

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 29, 1985

Dear Mr. Crockett:

Thank you for your letter concerning the situation of South Africa's Nelson and Winnie Mandela.

I am sure you are aware that the President made a strong statement on Human Rights Day with respect to the situation in South Africa (attached). In his remarks the President called for the South African Government to end its practice of detention without trial and lengthy imprisonment of black leaders, in addition to calling for the establishment of a government based on the consent of the governed. I am certain the South African leadership was quick to understand that the statement implicitly called for the release of Nelson Mandela.

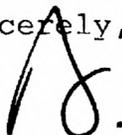
In the Administration's view, the approach most likely to achieve Mr. Mandela's release combines the kind of public statement President Reagan made on December 10 with private diplomatic approaches which deal explicitly with his case. This is exactly what we have been doing in the hope of securing his release. You may be assured that we will persevere in our efforts with the South African Government to secure the release of all political prisoners in that country.

As you know from an earlier letter from Ambassador Bennett, Mrs. Mandela is not incarcerated in prison but has been "banned" by the Government of South Africa. We continue to maintain contact with her, as she is allowed at least individual visits, and we persist in making known to the South African Government our opposition to banning.

We appreciate and share your deeply felt concern about the treatment of the Mandelas. Our efforts on their behalf will continue.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



M. B. Oglesby, Jr.  
Assistant to the President

The Honorable George W. Crockett, Jr  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

JAN 31 1985

*President Reagan*

# Rededication to the Cause of Human Rights

December 10, 1984



United States Department of State  
*Bureau of Public Affairs*  
Washington, D.C.

*Following are remarks by President Reagan in a ceremony commemorating Bill of Rights Day, Human Rights Day and Week, 1984, in Washington, D.C., December 10, 1984. Also included is the text of the President's proclamation.*

This ceremony marks more than another event on the White House calendar or another worthy cause for the national agenda; for in observing Human Rights Day, we rededicate ourselves to the cause of human dignity and freedom, a cause that goes to the heart of our national character and defines our national purpose.

So today, we dare to affirm again the commitment of the American people to the inalienable rights of all human beings. In reaffirming the moral beliefs that began our nation, we strive to make the United States what, we pray to God, it will always be—a beacon of hope to all the persecuted and oppressed of the world. And we resolve that, as a people, we'll never rest until the blessings of liberty and self-government are extended to all the nations of the Earth.

Two years ago in London, when I called for a crusade for freedom and human rights, I noted that these ideals—embodied in the rule of law, under God, and in the institutions of democratic self-government—were on the march. Because these ideals represent the oldest and noblest aspirations of the human spirit, I said then that this power is irresistible when compared to totalitarian ideologies that seek to roll back mankind's march to freedom.

Today, I want to take special note of evidence that this desire for self-determination, this recognition by the state of the inalienable rights of men and women everywhere, is nowhere stronger than close to our own borders in the lands of Latin America. In contrast to only a few years ago, today more than 90% of the people in Latin America and the Caribbean live in nations either democratically governed or moving in that direction.

While we're still doing all that we can to promote democratic change in nations such as Paraguay and Chile, we must not forget that over the last 5 years in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Peru, and, most recently, in Uruguay, military juntas have been replaced by elected civilian governments. And just last Monday, democratic values triumphed again as the people of Grenada freely elected a new civilian prime minister.

Today, all who cherish human rights and individual freedom salute the people of the Americas for their great achievements. And we pledge to our neighbors the continued support and assistance of the United States as they transform our entire hemisphere into a haven for democracy, peace, and human rights.

In other nations farther from our shores, we've also seen progress toward reducing the repression of human rights and some strengthening of democratic institutions. In some of these nations, which have authoritarian governments but friendly ties to the United States and the community of democratic na-

tions, quiet diplomacy has brought about humane and democratic change.

But we know there are occasions when quiet diplomacy is not enough, when we must remind the leaders of nations who are friendly to the United States that such friendship also carries responsibilities for them and for us. And that's why the United States calls for all governments to advance the democratic process and work toward a system of government based on the consent of the governed.

From our beginning, regard for human rights and the steady expansion of human freedom have defined the American experience. And they remain today the real, moral core of our foreign policy. The United States has said on many occasions that we view racism with repugnance. We feel a moral responsibility to speak out on this matter, to emphasize our concerns and our grief over the human and spiritual cost of apartheid in South Africa, to call upon the Government of South Africa to reach out to its black majority by ending the forced removal of blacks from their communities and the detention, without trial, and lengthy imprisonment of black leaders. Such action can comfort only those whose vision of South Africa's future is one of polarization, violence, and the final extinction of any hope for peaceful, democratic government. At the same time, we note with satisfaction that the South African Government has released 11 black leaders, including the top leaders of two of that country's most important labor unions.

