

# AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

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*W. J. Davis  
for Africa*

October 13, 1964

Representative Charles C. Diggs, Jr.  
House Office Building  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Congressman Diggs:

I am enclosing a memorandum which we issued just a few days ago about the case of three African leaders in South Africa who are presently condemned to die. I think that the enclosure gives the essential details in the case. It certainly is impossible to know at this distance exactly what the complicity of the three condemned men may have been in all of the actions with which they are charged. The one thing that is thoroughly clear is that as Africans they have had no opportunity of political expression or political involvement in the constitutional processes of their own country. Instead their activities have been banned and the government has refused to listen to the non-violent actions which have been taken by the African people over the last many years.

About the murder charge, Bishop Ambrose Reeves (formerly of Johannesburg) recently wrote:

While it is true that these three men were implicated in the murder insofar as it was discussed at a committee meeting at which they were present, as far as I can gather it has never been suggested by the prosecution that they actually took part in the murder of this man (who was to be a prosecution witness) who was regarded as a traitor to the organization of which all of them were members.

He goes on to comment:

The execution of these three men, all of whom are political leaders, can only lead to a serious worsening in relationships between the South African Government and the African people.

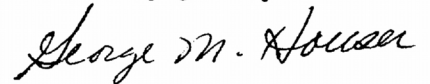
I realize that it is a delicate matter for the leaders of government in one country to raise questions or make protests to the leaders of another country. But in the case of South Africa it seems to me that because of the peculiar and extreme circumstances which exist there, that at least raising questions is valid.

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I would hope that you might wish to raise such questions yourself either with the President of South Africa, or urge the Secretary of State to quietly press for clemency.

If you need any further facts in this case I'd be happy to supply them.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George M. Houser". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

George M. Houser

(Dictated by Mr. Houser and signed in his absence)  
GMH/jkb

Enc.

