



UNITED NATIONS  
SECURITY  
COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

S/13842  
13 March 1980

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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NOTE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

After consultation with the members of the Council, the President of the Security Council, on 13 March 1980, sent the following message to the Government of South Africa regarding that Government's seizure and continued detention of Mr. Victor Matlou:

"The Security Council has learned with profound concern that South African authorities seized and continue to keep in detention Mr. Victor Matlou, an international passenger on Lesotho Airways en route from Swaziland to Maseru, Lesotho.

"According to information available to the Security Council, on 12 December 1979, Mr. Matlou, who is a South African refugee, boarded a Lesotho Airways International Flight No. 351 from Maputo, Mozambique, via Swaziland to Maseru, Lesotho. Because of bad weather conditions in Maseru, the plane landed with permission at Bloemfontein, South Africa. All passengers, including Mr. Matlou, were transferred from the plane to a bus to be transported to Maseru. At the border post the South African Police seized Mr. Matlou at gunpoint.

"All efforts to get Mr. Matlou released have so far failed to produce the desired results. The efforts of the Lesotho Government and appeals from third parties have not succeeded in obtaining the release of Mr. Matlou. The Council understands that the South African authorities intend to put Mr. Matlou on trial under the 'Terrorism Act' of South Africa.

"I therefore make an urgent appeal on behalf of the Security Council to the South African authorities to take full account of the particular circumstances of this case, to release Mr. Matlou immediately and unconditionally and to allow him to leave the country.

"I also urge South Africa to facilitate the maintenance of airline communications between Lesotho, a land-locked country, and the rest of the world."