



**SATIS (Southern Africa the Imprisoned Society)**

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Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP  
 Prime Minister,  
 10 Downing Street,  
 London, SW1

13th October 1989

UPINGTON 14

Dear Mrs Thatcher,

I am writing to you on behalf of the SATIS Committee concerning the case of the Upington 14. The Upington 14 are residents of the township of Paballelo - one of the most deprived in the whole of South Africa - outside Upington. They were sentenced to death on 26th May this year. The case has many similarities with that of the Sharpeville Six especially in that they were found guilty under the doctrine of "common purpose."

Their trial began three years ago today. I have been fully briefed by lawyers involved in the trial and if these executions go ahead it would be a complete travesty of justice. It is a case which meets all the criteria which you have laid down as the basis for an intervention by the British government.

The case raises wider issues. Pabellelo was a community with no history of political activity before the events of November 1985 which led to the death of the policeman whom the accused were found guilty of murdering.

The execution of all or any of the Upington 14 can only further contribute to the cycle of violence in South Africa. This is why we believe that it is essential for the British government to use its influence by intervening to stop the execution of the Upington 14.

As you will be aware the British government reacted promptly and swiftly following the sentencing of the Sharpeville Six. We welcomed this action and this is why we are so dismayed that the Government has not yet intervened over the Upington 14.

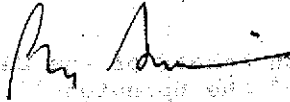
We also believe that such an intervention will contribute to the process of negotiations to end apartheid. The Organisation of African Unity has sensibly identified the cessation of political executions as one of the pre-conditions for creating the conditions for genuine negotiations. This strengthens the case for such an intervention.

SATIS (Southern Africa the Imprisoned Society) initiates and co-ordinates campaigns in Britain and internationally against repression and for the release of all political prisoners and detainees in Namibia and South Africa. The SATIS Committee includes representatives from: Alliance of Radical Methodists · Anti-Apartheid Movement · British Defence and Aid Fund · COSAWR · Haldane Society · International Defence and Aid Fund · Jews Against Apartheid · Lawyers Against Apartheid · Liberation · MSF · National Union of Students · Namibian Support Committee · Pax Christi · Society of Black Lawyers · UNA Youth Council · Young Social and Liberal Democrats of England

We cannot accept that the Government has to wait for all legal avenues to be exhausted before it makes any intervention. Indeed we believe that such a delay could reduce the impact and effectiveness of such an intervention, especially in a case such as the Upington 14, by conveying the impression that it is reluctant to do so.

We would hope very much that you will give serious consideration to an immediate intervention on behalf of the Upington 14 and to giving support to the OAU's call for a cessation of all political executions.

Yours sincerely,



**Geoffrey Bindman**  
Chair of SATIS