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DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

ANC PRESS STATEMENT ON BOIPATONG MASSACRE

The ANC is absolutely outraged by the cold-blooded slaughter of more than 50 innocent people in their homes in Boipatong township in the Vaal Complex on 17 June.

The ANC is even more outraged by the callous and cynical remarks, made by Captain Craig Kotze on behalf of Minister Kriel, which sought to exploit a tragedy of such proportions for the benefit of the Nationalist Party and the apartheid regime.

The ANC places the blame squarely on the shoulders of Mr FW de Klerk, who declared in Tokyo recently that his government had a plan to counter mass action. That plan included mobilisation of the army, the police and police reservists.

These provocative acts failed to intimidate the people who came out in their thousands to attend ANC rallies on 16th June. The unprovoked slaughter of innocent people by hordes whom eye-witnesses swear were ferried in Police vehicles appears to be the second phase of that plan.

Mr De Klerk's administration is less than three years in office, and yet the death toll of black people during its brief period of office exceeds that of 40 years of National Party rule. Mr De Klerk created the opportunity for such slaughter by legalising the carrying of dangerous weapons in 1990.

The South African Police, led by their Minister, Hernus Kriel, and their Commissioner, General van der Merwe, stand accused of complicity with the armed men who have committed one of the most heinous crimes this country has seen. Their denials, snide and cynical remarks aimed at political point-scoring deaden the senses.

They still have to explain the murders that took place at Swanieville a year ago. They must explain also the inability of the Police to apprehend a single suspect for that massacre!

The South African Police no longer know the difference between protecting people and generating propaganda. Two days before 16 June they confiscated Inkatha weapons in a blaze of publicity, overseen by the Commissioner himself. The following day, 15 June, these weapons were returned to the IFP on the pretext that they are "cultural weapons". The cynical attempts by de Klerk and his ministers to project Mass Action as the begetter of violence assume a new significance in the context of their actions on the 16th June.

Anyone who doubts the lethal character of these "cultural weapons", should visit the ICU of Sebokeng Hospital and see at the children, ranging in ages from three to 11, who are fighting for their lives after being stabbed with these so-called cultural weapons.

The ANC is calling an emergency meeting of the extended National Working Committee to consider further action to take in response to this massacre. The President of the ANC, Comrade Nelson Mandela, will visit the Vaal area on Sunday.

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