

THE LATEST CHALLENGE

Statement by Comrade Alfred Nzo, Secretary General of the African National Congress following the rejection of the appeal against the death sentences imposed on three MK combatants: Johnson Lubisi, Petros Mashigo and Naphtali Manana.

The appellate division of the South African Supreme Court has rejected the appeal against death sentences imposed on Ncimbithi Johnson Lubisi, Petros Tshepo Mashigo and Naphtali Manana, all members of the African national Congress and our People's Army, "Umkhonto We Sizwe. In terms of this verdict the ground has finally been cleared for the judicial murder of three more young revolutionaries, the heroic sons of the oppressed and dehumanised people of South Africa.

The death sentences were imposed by the lower courts in defiance of the demands of the overwhelming majority of the South African population and those of the entire international democratic community which made repeated calls for their release on the basis of the internationally recognised right of every people to struggle for justice and human dignity. In this case the three condemned men are part of the multi-million army of the oppressed people who are engaged in a dedicated struggle to rid South Africa of the oppressive apartheid system which has been declared a crime against humanity.

CALLOUSNESS

The apartheid regime has with characteristic callousness once again ignored the voice of the overwhelming majority of mankind, leaning as usual on the increasing collaboration of its traditional allies, especially the Reagan administration. It should be borne in mind that shortly before an announcement of the verdict of the appeal court in Bloemfontein, the US Senate Committee on Security and terrorism has just completed an inquisition seeking to establish the connections between the African National Congress and SWAPO with the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic and Socialist Cuba. The evidence to justify this Mc Carthy-style disgraceful inquisition was extracted from traitors who have deserted to the side of

the racist enemy, one of whom, Nonkonono, have qualified for admission in a mental institution. The South African white minority press is now whipping up a noisy hysteria against the African National Congress and its international allies. This has provided a convenient background setting for this latest crime against our people and against the rest of democratic humanity.

This latest challenge should not just be replied to by mere expressions of outrage and disgust. More than that is needed. The time is long overdue for the concrete implementation of all the resolutions already adopted by international bodies such as the United Nations, Non-Aligned countries, the Organisation of African Unity and many other international forces, seeking the effective isolation of the apartheid regime from international political and diplomatic intercourse, including the imposition of comprehensive mandatory economic and oil sanctions and the strict observance of the arms embargo against the terrorist apartheid regime.

This international activity should also be geared to generating increased all-round support and assistance for the African National Congress, the only reliable weapon for the achievement of the national and social liberation of the oppressed majority in South Africa.

ONSLAUGHT

The African National Congress pledges once again to match the growing barbarity of the apartheid regime with an intensified onslaught in the mass political and military levels. We shall extract a tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye. Our capacity to effectively punish the racist criminals and their supporters inside South Africa is no longer in doubt.

The heroic youth and all sections of our people should accept this latest challenge with increased determination to forge further ahead along the road to complete victory. This road can be shortened by forging and strengthening united action involving all the democratic sections of our people, by strengthening the reliable shield and sword of the people, the African National Congress and swelling the ranks of our popular army, Umkhonto We Sizwe.

We owe all this to the heroes now languishing in the death cells and to all the leaders and cadres of our movement in prisons, detention cells and the vast majority of our people who are engaged in a life and death struggle against the escalating ravages of the criminal apartheid system.