



No. 246

December 8, 1988.

SOUTH AFRICA: TREASON TRIAL

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, The Right Honourable Joe Clark, today expressed great concern about the court's judgement on sentencing in the "Delmas Treason Trial" in South Africa.

On November 18, a South African court found four defendants guilty of treason and seven others guilty of other political "crimes" for their role in organizing opposition to apartheid in 1984/85. Several of the defendants are prominent members of the umbrella anti-apartheid organization, the United Democratic Front (UDF). Today, they received sentences up to twelve years. Eight others were acquitted.

Although the sentences were less severe than had been feared, Mr. Clark said the entire trial process appears to be an effort by the South African government to use the legal system to harass and suppress legitimate opposition to apartheid.

In Mr. Clark's opinion this practice could be used as a justification for further repression of peaceful opposition to apartheid.

Mr. Clark once again urged the Government of South Africa to negotiate with the leaders of the majority of South Africans instead of looking for new ways to jail them. Even though a lengthy appeal process is expected, Mr. Clark called on the Government of South Africa to intervene now to end what has been from the beginning an example of the use of the judicial process to pursue unacceptable political objectives.

- 30 -

Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures