

1982

YEAR OF INTERNATIONAL MOBILIZATION FOR
SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

Mr. Chairman,

The African National Congress on whose behalf I here appear is honoured by the invitation to address the world community through you and the General Assembly of the United Nations.

You have come together to discuss one of the most serious and fateful issues confronting you, the peoples of Africa and particularly my own country South Africa with its combined population of 27 million.

The issue of South Africa, the position of the Black majority under apartheid and the aggressive actions taken by the government representing the white minority has been before the United Nations for more than one third of a century. On repeated occasions the world body has condemned the vicious system of discrimination exercised against the Black majority. This Assembly has at all time recognized the legitimacy of our struggle for national liberation from what in effect constitutes a racial autocracy which is determined to perpetuate a form of colonial oppression and exploitation which exists today only in Namibia and South Africa.

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I should like to take this opportunity to commend the General Assembly for declaring 1982 a Year of International Mobilization for the enforcement of sanctions against South Africa. Needless to say this decision is in keeping with numerous resolutions adopted by the Assembly in the past 35 years.

This Assembly has adopted mandatory sanctions against South Africa but the decisive step has never been taken however because certain Western governments who are allies of the racist regime have protected it by using their powers of veto in the Security Council.

The oppressed people of South Africa are fully aware of the sinister role being played by the international forces lined up against us. The powerful industrial countries that trade with South Africa and provide it with advanced technology and equipment have in defiance of the spirit of the United Nations resolutions given the white minority of 4 1/2 million people the capacity to build up the most powerful military machine on the continent of Africa.

It is this assistance that enables the small minority to defy with impunity the entire African continent and international community.

It is true that current attitudes adopted by the USA administration has given the racist minority a boost of confidence, strengthening its avowed aim to conduct a total war on all fronts, encouraged the ruthless invasion of Mozambique and Angola and in so doing contributed to the massacre of civilians in Southern Angola.

We call on this world body to put an end to the moral support and material aid provided by the Western powers to the racist minority, thereby enabling it to conduct an undeclared war against independent states in Southern Africa.

My organisation representing the majority of the oppressed Black people and white democrats appealed for the imposition of sanctions against the apartheid regime as far back as the 1950's before we took up arms in our struggle for liberation.

South Africa's defiance of world opinion and the backing it receives from NATO powers will not stop the struggle for freedom and independence. We shall not lay down arms until we have destroyed the racist autocracy and the evils of apartheid.

It is our considered view that the imposition of mandatory sanctions would not only serve to further isolate the racists, but would also help to hasten the process of revolutionary changes and put an end to the suffering endured by our people.

We recognize that some sympathetic observers are reluctant to enforce comprehensive sanctions because they say it will inflict sufferings on our people and neighbouring states. There is a reality in that point of view: suffering will follow.

Our people however are prepared to make this sacrifice. Moreover an escalation of the war that is now being fought will bring in its train much greater destruction, loss of life and sufferings. Sanctions are an alternative to war. Let me remind the distinguished representatives of member states that the war is now being fought in Southern Africa, that racist army units are now entrenched in Southern Angola and are posed for action against the People's Republic of Mozambique in support of the so-called Mozambique National Resistance Movement.

The opposition to mandatory sanctions appears to be motivated by economic and strategic considerations. Those who put profits before human suffering, who sacrifice life and liberty to wealth and prosperity for the few - their investments cannot be assured in a period of revolutionary change.

The South African workers have demonstrated in the past two years their complete rejection of industrial colour bars, pass laws, migratory labour and the network of repressive laws that prevent us from taking our proper place in a developed economy.

Nothing will stop us from continuing the struggle for dignity, equality and liberty.

As regards the strategic factor the racists have for many years expressed a willingness to place our country, its ports, airfields and vast resources at the disposal of the Western powers and in particular the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. We understand the enormous advantages that military and naval commanders foresee in having secure bases at the tip of Africa and along the Atlantic and Indian Ocean Seaboards. Let me however put the question to the distinguished members here assembled. How secure will these bases be in the event of a global conflict? I hereby declare ~~that~~ with all the conviction and strength of our movement that the Liberation Army will turn a war in which racist South Africa participate into a civil war.

This year we are celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the African National Congress, a movement which has ~~sub~~gone through many trials, suffered persecution at the hands of the racist minority. Yet in its 70th year, though proscribed and persecuted, we stand stronger than ever and firmly united in the knowledge that the overwhelming majority of our people, Black and white, support our cause.

We shall win our struggle whatever the odds against us may be.

We call on the international community to endorse our appeal for comprehensive sanctions against the relics of colonialism in Africa, against a minority group which seeks to perpetuate its monopoly of power, wealth, property and prestige regardless of the sufferings it inflicts on millions of people in Southern Africa.

We appeal for support in the name of human dignity, peace and stability which alone can ensure social and economic progress for us all.