

News Release

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SOUTH AFRICA: RELEASE OF DELMAS TREASON TRIALISTS

The Secretary of State of External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today stated that he was gratified that the convictions and sentences imposed on the Delmas Treason Trialists in South Africa had been set aside.

Since the Delmas Treason Trial began in 1986, the Canadian Government has repeatedly expressed its concern that the judicial process was being abused in this case to suppress legitimate criticism of apartheid. The Delmas trialists are prominent members of the umbrella anti-apartheid organization, the United Democratic Front. The UDF was restricted by the South African Government in February 1987 and it remains, in effect, banned in South Africa.

"I would like to pay tribute to the dedicated and energetic work of the legal team who defended the Delmas trialists. I would also like to commend the members of the South African Court of Appeals for sustaining fundamental principles of justice in this case. Decisions like this can only improve the climate for reconciliation in South Africa".

Mr. Clark emphasized that it is important that the Delmas Trialists be able to participate freely in the movement towards democracy in South Africa, in particular, in securing a negotiated solution to the political crisis.