

Daily reports from South Africa have informed us of the escalating struggle against the system of apartheid and the repression exercised by the authorities against this opposition. The Government of South Africa imposed emergency measures. These were briefly lifted and then in June 1986, reinstated in a harsher form. The South African government has also imposed a clamp-down on both local and international media reporting on the deteriorating situation.

Despite these draconian steps, over 300 violently-caused deaths have occurred in South Africa since June 1986 and an estimated 20,000 Blacks have been detained, some of them children.

Relations between South Africa and its neighbouring countries have also deteriorated and reached an unprecedented level of tension. South Africa has conducted military raids against Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe in May 1986. It has also applied economic pressures, slowing down the movement of merchandise across its borders.

Canada does not wish to remain passive in the face of the denial of basic human rights to the great majority of South Africans. We have taken several measures to manifest clearly our opposition to apartheid and to encourage peaceful change in South Africa. A step-by-step approach has been adopted in applying pressure on the South African government. Not itself a major economic partner of South Africa, Canada has recognized a need to work with other countries to encourage the adoption of meaningful measures. Canada condemned the use of repression, and called upon the Government of South Africa to enter into an equal partnership with all South Africans.

Sanctions in themselves are neither desirable nor necessarily effective; they are, however, the only instrument available for impressing upon the authorities South Africa the Canadian Government's view of the urgent need to achieve real progress in removing obstacles to basic human rights for the majority of South Africans. Canada's approach is one of steady and increasing pressure, in conjunction with the widest possible consensus that could be achieved internationally.

Measures adopted by Canada in support of peaceful change in South Africa have been both negative, i.e., in the nature of economic or other types of sanctions, and positive, i.e., in support of the oppressed majority in South Africa, or in support of South Africa's neighbours who are suffering indirectly from the internal situation in South Africa.