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Extract from a statement by President Tambo to the Ninth  
Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the  
Organisation of African Unity - April 1975

The continued existence of the apartheid regime constitutes the principal obstacle to the complete and rapid emancipation of all the peoples of Southern Africa. It delays the process of

decolonisation in that region and postpones the total liberation of Africa. In addition, it constitutes a

threat to the security of free African nations and world peace.

Let us endeavour to establish a common understanding of what the true nature of apartheid is

Apartheid has often been equated with racism. We need, however, to understand that racialism

cannot be separated from the political oppression and economic exploitation of the black people. It

serves both, and is in turn sustained by both. It is an integral part of a socio-economic system

peculiar to South Africa, but one which has all except the geographic features of colonialism. The

difference between South Africa and other systems of colonialism is, therefore, that in South Africa

coloniser and colonised live side by side within the same country. Colour and race are used as a

dividing line between the resident white army of occupation and their subject population - the

black people. The extreme exploitation of labour is the *raison d'être* of this system. A vast apparatus

of restrictive laws and practices, coupled with the dispossession of Africans from their land, ensures

the availability of cheap and forced labour.

Above all, as a fundamental condition of its survival, the apartheid regime maintains a complete

monopoly of state power and seeks by terrorist methods to make the people acquiesce in their own

servitude

The problem that Africa has to face in South Africa is essentially a colonial problem, and like

colonialism elsewhere, it has to be removed root and branch. Attempts to bring about reform within

the existing system can never provide a satisfactory solution and can never be a substitute for

resolute anti-colonial struggle for national liberation.

Let us consider the context in which we have to work for the removal of this colonialist system

from our continent. The issue before us is not how to reform apartheid. The changes we seek in

South Africa are not encompassed by being able to share a park bench with a white man, or being

allowed to enter an all-white theatre. We demand a fundamental transformation whereby, in our

country, we shall have the same right of self-determination which free Africa has won for itself,

which peoples fighting colonialism have won elsewhere in the world. That right is not negotiable.

Yet this is the one fundamental change that the system can never voluntarily concede, for upon

the continued denial of any access to state power depends the very structure of apartheid. The

objective of our struggle must therefore be the seizure of that power

It is only when political power has been won by the masses in South Africa that we will be able

to begin the immense task of completely dismantling the structures and institutions of apartheid. In

the context of the apartheid system, such a change can only come about through armed struggle by

the revolutionary forces in our country. This is why the legitimacy of our armed struggle has been

endorsed at successive meetings of the OAU and by the international community as a whole. It was

reaffirmed by the East and Central African Heads of State in the Mogadishu Declaration

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liberation in the sub-continent; a principle which has been repeatedly stated in resolutions adopted by the OAU since its inception. It is one struggle against the common enemy who has dominated a great part of our continent. By means of hard and tenacious fighting involving enormous sacrifices, destruction of life and property, the peoples' armies have stormed and taken possession of one bastion after another of white supremacy. There remains one citadel, one fortress in South Africa and Namibia. That is the last stronghold which we are determined to occupy in pursuit of our historic mission which is to bring about the complete liberation of Africa from the last remnants of colonialism, fascism and racism. The enemy is formidable but it is not invincible. There is irrefutable evidence that in proportion to advances made by our political and military campaigns, the enemy is compelled to adopt defensive strategies which are having the immediate effect of raising enormously the level of fire and coercive measures. The enemy seeks to the same extent to sustain the political, economic, social and moral basis of his regime. Like any wounded beast of prey, the enemy is vicious and capable of inflicting injury and destruction on those within his reach. This is no reason, however, for abandoning the struggle against the beast of prey. He has to be destroyed if we are to safeguard the lives and interests of our people and those of the peoples in the neighbouring states  
VICTORY IS CERTAIN!