



# ***Southern Africa-the Imprisoned Society***

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## **SATIS-ACTION** ***urgent action against political repression in Southern Africa***

SATIS (Southern Africa-The Imprisoned Society) campaigns on behalf of political prisoners and detainees in South Africa and Namibia – those who because of their opposition to the apartheid regime face the massive arsenal of its repressive machinery, and who the regime is determined to silence.

The women and men who have dared to speak and act against apartheid need your support as they face detention without trial, bannings, political trials, and prison sentences, even torture at the hands of the apartheid state and death sentences. SATIS calls on all those opposed to racism and political repression to speak out in protest against this continuing barbarity. Apartheid seeks to silence its opponents – use your voice to call for the release of all political prisoners in South Africa and Namibia. Join the SATISACTION scheme and give your support to the victims of this crime against humanity.



*Nelson Mandela*

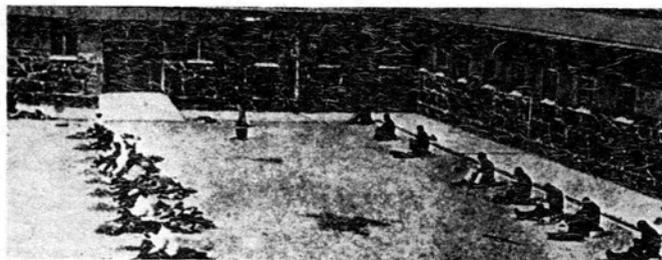
# **RELEASE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND NAMIBIA!**

# REPRESSION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Apartheid South Africa is a racist state in which the vast majority, the black people, are denied all political rights and are treated as nothing more than units of labour in an economic system that ensures a very high standard of living for the white minority. Black people are paid poverty wages and in the rural areas poverty, disease and malnutrition are rife. Ever since the process of subjugating and exploiting the blacks began, all protests have been ruthlessly crushed and white

... he put a big wet towel over my head and round my neck. He then pulled the two ends of the towel tight, which made me feel I could not breathe. When he took the towel away he said, "Now you can see how Mapetla died." After the third time they removed the towel and left me lying on the floor.'

*Thenjiwe Mtintso, 1977*



*Courtyard, Robben Island*

Church men and women, students, lawyers, trade unionists, journalists — all are at risk.

Political trials are a common feature of South African life. 'The white man makes all the laws, he drags us before his courts and accuses us, and he sits in judgment over us.' (*Nelson Mandela, statement to the court, 1962*) As Mandela explained, there is no possibility for a fair trial under such circumstances: 'In a political trial... which involves a clash of aspirations of the African people and those of the whites, the country's courts, as presently constituted, cannot be impartial or fair.'

Recently several trials have involved charges of high treason against those who have participated in guerrilla activities, such as attacks on police and military installations and sabotage of power station and rail networks. Such activities have been undertaken because the regime has persistently refused to listen to peaceful protest and has acted with such brutality to crush it (as in Soweto when over 1,000 schoolchildren were shot dead) that the people have been left with no alternative but to submit to the degradation of apartheid or to fight. The answer of the regime has been to sentence these young people to death. SATIS opposes the death sentence and believes that in such cases captured freedom fighters must be accorded Prisoner of War status, as required by the Geneva Conventions, to which the African National Congress, the liberation movement, has declared its adherence. Protests to the regime, and calls upon our government to intervene, have been decisive factors in preventing such executions.

At present there are over 500 sentenced political prisoners in South Africa. In November 1981 over 120 people were under banning orders. Every year hundreds are detained without trial under the security laws.

laws have been passed to prevent further protest.

White South Africa today is armed with a battery of 'security' laws which must be the envy of every repressive regime. It stops at nothing in the attempt to silence and crush opposition to the racist apartheid system. At its most subtle political repression takes the form of banning orders to silence opponents; at its most brutal it takes the form of the police torturers who murdered Steve Biko and over 50 others who have 'died in detention'.

Legislation, passed in the all-white parliament, allows for arbitrary detention without trial, with no right of access to family or lawyers. Periods of detention can be renewed indefinitely, and it is not unusual for someone to be detained for

many months in solitary confinement. Torture of detainees for information or 'confessions' is widely carried on.

Anyone involved in opposition to the apartheid system is liable to be detained: for giving out anti-apartheid leaflets; for speaking at a meeting; for being involved in an independent trade union; for speaking out against forced evictions and deportations.

'Detention means that midnight knock when all about you is quiet... it means your seizure at dawn, dragged away from little children screaming and clinging to your skirt, imploring the white men dragging mummy to leave her alone.'

