

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

**SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE, 707th
MEETING**



Tuesday, 27 October 1970,
at 11.05 a.m.

NEW YORK

Chairman: Mr. Abdul Samad GHAUS
(Afghanistan).

AGENDA ITEM 34

The policies of *apartheid* of the Government of South Africa: report of the Special Committee on the Policies of *Apartheid* of the Government of the Republic of South Africa (continued) (A/8022 and Add.1, A/8109, A/8117, A/SPC/L.181, A/SPC/L.183-186)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that Algeria, India, Mali, Niger and Singapore wished to join the sponsors of the draft resolutions—A/SPC/L.183 to A/SPC/L.186—submitted at the previous meeting.

2. Mr. SHARMA (India) said he found it distressing that in the twenty-five years it had been in existence the United Nations had not succeeded in eliminating *apartheid* in South Africa. India's association with the people of South Africa was long and historic. He referred in particular to the twenty-two years that Mahatma Gandhi had spent in South Africa fighting against that country's oppressive and inhuman laws. India had brought the question of *apartheid* to the attention of the United Nations at the first session of the General Assembly, had been one of the first countries to break diplomatic, trade and other relations with South Africa and had also authorized a mission of the African National Congress to function at New Delhi.

3. The policy of *apartheid* of the Government of South Africa was one of the most deplorable phenomena of the present day. Racial intolerance was based on a concept of "race", which was not a biological phenomenon but merely a social myth, and, whatever its underlying causes, provided an excuse in South Africa for political domination and economic exploitation of the African majority, which had been deprived of its inalienable rights. Racial discrimination was nothing new in the history of mankind, but South Africa was the only sovereign State in which slavery, in a new garb, had been raised to the status of an official institution under the name of the separate development of different races. The situation was all the more serious since the racist policy practised in South Africa had begun to spread to neighbouring countries.

4. In spite of the resolutions adopted on the subject of South Africa by the Security Council, the situation had not improved and had even deteriorated. He drew the attention of the Committee to paragraphs 112, 113, 114 and, particularly, 115 of the report of the Special Committee on the Policies of *Apartheid* of the Government of the Republic

of South Africa (A/8022). The report stated that foreign investments in South Africa had increased at a rate of 5 per cent a year during the 1960s, which was higher than the rate of increase of domestic investments in many countries that were investing in South Africa. In fact, the major trading partners of South Africa, in direct contravention of General resolution 2506 B (XXIV), in which all States and international organizations were invited to desist from collaborating with the Government of South Africa, were consolidating the white minority régime in South Africa and were reaping large profits by exploiting the non-whites peoples, who constituted a cheap labour force. In 1958 Jawaharlal Nehru had drawn attention to the duplicity of certain Powers which stood for racial equality and justice but were reluctant to indict South Africa and even more reluctant to take the action agreed on by the United Nations.

5. Meanwhile, the régime supported by those Powers continued to step up its repressive measures. Draconian laws made it possible for the South African police and Government to detain opponents of *apartheid* arbitrarily, put them under house arrest or banish them. He drew the Committee's particular attention to the establishment, in 1969, of the Bureau of State Security, which had virtually completed the process of turning South Africa into a police state. The act establishing that Bureau served to supplement the Terrorism Act, section 6 of which authorized any commissioned police officer to detain indefinitely any person whom he believed to be a "terrorist" or in possession of information relating to "terrorists" or to offences under the Act.

6. No one knew how many people had been detained for long periods under the provisions of the Terrorism Act, since the South African Government refused to provide information on the subject, or even to reply to questions asked in Parliament. The detainees were held incommunicado and no one, including the courts and relatives and lawyers, could have access to them. There was overwhelming evidence that they were subjected to brutality and torture during interrogation, and several persons had died while in detention, including the trade union leader Caleb Mayakiso and the Moslem religious leader, the Imam Abdullah Haron. He also wished to recall the case of the twenty-two people who had been detained under the Terrorism Act for several months on minor charges and who, when finally acquitted, had immediately been put back into solitary confinement; two other people had been detained as witnesses in the same case and never charged. In other words, the prosecutor's strategy was to hold defendants indefinitely under the Terrorism Act until more "evidence" could be obtained or concocted by the bestial methods which had become the hallmark of South African

“justice”. The system amounted to nothing less than a systematic and insidious form of genocide.

7. Moreover, Africans were being made homeless by the thousands. An African who had been born in a town and had worked and lived there for five years could be required at any time to leave that town and take up residence in a Bantu area where he had never lived and had no relatives or friends. Whenever the authorities deemed it expedient in the public interest, they could, without prior notice, order any African to leave his home, go to another part of the country and remain there for an indefinite period without the right of recourse to a court of law. If the African failed to comply with the orders, he could be summarily arrested, detained and afterwards removed from his home.

