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## AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

### **ANC REACTION TO THE INTERIM REPORT OF THE GOLDSTONE COMMISSION INVESTIGATION INTO TRAIN VIOLENCE**

The ANC finds some of the findings of the Committee looking into train violence both disturbing and alarming. It is an outrage that the statistics of the incidents of violence kept by the police are incomplete due to what the Committee calls "routine destruction of records". How is it possible that records of serious and unsolved crimes are "routinely destroyed"? This can only be interpreted as action to hide the nature of the train violence and who is responsible.

The destruction of records, inadequate investigations or gathering of evidence on train attacks has resulted in very few cases being brought to court, and even fewer cases of successful prosecutions. The Committee views the situation as "unsatisfactory and disturbing". The resultant loss of faith in the administration of justice, also identified by the Committee, concerns the ANC equally. This is another typical example of the crime of omission on the part of the state and its agencies.

The Committee has also identified the 27 hostels along the rail system and adjacent to townships as a definite factor in the train violence. Since the IFP has repeatedly claimed the hostels as their strongholds, particularly when arguing against their closure, the political responsibility for the actions of hostel dwellers must rest primarily with it.

The Committee has concluded that the carrying of weapons in public, including on trains, has contributed to the fear, intimidation, death and destruction on the trains. The incidents of arms-wielding IFP supporters at Isando Station resulted in black and white passengers frantically disembarking from a train clearly illustrates the connection between weapons carried in public and train violence.

The report of the Committee should convince the IFP of the need to stop its supports from carrying weapons in public, and to accede to the banning of such weapons in public. Furthermore, this report provides the



government with additional reasons, if any were needed, why it should immediately phase out hostels and ban the carrying of weapons in public.

The Committee must, in spite of the difficulties it cites in this interim report, pay particular attention to points (b) and (c) of its terms of reference. The lack of public opprobrium directed at those who perpetuate violence has the same effect as the failure of the administration of justice - it tells the perpetrators of violence that they can get away with their crimes.

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