

CINPROS

COMISION INTERNACIONAL DE LOS
PROFESIONALES DE LA SALUD
para la salud y los Derechos del Hombre



ICHP

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS
for Health and Human Rights

CINPROS

COMMISSION INTERNATIONALE DES
PROFESSIONNELS DE LA SANTE
pour la Santé et les Droits de l'Homme

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The President of the Republic
of South Africa
P.W. Botha
Union Building
Pretoria
Republic of South Africa

June 18, 1986

Your Excellency,

At the international seminar organized by ICHP/CINPROS on June 16/17, 1986 in Geneva, Switzerland entitled "Health Professionals Ethical Problems in Situations where Human Rights are Violated", members of our commission and other participants considered the current trends of human rights in South Africa in the light of the system of apartheid and the declaration of the nationwide state of emergency, and they expressed their belief that abuses of human rights by government or its agents are never justifiable under any circumstances, whether in peacetime, or in response to civil unrest.

Our commission has been greatly concerned by evidence of increasing violence and torture, whether in police custody, in detention, in public places, or in the home. We believe that certain features of the legal system encourage these abuses of human rights by the South African police forces and other law enforcement agencies. We wish to draw attention in particular to the acceptance by the South African courts of evidence obtained under torture, which we consider to be a breach of the principles of fair trial. Also, we wish to protest against the abuse of prosecution under criminal procedures or civil law in cases of extra-judiciary killing or maiming.

The work of health professionals has been obstructed and distorted by interference with normal medical practices such as has happened recently in the clinic of Alexandra and Crossroads, or by harassment as in the case of Dr. Wendy Orr and the nurses of Bharagwanath hospital. This violates

President: Dr. Arni Meyer-Lie (Sweden), Vice Presidents: Dr. Robert Bannerman (Ghana), Dr. Chikot Vas (India). Members of the Executive Committee: Miss Marjorie Duvillard (Switzerland), Dr. Richard Goldstein (USA), Dr. Norberto Ignacio Litwki (Argentina), Dr. Mita Pardo de Tavera (Philippines). Other commission members: Dr. Salah Al-Ateegy (Kuwait), Dr. Rosalie Bertell (Canada), Dr. Zafullah Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Dr. Miriam Gaxiola (Mexico), Dr. Enrique Gulnberg (Mexico), Miss Yvonne Heatsch (Switzerland), Dr. Isao Hirota (Japan), Dr. Oumame Kitta (Guinea), Dr. Heloise Lorufe Manzano (Brazil), Dr. Fanny Pollarolo (Chile), Dr. Eric Ram (India), Dr. Paz Rojas (Chile), Dr. Mohammed Shaalan (Egypt), Dr. Anthony Storr (United Kingdom), Prof. George Wald (USA), Secretary General: Dr. Paulo Parra (Brazil), Executive Secretary: Dr. Charles Graves (USA).

both the rights of the patients and of the health workers.

We call on you to end the national state of oppression and to guarantee health professionals the freedom to work in accordance with ethical guidelines established by international medical, dental and nursing organizations which are based, in turn, on the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Standard Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, and the UN Principles of Medical Ethics (see annex appended).

We shall continue to support all those health professionals and organizations in South Africa who courageously maintain their professional standards and ethics based on the human rights of their patients.

We condemn those health professionals and organizations who participate in torture, whether under orders of the government or not, or who condone or camouflage its practice for any reason.

We urgently request that the health professionals presently in detention be released. We would particularly request information about the whereabouts and well-being of

Dr. Vijay Ramlakan (Durban)
 Dr. Dhlomo (Durban)
 Dr. M.M. Motala (Durban)
 Dr. V. Chitty (Durban)
 Ms. Oomie Jhetham (medical student, University of Natal)
 Dr. R.A.M. Saloojee (Johannesburg)
 Dr. Francis Hlahla (Mahwelereng)
 Dr. Fabien Ribeiro (Pretoria)
 Dr. Abubaker Asvat (Johannesburg)
 Mr. Saths Cooper (clinical psychologist, Durban)

We are looking forward to a reply at your earliest convenience.

With respects,

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Paulo Parra

Secretary General

Dr. Arnt Meyer-Lie

President