Because we care deeply about the people of South Africa and the future of that nation, we ask that the constructive changes of recent years be broadened to address the aspirations of all South Africans. Peaceful change in South Africa, and throughout southern Africa, can come only when blacks and whites find a durable basis to live together, when they establish an effective dialogue, a dialogue sustained by adherence to democratic values and a belief in governments based on the consent of the governed. We urge both the Government and the people of South Africa to move toward a more just society. We pledge here today that if South Africans address the imperatives of constructive change, they will have the unswerving support of our government and people in this effort.

A few years ago, when I spoke of totalitarian ideologies as the greatest threat to personal freedom in the world today and the most persistent source of human suffering in our century, I also pointed out that the United States, too, has faced evils like racism, anti-

Semitism, and other forms of intolerance and disregard for human freedom. So while we work to see human rights extended throughout the world, this observance of Human Rights Day reminds us of our responsibility to assure against injustice and intolerance in our own land as well. And today, I call on the American people to reaffirm, in our daily lives and in the workings of our private and governmental institutions, a commitment to brotherhood and equal justice under the law.

But we do a serious disservice to the cause of human rights if we forget that, however mistaken and wrong, however stumbling the actions of democracies in seeking to achieve the ideals of freedom and brotherhood, our philosophy of government permits us to acknowledge, debate, and then correct mistakes, injustices, and violations of human rights. Let us always remember the critical moral distinction of our time—the clear difference between a philosophy of government that acknowledges wrongdoing and injustice and one that refuses to admit to such injustices and even justifies its own assaults on individual liberty in the name of a chimeric, utopian vision. Such brutal affronts to the human conscience as the systematic suppression of individual liberty in the Soviet Union and the denial of religious expression by Christians, Jews, and Muslims in that country are tragic examples.

Today, for example, the largest remaining Jewish community in Europe, Soviet Jewry, is again being exposed to a systematic anti-Semitic campaign. Ominously, teachers of the Hebrew language have been arrested and their efforts to preserve their culture and religion treated as a crime.

Soviet authorities are continuing to threaten many "refuseniks" with confinement in psychiatric hospitals, expulsion from their jobs, and internal exile. Yet thousands of Soviet Jews have applied for permission to emigrate. We have insisted and shall continue to insist that those who wish to leave must be allowed to do so.

Our heart also goes out today to an individual who has worked so hard for human rights progress in the Soviet Union and suffered so much for his efforts—the Nobel Prize laureate, Dr. Andrei Sakharov. Nothing more clearly illustrates the absence of what our Founding Fathers called a "decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind" than the cruel treatment of this great humanitarian. The Soviet Union, itself, would do much to regain respect within

the international community if it would allow academician Sakharov and his wife, Yelena Bonner, to live the rest of their lives in dignity in a place of their own choosing. We're pleased to have the Sakharovs' son-in-law here with us today.

The Sakharovs are the best known victims of human rights violations in the Soviet Union, but thousands of other Soviet citizens, such as Uri Orlov, or Anatoli Shcharanskiy—whose wife, Avital, is here with us today—suffer in Soviet prisons and labor camps for the sole crimes of expressing a personal opinion, seeking to emigrate, or openly expressing their love of God.

We Americans recognize a special responsibility to speak for the oppressed, wherever they may be. We think here of special cases like the persecution of the Baha'i religious minority in Iran. But we also acknowledge a special obligation to speak for those who suffer the repression of totalitarian regimes, regimes that refuse to acknowledge and correct injustice and that justify absolute state power even as they seek to extend their cruel rule to other lands.

So, we call today for all free peoples of the world to unite in resisting and bringing to an end such intolerable practices as the suppression of free trade unionism, the campaign against the church and against political freedom in Nicaragua, the continuing Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, and the barbaric war waged by Soviet troops in Afghanistan—a war which began 5 years ago this month with the Soviet invasion of that once nonaligned country.

As but one of the tragic consequences of Soviet actions in Afghanistan, more than one-third of the people of that country have fled from their homes and sought refuge in internal or external exile.

Finally, we welcome the recent steps taken by the Polish Government, but we urge that they are followed by lasting efforts for genuine, national reconciliation through effective dialogue with the Polish people.

So today, we, the people of the United States, in conjunction with other freedom-loving people everywhere in the world, rededicate ourselves to the cause of human rights, to the cause of democratic self-rule and human freedom. We reassert our belief that some day the repression of the human spirit and the special tragedy of totalitarian rule will be only a distant chapter in the human past. In doing so, we're deeply aware of our nation's long struggle toward achieving these goals and our own heritage

**PROCLAMATION 5287,  
DECEMBER 10, 1984**

On December 15, 1791, our Founding Fathers celebrated the ratification of the first ten amendments to the Constitution of the United States—a Bill of Rights that has helped guarantee the freedoms that all Americans cherish.

