

STATEMENT BY

THE PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF
SOUTH AFRICA

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ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCHING OF THE INTERNATIONAL
YEAR AGAINST APARTHEID

United Nations Organisation
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Thirty-three years have passed since the Second World War came to an end with the defeat of Nazi Germany and her allies. In this period many of the wounds inflicted during that holocaust have healed. A new generation has grown up without experiencing what would be a cataclysmic third world war.

All this attests to the vigilance and the strength of the democratic and peace-loving peoples who have thus managed to hold in check the forces of military aggression and domination.

Tribute for this success is also due to the United Nations Organisation, which has by and large repelled powerful pressures to turn it against the purposes for which it was created.

Yet it is well to remember that 30 years ago this year, the South African white minority electorate voted the present regime into power. On the other hand, 30 years ago this year, the Member States of the United Nations Organisation, horrified by the desperately anti-human theories and activities of the Nazis, approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Even as the fascist forces were holding their victory ^{celebrations,} ~~celebrations,~~ the United Nations Organisation was, for the third year in succession, grappling with the question of racism in South Africa.

Then, as now, the racists tried to shelter themselves from world condemnation by claiming that the criminal practices they were and are engaged in fell within the realm of domestic affairs in which the world community had no right to interfere.

We stood by the position at that time, as we do today, that national oppression and fascist tyranny must of necessity be a matter of concern to all freedom - and peace-loving peoples throughout the world.

Arising directly out of the experience of the rise and defeat of fascism, the founders of this Organisation realized, and sought to give concrete expression to the fact, that the sphere of international relations has ceased to be a tangential factor in the formulation and execution of national policies. Rather,

the international setting, itself brought into being by the interaction of national policies, correspondingly provides the condition and the framework for the pursuit of national objectives.

The United Nations Organisation, its Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are therefore some of the outstanding products of the victory of the peoples of the world over Nazism. They constitute the conscious resolve of humanity to ensure that both national and international affairs are governed by a common code of behaviour based on freedom, equality, social progress and peaceful coexistence among the peoples.

It is therefore appropriate that it was the United Nations Organisation that decided that 1978 should be observed as the International Year against Apartheid. Recognizing the specific historical tasks of this Organisation, we are convinced that it is here that we should put before the world democratic forces an urgent call for immediate and decisive action against the inhuman system prevailing in South Africa, not as an act of charity towards our people but as a necessary condition for the realization of the United Nations objective of establishing and guaranteeing a just and stable world peace.

To put the matter briefly, the accession of the apartheid regime to power 30 years ago coincided with the efforts of the fascist forces, defeated in Europe, to regroup themselves wherever this was possible, in preparation for their re-emergence on the world scene, once more organised, once more strong enough to seek to impose their will on the peoples of the world. In South Africa these forces found fertile ground, enriched by a long history of colonial and white minority domination, and made specially favourable by the fact that the present rulers of our country had for many years prior to their 1948 victory organized themselves into the Nazi vanguard of South Africa, adopted and schooled themselves to the philosophy and practice of Nazism and openly declared their determination to turn South Africa into a Nazi stronghold.

When, therefore, this Nazi vanguard came to power, and for so long as it retained its hold on this power, it was clear that the task which mankind had set itself - to rid the world of fascist tyranny - and for which it had already paid such a high price, was as yet unaccomplished. Democratic humanity is thus faced with the task of dislodging and destroying the forces of Nazism, now embedded in the fabric of South African society.

When the United Nations resolved in its 1975 General Assembly session that it has a "special responsibility towards the people of South Africa", it was acknowledging and laying emphasis on the fact that we had inherited the retreating but unrepentant forces of Nazi aggression and domination. What Nazism achieved through gas chambers and concentration camps nearly four decades ago has been repeated in our country over the past 30 years by subtle methods and techniques, with Sharpeville and Soweto serving as danger signals alerting mankind to the gruesome inhumanity of the South African apartheid system. No one could possibly deny that millions of black people who should be alive and healthy today have died during the past 30 years, killed and consumed by the apartheid system and those who work it.

We want to suggest here that this "special responsibility", by the very nature of its origin, is shared alike by the peoples of the world. It extends to the millions upon millions of the peoples of Europe, Africa, the Americas and Asia who stood together to defeat fascism, who came together to form this Organisation, and who, by that act, collectively pledged to ensure that the scourge of the swastika would never again haunt the world.

