. She suffers as a black oppressed person, exploited as a worker, and suffers all the disabilities meted out to women only, because she is a woman. Apartheid (which means that racial groups are living and developing separately) was instituted as state policy in 1948 when the racist regime took power. Apartheid is nothing else but 20th century slavery, spelling tragedy to millions. It means 21-23 million Africans occupying 13% of the most arid land - the bantustans, and 4 millions whites occupying 87% of the most fertile land, with all the mines, farms and industries. It means African men leaving their families in the bantustans, which are actually reserve labour camps, to seek work in the urban areas resulting in broken home and absence of fathers for long periods of time from their children and loved ones. The woman carries the responsibilities of bringing up the children single-handedly. Life in the bantustan means measery, loneliness and death.



With the creation of the so-called independent states, the Africans are denied the citizenship of the country of their birth, only Africans who qualify under certain laws are entitled to live and work in the urban areas. The dispossession of our country and the control of our people's movements is carried out by means of a document called a pass. This pass determines where an African should live and work, whether they can get married. The struggle against passes has been the cornerstone of women's resistance.

Today as part of the process to keep South Africa white, the racists are making even more vicious laws to control our movements; they hope by doing so to hamper our struggle and armed actions. One of these new laws has been dubbed the 'Genocide Law' because its aim is to kill the African nation, to lock African people in the bantustans, in particular women and children.

In another desperate move to forestall our efforts in liberating our country, the racist Pretoria regime is giving away parts of our country to Swaziland, a move which will deny 1 million Africans their South Africa citizenship rights, and it will be Swaziland who will carry the burden of this army of unemployed. One good turn deserves another. Swaziland reciprocated by rounding up about 100 South Africans identified as ANC members, and putting them in so-called 'protective custody'. This happened immediately after the Lesotho massacres, even before the funeral of the 42 South African refugees members of the ANC, including Basotho nationals, who were murdered in cold blood by the racist Pretoria regime.

Many women opponents of the policies of apartheid are subjected to harassments of all kinds, arrests and jail sentences. They are banned, house arrested, tortured extensively in the fascist jails. Recently a 30 year old white woman, Barbara Hogan, was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for belonging to the ANC; at the moment, a young black mother, Lilian Keagile, is on trial, undergoing unspeakable torture at the hands of the racist police. Thandi Modise, heroine of our people's army, gave birth in prison, serving a 8 year sentence. Some of our women have been killed in bomb attacks in the Frontline States: Jabu Nyaoase and Ruth First are some of the victims of South African aggression in the frontline states.

Dear Sisters and Friends, despite all the repression meted out against the indigenous people of our country, the women are putting up terrific resistance against the apartheid policies of the Pretoria regime. They are confronting the enemy on all fronts. The Trade Union organisations and women's organisations are playing a leading role in the struggle against high rents, boycotts of buses, because of increased fares and high cost of consumer goods. They have reiterated time and again their declaration: 'money for jobs and not for bombs'.

The oppressed women of South Africa are not only engaging themselves in open mass struggles but are also activists in the underground machinery of the ANC and combatants in the people's army Umkhonto we Siswe, hitting at the enemy's strategic installations. The sabotage carried out on the Koeberg nuclear power station, in Cape Town, by our army was done in the interest of peace in Africa and the world as a whole.

Despite all the brutalities, we are determined to carry on the struggle until final victory.



Our courage, determination and inspiration is derived from the fact that we know that we are not alone in our struggle, we have progressive and peace-loving people of the world, like the people of Algeria, on our side.

In your continued gesture of solidarity, we appeal to the people and government of Algeria to pressurize the racist Pretoria regime to stay the execution of our young combatants - Johannes Shabangu, Anthony Tsotsobe, David Moise, Simon Mogoerane, Marcus Motaung and Jerry Mosololi. Demand that their death sentence be commuted to life imprisonment. Demand that the captured freedom fighters be treated as prisoners of war in accordance with the relevant Geneva Conventions.

Demand the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. Isolate the fascist regime of South Africa and intensify the mandatory economic sanctions against the regime.

Give moral and material aid to the Frontline States in particular Angola and Lesotho as they are under terrible pressure to expel the ANC from their countries.

In conclusion, we hail the people and government of Algeria in their unflinching support to the Polisario Front, fighting for the independence of Western Sahara. We also commend the government of this country for its uncompromising stand against the manoeuvres to disintegrate the OAU by the forces of reaction. We reiterate our continued support and solidarity for the women of Namibia led by their vanguard movement, SWAPO of Namibia. We reject the linkage of the Namibian independence with the withdrawal of the Cuban internationalist forces from Angola. We reaffirm our solidarity with the women of Palestine and El Salvador, led by PLO and FMLM respectively.

Last but not least, allow us, dear sisters, to express our certainty that our visit will help strengthen the bonds of friendship and solidarity between our sister organisations.

LONG LIVE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY !

LONG LIVE THE NATIONAL UNION OF ALGERIAN WOMEN !

LONG LIVE THE ANC WOMEN'S SECTION !

LONG LIVE WORLD PEACE !

VICTORY IS CERTAIN !

Thank you.

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