

[press statements file]

PRESS STATEMENT ISSUED BY ANC COSATU UDF AND SAYCO

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PROGRAMME OF MASS ACTION AGAINST NATAL VIOLENCE CONTINUES

Monday's massive stayaway clearly demonstrated the deep concern of our people over the Natal violence. Virtually every family knows someone who has been directly affected by this terrible carnage. Therefore our organisations are determined to continue with our programme of mass action for peace, until the government takes decisive steps to end this violence.

This programme of action goes into its second phase on Saturday with national marches and rallies taking place, in every centre of the country. Over 20 marches and rallies for peace in Natal have been organised, both in the rural and urban centres (see attached list). We appeal to all peace-loving South Africans, including those who are not members of our organisations, to participate in these events to demonstrate their concern.

We are disturbed by the fact that a number of local authorities are obstructing Saturday's events. In particular we are concerned by the arrogant and high-handed attitude of the Vereeniging Municipality which has consistently over a long period of time refused residents permission to engage in protest action. This has now led to residents deciding to resort to a consumer boycott in that area. We intend to approach the government to register our protest at this refusal to allow our people to demonstrate their concern over the war in Natal.

We will shortly be approaching President De Klerk for a meeting on the Natal situation. We hope that the overwhelming demonstration of national concern over Natal will have brought home to the government that decisive action needs to be taken to meet the demands of our people.

We want to make it clear that Minister Vlok's recent announcement of a "solution" to the Natal violence is completely off the mark. Sending in 1000 more policeman, setting up 48 extra police "strongpoints", and introducing new legislation to "curb intimidation" can only worsen the situation. This is merely another version of Vlok's "iron fist" approach which has proved so disastrous in Natal. It seems that the Minister has failed to read extensive evidence which we have supplied to him which clearly demonstrates that the police have been a major part of the problem in Natal.

It is clear to us that certain sectors especially in the white community still do not appreciate the seriousness of the situation in Natal. There has been a massive propaganda campaign aimed at our white compatriots, which has attempted to claim that the violence in Natal is simply a "power struggle" between the ANC and Inkatha. We believe that we must set the record straight. We will therefore be briefing a wide range of people on the origins and the nature of the war in Natal, and our perspective on the solutions to that war.

Finally we are in the process of preparing for a major national Peace Conference on the war in Natal. The purpose of the conference is to bring together all those committed to bringing peace to the region in order to embark on a common programme of action. We plan to hold the Conference on the 4th and 5th of August. Details are still being finalised and will be announced to the press shortly.