

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ATROCITIES STILL A PART OF
SOUTH AFRICA

HON. RONALD V. DELLUMS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 18, 1989

Mr. DELLUMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of the Members the continuing atrocities being committed in South Africa.

September 13, 1989, marked the 10th anniversary of the independence of Venda, which is a so called homeland in South Africa. This anniversary is not one of celebration, it is one that commemorates 10 years of brutality and corruption.

The people of Venda have been forced into the homeland policy of South Africa which is part of the Governments restricted Group Areas Act. This act separates the people of South Africa according to race as to where they may live.

Some of the people of Venda have been detained. While in detention, they are beaten and tortured. Some have been so severely beaten that they have been, secretly, transferred to hospitals. Also, children have been forcibly taken to camps to ensure their participation in the celebration activities.

Four ministers who were recently released from detention were rearrested, immediately after their release. The request for their new release is presently in the court, waiting for judgment.

These actions are abhorrent. They are clear violations of international human rights law. They are violations of our beliefs in the freedom from oppression that we adhere to in a democracy. Clearly, they are violations to the conscience of any person concerned with the mistreatment of any human being.

In closing, I am entering into the RECORD a news release from Africa Watch, a well respected human rights organization, which will give a concise view of the problems in Venda:

MASS ARRESTS IN VENDA: CHURCH ACTIVISTS
UNDER FIRE

Security forces in Venda, an "independent" homeland in the far northern Transvaal, in late July arrested more than 200 people, including students, and at least 17 pastors and community activists associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Ecumenical Confessing Fellowship, and the Mulweli Counseling Center.

Tension in the homeland, usually characterized by a fearfully acquiescent population, has been building since 1983 in response to various factors. These include resentment over the corrupt and harsh rule of traditional chiefs and headmen, and disquiet over a spate of mysterious "ritual" murders. There are allegations that government officials may have been involved in these murders and in August last year, students spearheaded a widespread "stay away" to protest the apparent reluctance of the police to investigate the killings.

On July 17 this year, students called an other meeting to protest the mysterious murder of a schoolteacher, Mukosi Mav-

hina. The meeting, attended by about 10,000 people, also protested homeland rule and the upcoming "independence" anniversary celebrations. On July 10, students marching down the road after a commemoration service for Mr. Mavhina, were attacked by police and whipped with sjamboks (ox-hide whips). Some of the students were badly injured; others were detained.

Faced with the rising tensions, church and community leaders in late July formed the Northern Transvaal Church Workers Conference and at a meeting, decided to petition senior government officials to consult with the residents of Venda, to properly investigate the murders and to call off the "independence" anniversary celebrations.

The next day, police rounded up most of those associated with the petition, including members of the organizing committee of the Confessing Fellowship, an ecumenical organization of Christians opposed to apartheid. Those detained are being held incommunicado in unknown locations. Among the 17 people detained were:

Reverend O'Brien T. Malindi, a Church of Christ Pastor who is organizer of the Confessing Fellowship and is also UDF Northern Transvaal Vice President;

Reverend Phineas Phosiwa, a Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church who is a member of the Organizing Committee of the Confessing Fellowship. Since his detention, it was reported that Phosiwa had been taken to hospital under police guard. In 1981, Phosiwa was detained and severely tortured;

George Phadagi, an anti-apartheid activist who had been detained previously several times;

Reverend Nkhangweleni Ranzwa, a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and a member of the organizing committee of the Confessing Fellowship;

Aifheli Mukwevho, a member of the Confessing Fellowship and a member of the editorial committee of the group's magazine;

Justice Gundo Lidovho, public education director of the Mulweli Counseling Center, a recently-founded legal aid organization;

Tshifhiwa Maumele, a member of organizing committee of the Confessing Fellowship and a member of the editorial committee of the group's magazine;

William Sihlangu, a Lutheran pastor who is director of Beuster Church Center; and

Solomon Tshitangano, treasurer of the Confessing Fellowship, and a leader of several Lutheran Church youth groups.

Several days after the police swoop, two of those held were reported to have been hospitalized in police custody. They are the Reverend Phineas Phosiwa and Gundo Lidovho.

The Mulweli legal aid center has only been in operation for several months. In April 1989, shots were fired through the windows of the center, which members interpreted as a warning. There have also been several break-ins, although nothing has been taken.

Members of the security forces went to the home of Phanel Mpaphuli, the secretary of the Confessing Fellowship, who is also the Dependant's Conference field worker for the Northern Transvaal Council of Churches, and waited all night for him to return. He was alerted, stayed away, and continues to be in hiding. Police also at-

tempted to arrest Lutheran pastor Zwo Nevhutalu, who was away from home at the time, and are keeping a 24-hour watch on his home. Tshitangano, who is among those detained, is youth director of Nevhutalu's parish. The pastor's brother, Lusani Nevhutalu, who is director of the Thusanani Christian Center for the handicapped, has received several anonymous threatening telephone calls. In late July 1989, at the time of the police swoops, gasoline was poured on the doors and window sills of his home. Nevhutalu was not at home at the time.

Shortly after the detentions, a planned meeting in Tshakhuma village was violently broken up by security forces. According to witnesses, soldiers randomly assaulted those attending the meeting, including old women and children. A second planned meeting at Mbilwi Lutheran Church was preempted by the police, who sealed off the church.

Africa Watch is deeply concerned about these detentions, as the Venda Security Forces, which cooperate closely with the South African security forces, have a disturbing record of brutality. In October 1981, two policemen were killed in an African National Congress guerrilla attack on a local police station. Following the attack, the Venda National Force detained at least 21 people, including ministers and laymen associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church. One of those detained was Isaac Tshifhiwa Muofhe, a young salesman and lay preacher. Two days after his detention, Muofhe was found dead in his Venda prison cell. According to post mortem findings, he had died of blood loss as a result of widespread bruising and hemorrhage. An official inquest found two Venda security policemen, Captain Muthuphei Ludwig Ramaligela and Sergeant Phumula Josias Mangaga, responsible for Muofhe's death. In late 1982, the two were charged with murder, but were acquitted for lack of evidence.

Three Lutheran pastors were detained shortly after Muofhe, including the Lutheran Dean of Venda, Simon Tshenuwani Farisani. The dean was subjected to such severe torture, including beatings and electric shock treatment, that he nearly died.

According to a memo prepared by the Detainees Parents Support Committee, an additional two Lutheran Ministers, the Rev. Phosiwa and the Rev. Petrus Phaswane, were similarly treated. The Rev. Phosiwa alleged that on or about January 7, 1982, members of the Venda National Force compelled him to undress and then assaulted him, suffocated him with a wet khaki bag, and administered electric shocks to his head and genitals. The Rev. Phaswane additionally alleged that he was forced to do arduous physical exercises.

Dean Farisani was again detained in November 1986 and held until January 1987. In February 1987, he was served with an order restricting him to Venda. The homeland is scattered in three pieces across the Northern Transvaal, and the order effectively cuts the Dean off from the most of his parishes. He left South Africa for medical treatment and is presently living in the United States.

The Lutheran church has deep roots in the area, and a long history of opposition to apartheid, which has earned it the antago-

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