

A PETITIONER SPEAKS

MBURUMBA KERINA

The following speech was delivered to the United Nations Committee on South West Africa by Mr. Kerina, a spokesman for the non-white inhabitants of the Territory. His brother was amongst those killed during the Windhoek disturbances on December 10.

MR. CHAIRMAN, a grave and critical situation exists in my country. This situation requires immediate and decisive action by the United Nations.

The United Nations can no longer countenance the appalling behaviour of the South African Government in the International Territory of South West Africa. We have stated here repeatedly, and seemingly to deaf ears, that there is a limit to the suffering which the people of South West Africa can be compelled to endure. We have reached that limit. This is the end of our tolerance of midnight arrests, unjustified imprisonments, forced labour, removal from our traditional lands and the imposition of the alien doctrine of apartheid by those who cannot respect our humanity.

The cold-blooded killing of our people by the South African troops and the declaration of the state of emergency is not only an effort to suppress and victimize our people, but also a deliberate measure of intimidation against our people's demands that our territory be placed under United Nations trusteeship. Our people have been told time and again that the U.N. would do nothing to help them—most recently by the very Mr. J. G. van der Wath who spoke here of the benevolent intentions of the South African Government. The Foreign Minister has even gone to the length of charging that the U.N. is responsible for the state of affairs in S.W.A. It is—for not having taken action long ago to prevent this inevitable consequence of South Africa's flagrant violation of every principle of this organization.

The massacre of our people by Union troops and the continued bloodshed which will follow as long as South Africa is present in our land must be faced responsibly by this organization. The time has come for the United Nations to examine the platitudes and distortions of truth spoken by the representatives of the Union Government. The Union Government systematically uses these fabrications at the United Nations to disguise its real intentions. The current actions of the South Africans are as much a test of the United Nations ability to act to prevent them as they are a demonstration of strength and act of intimidation of our

people.

What has happened in S.W.A. points up the urgency of the need of a compulsory judgment of the International Court in this matter. Further, it requires the direct intervention of the Security Council. If there is any act to be called a "threat to international peace and security", the deliberate slaughter of innocent people in an international territory *is*.

Mr. Chairman, the people of South West Africa have lived for many years under this reign of terror. The present crisis is only the inevitable conclusion of what our condition has been and will continue to be as long as South Africa has any authority over us. What we demand is not just the end of these murders and the restoration of order, but we demand that immediate steps be taken to effect the immediate expulsion of South Africa from our land.

I appeal to the Committee on South West Africa to take the following steps immediately and simultaneously: (1) request the Secretary-General to visit South West Africa with a view to studying the situation and to report back at an early date; (2) inscribe the question of the crisis in South West Africa on the agenda of the Security Council for its immediate consideration and action. We have been authorized by our people to seek help from whatever source it is available. For 14 years we have maintained absolute faith in the U.N. and our hope that it would rescue us from this bondage. This is the final test of that faith.

STOP PRESS!

At the time of going to press with this issue of 'Africa South', the Deputy Minister of the Interior announced in reply to a question in the South African Parliament that legislation would be introduced this session "regarding the censorship of books and periodicals". The Bill has not yet been published, but there can be little doubt that its terms will make the continued publication of 'Africa South' within the Union useless, if not impossible. We hope that our readers everywhere, together with all those to whom the freedom of the press is a vital principle, will join us in expressing open hostility to any attempt by the South African Government to silence the voice of all opposition to its rule.
