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POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs today called on the Government of the Republic of South Africa to act quickly to release political prisoners who remain in detention for opposing apartheid.

Mr. Clark welcomed the release on November 5, 1987 of five opponents of apartheid, including former ANC Chairman Govan Mbeki. Mr. Clark urged the Government of South Africa to remove all remaining restrictions on the freedom of Mr. Mbeki and the others. Mr. Mbeki cannot be quoted by South Africa's media.

Mr. Clark noted that the release of political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela, is recognized as necessary for meaningful dialogue in South Africa by all authentic black leaders, including those such as Chief Buthelezi who are not in detention or exile. This was also recognized in the Commonwealth's 1985 Nassau Accord and reaffirmed at the Vancouver Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. Mr. Clark, in responding to a request by the families of eight Western Cape leaders in detention for up to 450 days, called for their release and an end to South Africa's state of emergency.