The world-wide programme of activities to observe the International Year against the inhuman apartheid system should therefore not overlook the Nazi component of that system, and should reflect *the* essential continuity of the struggle from Hitler to Vorster. These activities and actions should in part be targeted on all the well-known and notorious pillars of support for the apartheid regime which are political, economic military realtal. *and cultural.*

In turn, we the people of South Africa, under the leadership of A.N.C., as the front-line soldiers, the spearhead of the democratic and anti-fascist forces, accept it as an obligation we owe to Africa and to all progressive mankind to crush the fascist monster in our country, to expunge from the face of the earth this forward base of Nazism and thus ensure, for all the people of South Africa in the first instance, freedom, peace and social progress.

During the past 30 years, we have also seen very rapid advances in the economic development of the country with the apartheid state intervening on a massive and comprehensive scale to build up the technical base of an increasingly industrial economy, to concentrate capital into fewer and fewer hands, to ensure huge profits for these few monopolies which today **dominate the** important sectors of the economy. It is no accident that today the Vorster regime is able to boast about the capacity of the country to produce armaments.

The racist regime also prides itself on having one of the most powerful armies on the African continent, and for good reason: For nearly 20 years the fascists have paid particular attention to the creation of a force of aggression with an offensive **capability** far beyond the task of suppressing the national liberation movement within the country. Today the world is confronted by the reality that the racist regime has the capacity to produce nuclear weapons and has acquired the means for their delivery. What is to come has already been presaged by the arrogant invasion of the People's Republic of Angola and by the so-called extension of the defence border to the equator. The criminal acts of armed aggression against Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia are not unrelated to the aggressive policies of the South Africa regime.

The path that the apartheid regime has traversed over the last 30 years is in essence no different from that pursued by Nazis in the period up to 1939. It is inevitable that like its predecessor, the South African Reich will seek to impose a world order characterized by national and colonial oppression, extreme exploitation, rabid racism and fascist repression.

We have said before and say again that by its nature, apartheid, like Nazism, constitutes a threat to peace and international security. The collective experience of the peoples of the world attests to the truth of this statement.

Yet there are some Member States of this, of all Organisations, who today refuse to recognise this reality. In this regard, history is again repeating itself. Once more the Western Powers are embarked on a policy of appeasement for very much the same reasons as they gave encouragement to Nazi Germany, and they routinely proffer the same arguments to justify this dangerous policy.

Again the reason for this is to be found in the fact that the same West European and North American financial and military interests which financed and armed Nazi Germany still occupy decisive positions in these countries today. As in the past, they are moved by considerations of earning super profits and therefore support any regime that guarantees them these profits, without regard to the cost in human privation and suffering.

Fundamentally hostile to the aspiration of the peoples to determine and control their own destiny, the multi-national corporations and the military-industrial complexes as well as their political representatives in the leading Western Countries are infected and guided by a chronic anti-communism which sees fundamental democratic advances as a communist threat to their interests.

The continued resolve of the imperialist powers to roll back the advance of democracy, on their own or through their representatives, has been demonstrated by the brutal war of aggression against the people of Viet Nam; the bloody suppression of the people of Chile; the massacre of the Palestinian people for daring to say that they also are entitled to their own country and their own national rights. Even the Italian people are threatened with reprisals if in the exercise of their democratic rights, in their own country, they elect representatives that the United States Government might not like.

Half a century ago, the forces of reaction designed a grand strategy to strengthen Nazi Germany with a view to using her as their striking force for the imperialist domination of the world. That policy led to one of the most barbaric episodes in the history of mankind, the highest price being paid by the ordinary working people of the world who had never sought war but yearned for peace, democracy, a fuller life for themselves and equality among the peoples.

The same strategy is being pursued today with regard to apartheid South Africa. The same interests are continuing to strengthen the Vorster regime and wish to use the South African fascists as their striking force against the peoples of the African continent to stall and reverse our advance towards complete political and economic independence.

Already the sterling efforts of the Governments of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zambia and the People's Republic of Angola and Mozambique to improve the lives of their peoples have to take into account the fact that on their borders there exists a regime which is hostile to their efforts, a regime which on a daily basis uses its economic, military and political power to try to transform these countries into appendages of apartheid South Africa. Recent events prove this. The international community is confronted with the immediate threat that the Vorster regime will sooner or later gamble on its military might to ensure the success of this policy.

The African Nations Congress is convinced that these attempts will fail, thanks to the firm patriotic and anti-racist positions of the Governments and peoples of the independent countries of Southern Africa. We are equally convinced that we must play a decisive role to guarantee this victory.

As we have done before, we wish to pledge again that the African National Congress, its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, its allies, and our people as a whole will spare neither their lives nor their labour in the sacred struggle to rid the world of the South African fountainhead of racism, fascism and international aggression. To the same degree, we pledge our support for the armed struggles of the people of Namibia led by SWAPO, the Zimbabwe people fighting under the banner of the Patriotic Front, and the Palestinian people, presently the victims of brutal Israeli aggression. Our specific special responsibility to the peoples of the world lies in our ensuring that our country is removed from the coterie of areas which constitute a threat to international peace and security. We, together with the Governments and the peoples of Southern Africa must ensure that fascism is denied the regional base which would improve its possibility to act out its role to its ultimate limits as the enemy of mankind.

We are therefore the front-line troops of a world-wide army which, victorious in 1945, is still confronted with the responsibility of ensuring that the peaceable purposes of that victory are not compromised or denied by permitting the forces of international reaction in South Africa or any other part of the world to regroup and prepare themselves for their longer-term objectives.

The international campaign of solidarity with our fighting people, and all the peoples of Southern Africa must therefore be seen in the wider and more fundamental context of building a world in which democracy, social progress and peace are assured.

The United Nations Organisation is seized of such fundamental questions as the evolution of a new international economic order, the abolition of hunger, disease and ignorance throughout the world, world disarmament and the creation of other conditions to ensure a just and permanent world peace. Despite the gigantic and difficult problem that faces them, our people are also concerned to see a quick and appropriate solution of these problems.

It is a matter of great strength to us that the peoples of Africa, united in the OAU stand with us in our struggle to destroy the apartheid regime, and liberate our country.

The Socialist countries are ever a bed-rock which assures us the material and political support to counter the preponderant assistance which the powerful economic, military and political establishment of the leading imperialist countries accord to fascism in South Africa.

Ever increasing numbers of peoples and Governments in Asia, Latin America and Western Europe are also joining hands with us in the struggle. We must again pay tribute to the Nordic countries, Holland and Canada for the more responsive positions they are taking to our demand for concrete action to isolate the Vorster regime.

Much has been done throughout the world by voluntary anti-apartheid groups, by democratic political parties and the international trade union movement, and by the United Nations itself to advance our common cause. Without the support of these forces our struggle would not have reached the level that it has today.

Yet, in spite of the heroic sacrifices of our people, in spite of the actions of the rest of mankind in support of our struggle, the reality is that the Vorster regime remains uncowed. This as you know and as we have said is thanks to the support which that regime gets from the dominant forces in the imperialist countries which, even in their own countries, are continually looking for ways to circumscribe the democratic voice of the people, which are increasingly playing up the politics of racism and which are continuing to use their intelligence services as an instrument of terror against their own people.

In this historic International Year against Apartheid a specific responsibility therefore rests with the democratic peoples of the world to compel the Governments of the leading West European and North American countries to implement the programme of action adopted by the United Nations, to impose comprehensive economic sanctions against the Vorster regime, to ensure the strict observance of the mandatory arms embargo covering both spare parts and nuclear energy, and generally to ensure the total isolation of the apartheid regime.

Centrally there is the task of supporting, politically and materially, the armed struggle and the entire liberation forces led by the African National Congress.

We make this ^{appeal} appeal to the world community through the United Nations Organisation in the conviction that the whole of this humanity has been alerted to the international danger posed by the continuation of fascist white minority rule in South Africa. We make the appeal to those with whom we are united in a common struggle, those who genuinely value their own liberty, and who realize that the persistence of the apartheid-colonialist system in Namibia, Zimbabwe and particularly, in South Africa, is a fundamental condition for the disruption of

world peace on a scale unprecedented in the history of human conflict.

But we emphasize that however forbidding the sacrifice we in South Africa have to make as the price of victory, it is all dwarfed by the greatness, the supreme nobility and above all, the absolute justice of the cause for which we fight. Inevitably, therefore, we shall win; Africa will be totally liberated; a new and truly democratic world order will be born, and, as the ANC declares in its Freedom Charter, there will be peace and friendship.

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