For the first time in the history of nations, our Founding Fathers established a written Constitution with enumerated rights based on the principle that the rights to life and liberty come not from the prerogative of government, but inhere in each person as a fundamental human heritage. Americans believe that all persons are equal in their possession of these unalienable rights and are entitled to respect because of the immense dignity and value of each human being. With these great principles in mind, the Founding Fathers designed a system of government limited in its powers, based upon just laws, and resting upon the consent of the governed.

When Americans first proclaimed this noble experiment in self-government and human liberty, it seemed to some to be a utopian, unrealistic ideal. Today, virtually every nation in the world has adopted a written constitution expressing in varying degrees fundamental human rights. One hundred and fifty-seven years after the ratification of our Bill of Rights, on December 10, 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirming an international consensus on behalf of the human

rights and individual liberties that we value so highly.

Thirty-six years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, however, it is clear that this consensus is often recognized more on paper than in practice. Throughout the world, many governments nominally adhere to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights while suppressing free elections, independent trade unions, due process of law, and freedom of religion and of the press.

The United States recognizes a special responsibility to advance the claims of the oppressed; to reaffirm the rights to life and liberty as fundamental rights upon which all others are based; and to safeguard the rights to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. As we are free, we must speak up for those who are not.

As Americans, we strongly object to and seek to end such affronts to the human conscience as the incarceration in the Soviet Union of men and women who try to speak out freely or who seek to exercise the basic right to emigrate; the harsh treatment accorded one of the great humanitarians of our time, Andrei Sakharov; the denial of basic human rights and self-determination in Eastern Europe and the Baltic states; the failure of the Polish authorities to establish an effective dialogue with the free trade union movement in that country; the manifest injustices of the apartheid system of racial discrimination in South Africa; the persecution of the Baha'i religious minority in Iran; the lack of progress toward democratic government in Chile and Paraguay; the cam-

paign against the Roman Catholic Church in Nicaragua; the suppression of freedom in Cuba and Vietnam; the brutal war waged by Soviet troops against the people of Afghanistan; and the continuing Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea.

The American people recognize that it is the denial of human rights, not their advocacy, that is a source of world tension. We recall the sacrifices that generations of Americans have made to preserve and protect liberty around the world. In this century alone, tens of thousands of Americans have laid down their lives on distant battlefields to uphold the cause of human rights. We honor and cherish them all. Today, it is with an abiding sense of gratitude and reverence that we remember the great gift of freedom that they bequeathed to us.

As we give special thought to the blessings that we enjoy as a free people, let us not forget the victims of human rights abuses around the world.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 10, 1984, as Human Rights Day and December 15, 1984, as Bill of Rights Day, and call on all Americans to observe the week beginning December 10, 1984, as Human Rights Week.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

RONALD REAGAN

of seeking to promote these ideals throughout the world.

Thomas Jefferson told us, "The mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs." And the poet Archibald MacLeish once said that some say the hope for ". . . the liberation of humanity, the freedom of man and mind, is nothing but a dream. They are right. It is. It is the American dream."

Another great American literary figure, F. Scott Fitzgerald, suggested that America is "a willingness of the heart." We've recently read a great deal about the young people of this nation about whom, some say, this willingness of the heart no longer exists. Well, my own experiences with this generation suggest that the traditional idealism of the young, their hope to accomplish great things, their willingness to serve the cause of humanity are not only intact but stronger than ever. And like every generation before it, this generation hungers for a cause, for a mission that will take it outside itself and let it help lift humanity beyond the material and the immediate to new heights of human and spiritual progress.

So today, let us challenge these young Americans to make our nation an even better example of what it was always meant to be—champion of the oppressed, defender of all who reach for freedom and for the right of self-determination. Let us challenge young Americans, excited by technological and material progress, to ensure that this progress enriches political freedom and human dignity as well. Here's a challenge that's worthy of our youth, of their vision, their energy, and their vigor. Let our younger generation lead young people throughout the world to join the democratic nations in promoting human rights and self-government and the cause of human freedom.

The other night at the Kennedy Center, they had a choir, a UN choir of 90 young people, children, in the costumes of their native countries from all over the world. And looking at them down there, singing together, I couldn't help but think, "Good Lord, if we turn it all over to them, they'd get along just fine together." And maybe the world should follow their lead.

There is in the Book of Genesis a story of great loss. It's a story of man

alienated from his fellow man and turning to persecution and hatred for others. Well, I believe that history is slowly working itself back to the restoration of brotherhood and mutual respect among all the peoples of the Earth. So today, we rededicate ourselves to this vision and mission. We do so mindful that human might and will alone cannot achieve this goal, aware that our ultimate success will be determined by our faith in the power of prayer, in the promises of Him who made us and even now guides us in our quest for human dignity and freedom.

And now I shall quit talking and sign the proclamation.

Today is now, for the week beginning today, it is now recognized officially as Human Rights Week. And the 15th will be Bill of Rights Day. ■

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