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CANADA DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT SOUTH AFRICAN
GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PEACEFUL DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today expressed deep concern about the South African Government's response to peaceful protests against racial discrimination. "The recent harassment and detentions of opposition leaders and the tear-gassing of Archbishop Tutu and hundreds of schoolchildren without warning or provocation typifies the South African Government's response to peaceful political dissent and calls into serious question its professed desire to bring about change".

A non-violent defiance campaign is being waged by thousands of South Africans, under the leadership of the Mass Democratic Movement, a broad-based coalition comprised of the UDF, COSATU, church, youth, professional, community and other anti-apartheid organizations. It has included protests against racially segregated facilities, including hospitals, schools, and public transport, as well as against restrictions on organizations and peaceful dissent, political detentions and repression in general. Regrettably, instead of acting to repeal discriminatory and repressive legislation, the South African Government has chosen to respond with the harassment and detention of campaign leaders and the banning of and excessive use of force in breaking up protest meetings.

Mr. Clark urged the South African Government to meet the legitimate demands of those calling for an end to racial discrimination and to release political detainees, including UDF leader Mohammed Valli. He also urged that free expression of peaceful opposition not be stifled. In this connection Mr. Clark expressed his hope that this weekend's major peace rally in Soweto organized by the churches and the October "Conference for a Democratic Future" would not be banned.

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Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures