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GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-second year

Letter dated 14 April 1987 from the Permanent Representative of
Botswana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you a press release and a statement issued by my Government concerning a bomb explosion in the capital of my country, Gaborone (see annexes I and II). It is requested that the press release and the statement be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 33 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Leqwaila J. M. J. LEGWAILA
Ambassador and Permanent Representative

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ANNEX I

Press release issued by the Office of the President of
Botswana concerning a bomb explosion at Gaborone

At about 2 a.m., a bomb exploded in a South African registered Combi, No. JKT 735T, which was parked in Gaborone West. The explosion killed three people (one woman and two children) and injured seven other people. All the people who were killed were Botswana citizens. Their names will be released as soon as their next of kin have been informed.

One house was completely demolished, while another was extensively damaged. Nineteen houses in the area have been damaged in varying degrees by the bomb explosion.

Investigations are continuing to find those who are responsible, and everyone who may be contacted or knows something about the explosion is urged to give the police maximum co-operation.

The Government of Botswana wishes to express its outrage at this act of murder of an innocent woman and children and destruction of property.

Seven bombs have exploded in Botswana in the past, which have killed two people and destroyed properties. Members of the public are once again urged to be vigilant and report suspicious people to the police. In this way crime will be prevented and innocent lives spared.

ANNEX II

Statement by the Government of Botswana concerning
a bomb explosion at Gaborone

The Department of External Affairs, this morning, received a telex message from the Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa alleging that the African National Congress (ANC) was planning to launch an offensive aimed at disrupting the forthcoming South African elections for whites by violence and that, to this end, groups of armed ANC cadres were being infiltrated into South Africa via Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The same message then threatened dire consequences for Botswana and other neighbours of South Africa if ANC should carry out the alleged violent activities.

By the time this message was received, its contents had long been released to the press by the South African authorities.

The Department of External Affairs has, in its response to the South African message, reiterated the well-known policy that Botswana does not allow itself to be used either as a base for armed attacks on its neighbours or as a transit route for armed infiltration into neighbouring countries, including South Africa. Consequently, the Botswana Government has asked the South African authorities to provide detailed information on their allegations.

The Department of External Affairs wishes to recall that in the past, similar messages from the South African Government have been followed or accompanied by raids on Botswana and/or other countries neighbouring South Africa.

On every such occasion in the past, South African raids into this country have been shown to have been totally unjustified. Invariably, such raids have been carried out not because of any hostile acts on the part of Botswana, but rather simply because those who authorized them saw the raids as serving some internal political purpose, such as placating certain political elements within their society.

With the forthcoming white elections in South Africa and the temptation to seek to attract, especially, the right-wing votes, given the stiff competition for right-wing support, in the election campaign, it is not surprising that familiar accusations and threats relating to ANC are once again coming out of South Africa.

The Department of External Affairs urges the South African Government to restrain itself, to avoid the temptation of blaming its neighbours for the problems of South Africa and to address seriously and coolly the root of these problems, which is apartheid.