

36. SOUTH AFRICA

Background

In November 1983 the white community in South Africa voted in favour of a new constitution which extended limited political representation to those classified under apartheid as Indians and coloureds. The new constitution established a tricameral parliament with one chamber each for the Indian and coloured peoples, but gave the white chamber the power to override its counterparts and denied any political representation to blacks, who constitute almost three quarters of South Africa's population. Elections were held under the new system in 1984, but the voter turnout was exceptionally low. Protests against the new constitution, school boycotts, and protests against local Government structures and economic hardships spread throughout non-white residential areas.

Unrest continued through 1985. On 21 July the Government imposed a state of emergency throughout most of the country. A week later it banned outdoor funerals. In August the Congress of South African Students was banned and President Botha announced that he was opposed to the implementation of a one-man one-vote political system. In November the Government prohibited foreign news agencies from reporting on township violence.

Protest inside South Africa was accompanied by an increase in South African pressure against the Front Line States (Neighbouring States). In March 1984 Mozambique and South Africa signed the Nkomati Accord, whereby Pretoria agreed to stop supporting the Mozambiquan National Resistance while Maputo pledged to close African National Congress (ANC) facilities on his territory. In September 1985, however, Pretoria admitted to technical violations of the Accord. Similarly, the non-aggression agreement reached with Angola in January 1984 was violated by Pretoria in May, June and September 1985.