

# JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE SOVIET AFRO-ASIAN SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE AND THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS MARCH 1989

During its official visit to the USSR in March 1989, the African National Congress delegation, headed by its Secretary-General, A Nzo, met with a delegation of the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, led by its chairman, M Kapitsa.

The delegations agreed that the principal source of problems faced by South Africa and the region is the apartheid regime. The apartheid system is sinking into an all-round crisis, with the legitimacy crisis being one of its most burning issues. This crisis entails an aggravated political situation and economic stagnation. Parties agreed that apartheid cannot be reformed — it must be destroyed.

The ruling group's verbal juggling is helpless to camouflage its intention to keep itself in power, and the racist laws in force, at any cost. The regime intensifies reprisals, even against conspicuously non-violent organisations. The shameful verdict at the Delmas trial of the UDF leaders is a recent illustration. The racists instigate the Natal conflict, where peace should be restored for all the oppressed people fighting their common enemy — apartheid.

The two sides agreed that the breakthrough in attaining a settlement in south-western Africa, namely, the proclaimed cessation of South Africa's aggression against Angola and commencement of the process leading to Namibia's independence, are a major victory scored by national liberation forces over forces of colonialism and reaction. This is a result of the Namibian people's courageous struggle led by SWAPO, and the heroic resistance of the Angolan people, supported by the Cuban internationalist forces and the rest of progressive humanity. The SAASC and the ANC call upon all honest people in the world to give as much aid as they can to the Namibian people to enable them to elect their constituent assembly in an atmosphere of peace and freedom, and under the United Nations' effective supervision and control.

The SAASC and the ANC point out that at present the South African government exerts vigorous efforts to break out of international isolation by publicising its forced withdrawal from Angola and the forthcoming independence of Namibia, but inside South Africa the regime continues its policy of repression.

The SAASC and the ANC express support for the measures designed by the world community of nations and by international public opinion to bring pressure to bear on the Pretoria regime, including economic sanctions, the cultural, academic and sporting boycott of the regime, and the other measures aimed at keeping the apartheid government in continued isolation. The SAASC and the ANC expressed their unreserved support for the mass democratic movement in South Africa, in its struggle against the system of racism and apartheid.

The SAASC and the ANC reiterated their preference for settling the country's problems by political means. At the same time, they pointed out that the South African people is fully entitled to choose its own ways and means of struggle, including armed struggle, in line with United Nations General Assembly resolution N43/50 of December 5th 1988.

The two sides confirmed their irrevocable demand that Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners in South Africa be released, and that captured combatants of Umkhonto We Sizwe be granted prisoner-of-war status in accordance with the Geneva Conventions of August 12th 1949 and the supplementary protocol No 1 of 1977.

The two sides agreed that South Africa's problems can only be settled through building a united, democratic, non-racial South Africa, on the basis of one person, one vote. Both sides believe that the *sine qua non* for a serious political dialogue in South Africa is the release of all political prisoners and detainees, the lifting of the state of emergency, the unbanning of the ANC and other democratic organisations, the free return of political exiles, and clearing the way for the people to express their will and to conduct political activities.

The SAASC assured the ANC that it was resolved to continue to give all possible moral, political and practical support to the South African national liberation and democratic movement, in its noble struggle for the liberation of the South African people.

Both sides expressed their profound conviction that the system of racism and apartheid will collapse as a result of the struggle waged by masses of people inside the country and the pressure applied by the world community in support of the just struggle of the South African people.