8. In the new townships where displaced persons were to be settled, no arrangements had been made for churches, cinemas or community centres and the residents had very high transportation and rental costs. Many Africans were still in transit camps or shantytowns, where thousands of them were crowded together in tin shacks under deplorable hygienic conditions, often without drainage, electricity or adequate toilet facilities, just a few miles from the opulent white suburbs of Capetown.

9. Because the South African Government realized the truth of Mahatma Gandhi's statement that a thing acquired by violence could be retained by violence alone, it had acquired the most powerful apparatus of destruction on the African continent. In spite of the arms embargo, economic sanctions and related measures, the South African Government continued to build up its military and police forces. Not only was it still able to buy abroad, but domestic manufacturers were now producing the most up-to-date weapons.

10. He drew the Committee's attention to annex III to the Special Committee's report listing the names of countries which still maintained diplomatic, consular and other relations with South Africa in spite of General Assembly resolution 1761 (XVII) and the recommendations of the Special Committee. The list was, incidentally, incomplete since some twenty countries maintained informal diplomatic contacts with South Africa.

11. His delegation felt that the resolution adopted by the Third Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/SPC/L.181) held recently at Lusaka would provide an effective solution to the problem of *apartheid*. The General Assembly—by its resolution 2544 (XXIV)—had designated 1971 as International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, and his delegation expressed the hope that the United Nations would now take measures, in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter, to put an end to the policy of *apartheid* in South Africa, which constituted not only a threat to international peace and security but also a continuing affront to human dignity.

12. Mr. NTEZILIZAZA (Rwanda) deplored the fact that all efforts aimed at dissuading South Africa from practising its inhuman policy of *apartheid* had ended in failure at a time when 127 States, some of which had emerged as a result of decolonization, had committed themselves to

defend human rights and fundamental freedoms by subscribing to the Charter of the United Nations.

13. The South African Government was steadily increasing its military potential in order to continue its oppression and humiliation of South Africa's non-white majority. It had the assistance of a number of accomplices who justified their refusal to apply the arms embargo on South Africa with the argument that a distinction should be drawn between arms intended for use in imposing the policy of *apartheid* and those intended for external defence. It was well known, however, that those imported arms could be used either for defence against external attack or to quell liberation movements and expand the *apartheid* policy into neighbouring territories.

14. Thus, not content with expanding its racial separation and segregation policy to Namibia, the Pretoria racist minority was giving powerful political, economic and military support to Portugal in its barbaric wars against black peoples which were struggling valiantly for self-determination and independence. The South African *apartheid* policy represented an imminent danger not only to the oppressed peoples of those unhappy countries, but also to the independent States of Africa as a whole, and particularly of southern Africa. He therefore urged all States Members of the United Nations to join in an effort to bring about the immediate and full implementation of Security Council resolution 282 (1970).

15. Since South Africa was obviously disregarding the international action which had been taken, his delegation felt that the United Nations should continue the struggle against the Pretoria minority régime unremittingly and by all lawful means, including the mandatory economic sanctions provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter. The entire world must be kept constantly informed of the crimes being committed in the name of *apartheid*. Concerted action must be taken against that outmoded policy which was condemned by all who were devoted to justice and progress; such action would be particularly appropriate in 1971, the International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. In the meantime, the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1506 B (XXIV) must be applied as an interim measure. In that connexion, he urged South Africa's principal trading partners to implement the United Nations resolutions.

16. In conclusion, he wished to express solidarity with the oppressed peoples of South Africa and the neighbouring territories in their unrelenting and heroic struggle against colonialism and racism.

17. Mr. OUCIF (Algeria) said that the measures recommended by the Special Committee had proved ineffective because of the fact that some States Members of the United Nations were continuing to maintain diplomatic, economic and trade relations with South Africa in defiance of all the General Assembly's resolutions. The precarious situation in South Africa could only be made worse by the persistent refusal of those countries, some of which were members of the Security Council, to shoulder their responsibilities and by their negative attitude towards United Nations resolutions. Moreover, some of those Powers were strengthening their military relations with South Africa, completely

disregarding the Security Council resolutions calling for an arms embargo.

18. He emphasized that it was the duty of all peace-loving States to combat the policy of *apartheid*, which constituted a genuine threat to world peace and could end in a racial holocaust. Practical measures must be taken, for the time had come to put an end to the glaring contradiction between verbal censure and the maintenance of relations with South Africa.

19. The States members of OAU had proclaimed that without equality among men and respect for the principle of self-determination there could be no basis for peace and justice in the world. However, despite the efforts of both OAU and the United Nations to induce South Africa to change its policy, the latter—true to its nature—was continuing to practise *apartheid*, that vile form of slavery and crime against humanity.

20. In view of the ineffectiveness of the measures supported by a majority of Members of the United Nations, the people of South Africa would inevitably assert their true human condition by replying with violence of their own to the violence of the white settlers. All States that wished to see justice done must support the liberation movements, which had already begun their fight for freedom. His country would continue to give those movements all the political, moral and material assistance they needed to realize the ideals of the Charter to which all States Members of the United Nations had freely subscribed.

