

Department of External Affairs



Ministère des Affaires extérieures

Canada

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
FORTY-FOURTH SESSION

ITEM 6, 7 16 AND 17  
STATEMENT ON SOUTH AFRICA

OBSERVER DELEGATION OF CANADA  
STATEMENT BY MR. TOM HAMMOND  
DEPUTY HEAD OF DELEGATION  
11 FEBRUARY 1988

Mr. Chairman,

In the year since my delegation last spoke before this Commission on the situation in South Africa and Namibia overall conditions there have not improved. The Government of South Africa remains as intransigent as ever in the face of overwhelming internal opposition to and world-wide condemnation of its policies and practices. However, the resolve of those trying to end both the abhorrent system of apartheid and South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia has only grown stronger.

In South Africa a minority of the population continues to pretend to operate a democratic political system while denying political rights to the overwhelming majority of the population. It is a double standard that is based entirely on race and one that most South Africans and the world community find totally repugnant. While the system of apartheid remains intact, the Government of South Africa has accepted that it can never successfully justify it, either to South Africans or the rest of the world. Instead it tries to pretend that apartheid no longer exists. But the majority remains bereft of political rights, large numbers of South Africans are still being denied citizenship in their own land, controls are still placed on where people can live, and gross social and economic inequities remain apartheid's enduring legacy. Racism -- institutionalized in the legal, political and economic system -- continues to be the cornerstone of South African society.