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SOWETO DAY

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today, on the twelfth anniversary of the terrible events in Soweto, expressed his continuing deep concern about the situation in South Africa. Mr. Clark once again urged the Government of South Africa to remove all restrictions on peaceful political activities and to initiate meaningful negotiations across racial and political lines to achieve a non-racial representative government.

The brutal acts of the South African security forces twelve years ago focussed the world's attention on the system of institutionalized racism known as apartheid. Today, despite superficial reforms, the situation remains essentially unchanged. Stark inequities based on race remain the basic reality for most South Africans. The overwhelming majority of the population is denied basic political rights. Access to a meaningful political process to try to bring about change is denied them.

The Government of South Africa continues to respond with systematic repression to even peaceful efforts pressing for the dismantling of apartheid. This year it has added to the long list of restrictions on peaceful political activities. It has tightened censorship. It has closed down publications which have dared to describe the realities of life in South Africa and to call for change. The renewal of the State of Emergency on June 9 is further evidence that the South African Government is not prepared to allow its citizens the basic rights we in Canada take for granted.

Aware of the most recent decision of the Pretoria Supreme Court not to grant a retrial to the "Sharpeville Six", Mr. Clark called upon the Government of South Africa to grant clemency to the Six if petitions for the right to appeal this decision are not accepted.

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Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures