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EWS OF street vioience in South Africa

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I\ICommands attention, but less is known
about the treatment of political detainees
in thatâ\200\235country Recently, the Lawyersâ\200\231 Commit-
tee' for Civil Rights Under Law sponsored visits
by a number of South Africans, some of whom
have been in prison, to tell their stories to the
American public.-

A state of emergency has existed in South .

The Lawyersâ\200\231 Committee estimates that 40
percent of those who have been arrested are
under 18, and a few are as young as 8. Their _
families ' . are not necessarily notified of their
whereabouts, and once in custody, they are held
with and subject to the same treatment as adults.~
They are not entitled to visits from parents,
lawyers or independent doctors.

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Africa since June 1986. Since then, an estimated
25,000 people have been arrested without charge
and held for indefinite periods of time The
Lawyersâ\200\231 Committee South Africa Project, which
for two decades has been providing American
â\200\230 support for legal assistance to political prisoners
in that country, has in\201nanced the defense of 1,000
of those arrested. Their individual stories are
moving, and the overall picture they present is
terrible. One witness after another told of Sur-
prise roundups, raids on homes, schools and work
places, arrests without explanation. Some prisonersâ\200\224
were tortured, others held in solitary confinement
and all suffered the frightening uncertainty
of indeterminate confinement

The political detention of youngsters is a par-
ticularly repulsive aspect of the crackdown in
. South Africa, but this kind of injustice is no less?
- acceptable for adults. We are not talking about
people who have been charged with, and tried for
crimes. These people have lost their liberty -:
because of a speech, an opinion, a club membership.
They are confined without charges or trial;
and are kept for as long as the police choose to
keep them. South Africa is not the only place - '111
â\200\230 the world where this happens, but it is a country
where international pressures have some effect.
Americans must continue to protest on behalf of
those who have been silenced.

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