



Southern Africa - the imprisoned society

c/o 89 Charlotte Street London W1P 2QD Tel: 01-580 5311

18 September 1982

Dear Friends,

FREE NELSON MANDELA AND ALL SOUTH AFRICAN
POLITICAL PRISONERS

I am writing on behalf of the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Southern Africa - the Imprisoned Society (SATIS) Committee, which brings together a number of British organisations campaigning for the release of political prisoners in South Africa and Namibia.

You will be aware that August 5th 1982 marked the 20th Anniversary of the capture of Nelson Mandela, and that on this date calls were made by the President of the African National Congress, Oliver Tambo, and the Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, His Excellency Alhaji Yusuf Maitama-Sule, for a renewed and intensified campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela and all South African political prisoners. (Copies of these appeals are enclosed in case you have not already seen them).

We have discussed with the African National Congress and the United Nations Centre against Apartheid, as well as with a number of anti-apartheid and solidarity movements, how best to respond to this new challenge. We would like to propose that an internationally co-ordinated campaign be launched on October 11th this year, in as many different capital cities as possible. The character and nature of activities in each country will obviously vary from country to country, depending upon previous experience, if any, in campaigns for the release of Nelson Mandela, as well as the current state of campaigning on Southern Africa as a whole in your country. However, to give the international campaign a particular focus, we would like to suggest for consideration the organisation of an International Petition Campaign, in which signatures would be collected for a similar petition in as many countries as possible. This has already received a positive response from a number of anti-apartheid and solidarity movements with whom we have discussed it directly.

For your benefit, we have enclosed background information on the campaign, including press reports of the 20th Anniversary. We would naturally hope to produce additional material as the campaign progresses. We would be happy to play a role in co-ordinating, at an international level, anti-apartheid and solidarity movement activities during the period of this campaign and, in particular, would be willing to produce a "News Bulletin" on the campaign, which would include items from each country in order to ensure that we keep ourselves abreast of developments in the campaign. In order to assist in this respect, we have prepared a form which we would be grateful if you could complete and return to us as soon as possible.

We would be most grateful to hear of your response to this initiative.

With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,

Mike Terry
Executive Secretary

**A CALL FOR AN INTENSIFIED INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE RELEASE OF
NELSON ROLIHLEHLA MANDELA AND ALL OTHER SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL
PRISONERS BY O.R. TAMBO PRESIDENT OF THE
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICA**

On 5th August 1962 Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was captured by the South African regime in Natal. For two decades Mandela has been incarcerated in the dungeons of apartheid South Africa.

At the time of his arrest Nelson Mandela was Commander-in-Chief of our people's army Umkhonto We Sizwe and working underground in South Africa. He was continuing his life of struggle for the liberation of our people. He had served as National Secretary of the African National Congress Youth League, Volunteer-in-Chief of the 1952 Defiance Campaign and Transvaal President of the African National Congress.

For more than three decades Nelson Mandela has been a vital symbol of our people's struggle for freedom, human dignity and resistance to apartheid.

When the Rivonia Trial opened in 1963 Nelson Mandela was brought from Robben Island where he was serving a five year sentence for organising the 1961 strike against the regime's Republic and joined with the other leaders of the liberation movement charged with preparing to overthrow the apartheid state by armed uprising and guerrilla warfare. He was accused No 1. On 12 June 1964 Mandela, together with Walter Stulu, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Elias Motsoaledi, Andrew Mlangeni, Ahmed Kathrada and Denis Goldberg, was sentenced to life imprisonment.

In response to their sentence the late President General of the African National Congress, Chief Albert Lutuli, stated:

'They represent the highest in morality and ethics in the South African political struggle ... Their policies are in accordance with the deepest international principles of brotherhood and humanity; without their leadership, brotherhood and humanity may be blasted out of existence in South Africa for long decades. They believe profoundly in justice and reason; when they are locked away justice and peace will have departed from the South African scene.'

Prison walls cannot silence the ideas and spirit of Mandela and his comrades. This was reflected in a message smuggled out of Robben Island following the Soweto uprising which said:

'We who are confined within the grey walls of the Pretoria regime's prisons reach out to our people ... We salute all of you - the living, the injured and the dead, for you have dared to rise up against the tyrant's might.'

Today our people are unanimous in their demand for the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners and detainees. We have been encouraged by the repeated appeals for their release by the international community, including many heads of state and the United Nations Security Council itself.

On the 20th anniversary of the arrest of Nelson Mandela, 5th August, 1982, and on behalf of the entire membership of the African National Congress, the militants of Umkhonto We Sizwe who are fighting the apartheid regime on South African soil, and the oppressed people of South Africa, we call for an intensified worldwide campaign to demand the release of Nelson Mandela and all South African political prisoners.

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PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand

Location:- Johannesburg

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DOCUMENT DETAILS:

Document ID:- AG2918-2-5-1-1-2-7-1

Document Title:- Free Nelson Mandela and all South African prisoners, letter, and attached: Call for an intensified campaign

Author:- Southern Africa-The Imprisoned Society (SATIS)

Document Date:- 18-Sep-82