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STATEMENT DELIVERED ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON, 28 OCTOBER 1977,
BY AMBASSADOR WILLIAM H. BARTON,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
NEW YORK,
DURING THE SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ON
THE QUESTION OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Security Council's debate on the question of South Africa and its policy of apartheid has been suspended for several months, but this does not reflect any lack of interest on the part of our Governments in this question; quite to the contrary, it is the result of the intensive international diplomatic efforts which are being directed towards the resolution of the problems of Southern Africa, in which the policy of apartheid of the Government of South Africa plays a central role. Let me summarize them briefly.

At the conclusion of our considerations during the month of March on this subject, the Five Western members joined together in an initiative designed to bring about the independence of Namibia in a manner consistent with the provisions of Resolution 385 of the Security Council. The exploration of the means of bringing about this objective has required a great deal of effort and is continuing. At the same time, the UK and USA have been involved in the elaboration of proposals designed to bring about early independence and majority rule in Zimbabwe. This initiative too has reached a decisive stage.

During the month of August the United Nations in cooperation with the OAU and the Federal Government of Nigeria convened in Lagos a World Conference for Action Against Apartheid. It was the most significant such conference yet held on this subject. It brought together delegations from 112 governments, 12 intergovernmental organizations, 5 liberation movements, 51 non-governmental organizations, and a number of

prominent individuals. The wide range of participation, as well as the high level at which governments were represented, left no doubt about the seriousness with which the international community regards the problem created by the policies and actions of the South African Government. The terms of the Lagos Declaration, which was adopted by consensus, set out in unmistakable language the intensity of the opposition of the international community to South Africa's system of apartheid. It underlined the support of the international community for the victims of those policies in their struggle to achieve full and equal participation in their own society.

In the wake of our deliberations here at the United Nations and elsewhere, and of the Lagos Conference, the Government of South Africa can have no illusions as to how it is seen by the rest of the world. Its policies, which have created a society embodying cruel divisions along racial lines, have been universally condemned. The South African Government has been advised by voices within and without that it has set its country on a road to disaster and that only a commitment in favour of fundamental change can avert it.

The response of the South African Government to international appeals and demands for progress towards racial justice has been uncompromising. Last month Mr. Steve Biko died in a South African prison. His was the 21st such death in South African prisons in the past 18 months. His death deprived black South Africans of a leader who was widely respected as a man with potential for engaging effectively in the inter-racial dialogue which is essential to a peaceful evolution of South African society. The Canadian Government made known its concern to the South African Government and advised them that a full and prompt investigation into the circumstances of Mr. Biko's death was warranted.

Mr. President, Canadians reacted with shock and dismay to the latest oppressive wave of bannings and detentions and the silencing of an important element of the South African press. To give expression to Canadian feelings in reaction to these events, the Canadian Government called in the South African Ambassador in Ottawa to convey to him and his Government our concerns.

Among those struggling courageously against the unjust and humiliating system of apartheid, is Mr. Percy Qoboza, the editor of the principle black newspaper "The World," which was among those banned last week. In a paper he prepared for a conference last May at the University of Pretoria, Mr. Qoboza stressed that black leaders wished to have a dialogue with the

whites of South Africa concerning the future of the country which is their common fatherland. He said "It is never too late to do the right thing. It is never too late to transform the might of South Africa into the might of justice and dignity for all. It is never too late to build a South Africa where people of all races can live together in mutual respect and tolerance." It is this generosity of spirit which must be encouraged among all segments of the South African population.

Mr. President, the Security Council is now considering measures which can be taken to promote change in South Africa. Opinions vary as to what kind of measures can most appropriately be employed to move towards that objective. There is no difference of opinion, however, among our members that action at this point is warranted, and we have concerted our efforts in exchanges of views since March and since Lagos on the variety of possibilities which lie before us.

The Canadian Government is prepared to support the imposition against South Africa of a mandatory arms embargo under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and, in addition, to support a call to all governments to review their economic relations with South Africa. Mr. President, the proposal in relation to the Chapter VII action is of profound significance. If adopted, it would be the first time that a member state of the United Nations is to be the subject of measures under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

The invocation of Chapter VII of the Charter has rightly been regarded as a grave decision to be taken only after the most serious consideration and a careful weighing of its implications. Canada has strictly maintained since 1963 a voluntary embargo on the export of arms and military equipment to South Africa, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. Since 1970 it has covered the export of spare parts. Nevertheless, in the light of the steady deterioration of the situation in South Africa over the last several months, and South Africa's continued ability to acquire arms and military equipment, the Canadian Government considers it appropriate that the voluntary arms embargo should now be made mandatory.

Mr. President, the implications of our actions here in this Council are far reaching and should be recognized as such. If we can reach agreement on a united determination of the kind I have indicated, a clear message will have been sent to the Government of South Africa and to those who support it from the world community, as expressed through the decisions of this Council. My Delegation looks forward to contributing to such a conclusion.