



Commonwealth Secretary General Sir Shridath Ramphal (left) and Canadian External Affairs Minister Joe Clark at meeting on South Africa: Making a case for international sanctions

Commonwealth countries to pressure for sanctions ⑨

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CANBERRA — Commonwealth governments are to use forthcoming international gatherings to serve joint demarches on countries failing to impose economic sanctions against South Africa.

The decision, agreed to by foreign ministers of eight Commonwealth countries at the end of a three-day meeting in Canberra, is part of a wider campaign to step up pressure on Pretoria.

External Affairs Minister Joe Clark said the meeting had "unquestionably helped prove the case" for international sanctions, and had documented the "devastating effect" of South Africa's destabilization policy on its neighbors.

The ministers also:

- Pointed to a "clear danger to free and fair elections" in Namibia. They put forward proposals to ensure the integrity of the November ballot, and made plans to send to Namibia an observer group and, if necessary, extra police.
- Voiced their "strong and unanimous desire" that next year's Commonwealth Games in Auckland should be an unqualified success.

On sanctions, which dominated the meeting, the ministers agreed to step up their lobbying of bank lenders to South Africa but left action on intensified trade sanctions to the heads of government meeting in Kuala Lumpur in October.

The decision on joint diplomatic action against countries failing to impose sanctions marks a significant escalation in the committee's position.

Now some or all of its eight members — Canada, Australia, India, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania and Guyana — are to use the UN General Assembly gathering, the Non-Aligned summit and the next Paris meeting on Cambodia to serve joint demarches.

Targeted countries are those whose trade with South Africa has increased over the past few years — among them Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Israel, West Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Turkey and Brazil.

The decisions represent a compromise between "front-line" African states seeking the immediate imposition of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against South Africa and others, such as Canada and Australia, which agree on the effectiveness of sanctions but wish to move more selectively.