

STATEMENT DISCOURS

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85/47

Statement by the
Right Honourable Joe Clark,
Secretary of State for
External Affairs,
concerning South Africa

OTTAWA

August 14, 1985.

Questions have been raised about the Canadian Government's decision to receive the credentials of the South African Ambassador-designate at this time. Receiving his credentials does not suggest in any way that Canada condones the apartheid policies of the South African Government or the measures recently taken to enforce them.

On the contrary, the Government of Canada is appalled at the continuing refusal of the South African Government to enter into a genuine dialogue with the true representatives of the black majority in that country and most particularly by President Botha's refusal to see Bishop Desmond Tutu, who has devoted himself to preventing violence while seeking peaceful change. The Canadian Government has condemned the imposition of a state of emergency and the ensuing detention of many black leaders, now numbering some 1500. As I pointed out to the Royal Commonwealth Society in London, imprisoning hundreds is no way to start a dialogue. I also pointed out the importance of releasing Nelson Mandela if the South African Government genuinely means to pursue a constructive dialogue with the black majority in that country.

The Canadian Government cannot condone any of the repressive and discriminatory measures involved in the system of apartheid -- banning, detention without trial, job reservation, pass laws, the use of forced removals, and the denial of citizenship to those who have lived in South Africa all of their lives. We have already emphasized that action is urgent and that delay in dismantling these measures will only make it more difficult to do so in the future. It must also be clear to the South African Government, to President Botha and his colleagues, that the dismantling of apartheid cannot end other than with the participation of blacks in the government of their country, with their full participation in the exercise of political power. The policy statement I issued on July 6 stressed that 25 years has been too long to wait for these changes, and that it is not only the details of the apartheid system but its essential core -- the exclusion of blacks from the decision-making process in their own country -- which must be addressed.

The measures announced at that time were a first step in the review of policy towards South Africa. We are pursuing that review. In doing so, we are looking to the South African government to take real and practical steps to dismantle apartheid. Unless we see concrete action, not just vague intentions, further measures to oppose apartheid will be adopted.

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That is the message which Canada will be conveying to the South African authorities in official discussions on the occasion of the Ambassador's presentation of credentials and subsequently. I consider that it can be better conveyed by speaking directly to the Ambassador than by having recourse to gestures of delay which may signal disapproval but cannot spell out the seriousness of the message which the Canadian Government wishes to impress on South Africa.

In order to help assess this situation and the policy options, I have decided to recall the Canadian Ambassador in Pretoria for consultations. He will be taking part in the discussions which I shall be holding with representatives of Canadian business in September.