21. Mr. MUNK (Denmark) said that if, during the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, there were scarcely any statesman who had not spoken of the problems of racism and *apartheid*, it was because those problems had, more than any others, haunted and tormented the conscience of the world community. In fact, they were still growing and threatened to divide nations; in those conditions, it was small wonder that many people tended to despair. The victims should at least have the sympathy of the United Nations and feel that their case was neither forgotten nor lost. Those who represented power and privilege in South Africa should be urged to revise their policy, if only out of self-interest, for resentment and vengeance were warnings that should not be misinterpreted.

22. On studying the Special Committee's report, his delegation had regretfully noted the South African Government's persistence in its policy of *apartheid*, its intensified persecution of opponents of *apartheid* and its introduction of harsher legislation, as evidenced by the promulgation of the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act, and the Bantu Laws Amendment Act, which empowered the authorities to uproot the population, thereby breaking up families and leaving them to face a hopeless future. Under the Terrorism Act and the Suppression of Communism Act, which with their inextricable provisions, mocked legal justice by extending the concept of "illegality" to cover everyday activities, the South African Government continued arbitrarily to indict and sentence opponents of its policies. Deaf to the appeals of world opinion, the Pretoria authorities were still blind to the danger of violence that racial bitterness could lead to.

23. Faced with these depressing facts, the United Nations should be firm. Resort to violence, however, would defeat its fundamental principles. A solution within the framework of the Charter could be found if all Member States, and particularly the main trading partners of South Africa, lent their assistance.

24. As to Denmark, its attitude to mandatory economic sanctions remained unchanged. It strictly adhered to the resolutions adopted in 1963 and 1964 by the Security Council and regretted that certain developments had made it necessary for the Council to take up the question of an arms embargo again during the summer of 1970. Denmark would also continue to aid the victims of *apartheid* by contributing to educational and training programmes designed to enable the South African majority population to take part in the political, economic and social development of their country. The Danish Government's appropriations for those purposes for the financial year 1970-1971 amounted to \$393,350 including \$60,000 for the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa, about \$93,000 for the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa, about \$93,000 for the International University Exchange Fund and about \$93,000 for other organizations and institutions working to improve conditions for victims of racial discrimination and *apartheid*. Finally, more than \$53,000 went for fellowship grants through the World University Service for the education of non-whites in South Africa and Rhodesia.

25. The situation in South Africa constituted perhaps one of the most frightening gaps between the aspirations of the United Nations and its accomplishments, between its decisions and their effects, not only because of the shocking conditions for millions of defenceless people but also because of the intractability of the problems. The United Nations should therefore close its ranks in its struggle against *apartheid*. It would be in South Africa's own interest, indeed, to realize as soon as possible that *apartheid* could not survive in a world dedicated to freedom, justice and respect for human dignity.

26. Mr. DUMA (Romania) described *apartheid* as a fascist system of oppression, racial domination and exploitation which was supported by the imperialist nations. The Special Committee's report, in which the list of the Pretoria Government's crimes had grown longer, was a bill of indictment of *apartheid* and underlined once more the need for the United Nations to take measures to enable the South African people to enjoy their right to decide their own fate. The South African Government had not only totally ignored the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions but was adopting harsher policies and intensifying repression against its opponents. In addition, the Pretoria régime was trying to extend *apartheid* to neighbouring countries. Its relations with the illegal Ian Smith régime were designed to oppress the non-white population of Southern Rhodesia. *Apartheid* was also an encouragement and support for the oppressive colonialist policies in Angola and Mozambique, while at the same time South Africa was still illegally occupying Namibia.

27. His delegation saw a link between the South African Government's defiance of United Nations resolutions and the interests of certain Western Powers in that country.

International financial interests, which made large profits in South Africa, supported the Government of that country. But the foreign investments and military assistance benefiting South Africa could have serious consequences, for the enormous arsenal that it was thus building up could lead to armed conflict. It was therefore imperative that Member States now supplying arms to South Africa should strictly implement the provisions of Security Council resolution 282 (1970), as requested by the General Assembly.

28. His country had always expressed solidarity with peoples struggling against colonialism and neo-colonialism for freedom and national independence. He recalled that the President of the State Council of the Socialist Republic of Romania had said at the recent Conference of OAU:

“Romania firmly supports the elimination of all forms of colonialism and expresses its full solidarity with the

struggle of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea (Bissau) and Namibia and also with all peoples still under the colonial yoke, and resolutely condemns the policy of *apartheid* and the racial practices promoted by the minority régimes in the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia.”

Faithful to the principles on which the United Nations was based, Romania had never wavered in its condemnation of *apartheid*, and it supported the measures taken by the General Assembly and the Security Council to eliminate that policy. Believing that the United Nations could and should put an end to *apartheid*, Romania would, as in the past, endorse any action consistent with the Charter and leading to the achievement of that aim.

The meeting rose at 12.5 p.m.