*Winnie Mandela*

# REPRESSION IN NAMIBIA



Herman ja Toivo

Namibia is illegally occupied by the South African regime, in spite of United Nations decrees and World Court judgments calling on South Africa to leave the territory and permit the Namibian people to govern themselves. Over 100,000 troops enforce the illegal occupation, terrorising the Namibian people. South Africa has exported some of its own repressive laws, such as the all-embracing Terrorism Act, to Namibia. This has also been declared illegal by the UN. In addition, the South African Administrator-General makes 'laws' in the form of unilateral proclamations, such as AG9 and AG26, which provide for detention without trial, with no form of legal representation. It is common for people to be detained under these 'laws' to be moved from one camp to another without relatives being informed of their whereabouts.

The Namibian people, led by their national liberation movement SWAPO, are resisting the South African occupation, many of them at great personal risk. Ida Jimmy, a prominent member of the SWAPO Women's Council, is currently serving a 7-year sentence for making a speech at a Namibia Day rally. Over 50 Namibians, including SWAPO founder Herman ja Toivo, are incarcerated in South Africa's Robben Island prison.

In May 1978 South African bombers and paratroopers attacked a Namibian refugee camp in southern Angola. Over 1,000 Namibians, 300 of them children of primary school age, were killed. At least 200 were seized and forcibly taken back to Namibia. Sixty-nine were released and gave eye-witness reports of terrifying tortures being carried out on those remaining in detention. The remaining detainees — at least 137 young Namibian men and women — are still being held without access to their families or to lawyers, at a concentration camp at Hardap Dam. They have never been charged with any offence.

Torture of detainees is widely carried out, ostensibly for information.

A recent and very disturbing development has been the increasing number of 'disappearances' in Namibia. This means that on a number of occasions people have been detained and then never heard of again — the security forces claim that they are not being held yet no trace of their whereabouts exists.

Their greatest weapons are secrecy and silence — ours are publicity and information.

Also of great urgency is the question of Prisoners of War — or rather the absence of them. South African troops are engaged in frequent confrontations with SWAPO guerrillas, yet South Africa says it holds no Prisoners of War. The fate of any Namibian captured by the SADF in such circumstances remains unknown.

**'I remember one girl called Lydia Musheko. . . She was beaten very hard because they were forcing her to agree that in SWAPO people don't have any food, or religion. She told them that in SWAPO we have got education, we have food, we have religion, and because she was not agreeing with them they beat her and shocked her with electricity... she bit her tongue and couldn't eat anything for a whole month. She could only drink.'**

*Magdalena Nghatana,  
Kassinga survivor*



Prisoners taken by South African troops during raids into Angola, May 1978

# YOUR SUPPORT IS VITAL

Past campaigns have shown that coordinated action can be effective. James Mange in South Africa, Markus Kateka and Aaron Mushimba in Namibia, and the Katumba brothers in Smith's Rhodesia were all saved from the gallows because of widely supported campaigns against their planned executions. However, political repression in South Africa and Namibia is escalating – there are more political trials and arrests, more death sentences, more detentions. This calls for a more coordinated and determined campaign by SATIS and its supporters. SATIS is therefore urging your support for its own urgent action scheme – SATISACTION – so that our response to news of detentions, trials, bannings and other repressive measures can be immediate and effective. Subscribers to the scheme will receive between six and nine mailings a year, each giving details of particular cases and proposing action you should take (eg letters/telegrams to the South African authorities and/or the British government). You will receive a return slip for SATIS so that we can monitor the level of activity in each case. Mailings will also include campaign proposals to help you get wider support from friends, colleagues, etc. The scheme is open to individuals and organisations – ask your organisation (eg trade union branch, church group, women's group, student union, etc) to subscribe to the scheme. Please give your support – it can help save lives!

**'We who are confined within the grey walls of the Pretoria regime's prisons reach out to our people.'**

*Nelson Mandela, in a message smuggled out of Robben Island Prison, 1976*

## JOIN SATIS-ACTION!



I/We wish to subscribe to the SATISACTION scheme

NAME ..... ORGANISATION .....

POSITION (if appropriate) .....

ADDRESS .....

..... TEL .....

If you are interested in taking up campaigns in any of the areas below please tick:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trade unionists | <input type="checkbox"/> Journalists            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students        | <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyers                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Women           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Churchpeople    |   |

I enclose ..... (minimum £5) annual subscription towards administrative costs

Return to **SATIS c/o 13 Selous Street, London NW1.**