

UDF REAFFIRMS NON-VIOLENT POSITION

Following misinterpretation by the media and the US State Department of the UDF open letter to US Secretary of State George Schultz, the UDF is compelled to reiterate its commitment to non-violent democratic opposition to apartheid.

An incorrect impression has been created implying that the UDF is at the point of abandoning non-violent strategies of democratic opposition to apartheid. The media in general and the US State Department in particular take issue with the phrase in the UDF's open letter: "The UDF and the legal opposition movement are being thrust by the unrelenting repression of the regime into a position where it may have to review its non-violent principles."

The UDF would therefore like to put the meaning of the above quote into its proper context, and therefore clear the confusion created

The very birth of the UDF in 1983 was accompanied by the most sinister methods of repression and intimidation of its leadership and affiliates calculated mainly to disrupt its legal democratic opposition to apartheid. What has happened since then are various attempts by the state to crush the legal democratic movement in our country.

Meetings and campaigns remain banned, draconian restrictions have been censoring statements and publications, hundreds of our supporters face charges, thousands of activists are still in detention, the army continues to occupy townships, and apartheid death squads are free to assassinate UDF supporters.

The UDF has, therefore, correctly pointed out on many occasions that the legal terrain within which the democratic movement has been operating is narrowing daily.

The apartheid regime is engaged in a process of ensuring that ultimately there will be no room left for legal and non-violent opposition to apartheid. As and when this happens, the UDF may be compelled to review its non-violent strategies.

Until then, however, the UDF's record speaks for itself. Under the most difficult conditions and despite brutal and sustained attacks by the state, we have continued to explore every legal and peaceful avenue to further effective mass opposition to apartheid.

It is the failure of the Reagan administration to seriously object to these attacks against us, which has been one of the most important factors encouraging the apartheid regime to systematically cut off all peaceful and legal avenues of opposition. It is for this reason that we called on Mr Schultz to condemn the main source of violence in our region, namely the South African government and the system of apartheid.


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