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OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa

Letter dated 14 April 1981 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations addressed
to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to Your Excellency the enclosed letter dated 14 April 1981 from the Honourable R. F. Botha, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Information of the Republic of South Africa.

I should appreciate it if the Minister's letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 83 (b) of the preliminary list.

(Signed) David W. STEWARD
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

* A/36/50.

ANNEX

Letter dated 14 April 1981 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs and
Information of South Africa to the Secretary-General

During the recent International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, references to southern Africa were made both by speakers and in documents. One speaker was the President of the General Assembly, who, in his address to the Conference on 9 April 1981, stated:

"Likewise in southern Africa thousands have fled inhuman living conditions and persecution in Namibia and South Africa".

(U.N. Press Release, REF/1467 of 9 April 1981).

This tendentious and unsupported statement was made despite the fact that, through deliberate action on the part of the organizers of the Conference, South Africa was prevented from participating in it. Having been denied the opportunity during the Conference of stating its views on refugees in Africa and of placing on record the facts pertaining to refugees in the southern Africa region, the South African Government wishes to do so in this communication which it would request Your Excellency to have included in the documentation of the Conference.

Your Excellency will recall that on numerous occasions since January 1976 your attention has been drawn to the presence of Angolan refugees in South West Africa/Namibia, where the South African Government provided them with food, medical services and other necessities. The South African Government appealed in various letters to Your Excellency (S/11938, S/11970, S/11980 and S/12228) for the assistance of the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees in resolving the problem. For the sake of political expediency and with complete disregard for the well-being of the refugees, those appeals were all ignored.

That problems still exists today. Refugees from Angola continue to cross into South West Africa/Namibia in search of shelter and food. Their presence, to which the International Media, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross, can attest, and the reasons for their crossing into South West Africa/Namibia belie the allegation of "inhuman living conditions and persecution in Namibia".

If "inhuman living conditions and persecution" exist in South West Africa/Namibia and South Africa, the question may quite rightly be asked: Why do people flock to these two countries? The fact that more than 1,4 million registered foreign workers at the present moment earn a living in South Africa is conveniently ignored. The same double standard is applied when the international community's attention is drawn to the presence in South West Africa/Namibia of legitimate refugees from Angola - the facts are ignored.

There is another facet to the question of "refugees" from South West Africa/Namibia. In none of the statements nor in the conference documents is a single word mentioned of the facts which have been brought to Your Excellency's attention in the past in respect of the inhuman behaviour of SWAPO in abducting men, women and children from South West Africa/Namibia. Once brought at gunpoint to SWAPO camps in Angola these innocent people, who are labelled by SWAPO and accepted by the United Nations as "refugees", are forced to undergo military training in order to participate in SWAPO's terrorist activities against the inhabitants of South West Africa/Namibia. As "refugees" they or, by United Nations sleight of hand, SWAPO qualify for all the benefits for refugees under the United Nations system. The

true nature of these "refugees" and "their camps" became clear, inter alia, when a correspondent of The New York Times visited Angola recently. In his article entitled "Namibia rebels in Angola train 10 000 children", Mr Nossiter, in referring to the residents of the camp as "being trained to return as guerrillas", writes the following:

"This green glade under tall palm trees is officially called the Namibia Health and Education Centre. It may be the most single-mindedly political camp supported by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. No firm figure for costs is available but a reasonable estimate is \$2 million a year.

The guerrilla organization (SWAPO) is the United Nations' 'operational partner' in the project. That means that the United Nations and some private voluntary agencies put up the money for food, clothing, tents, drugs, blackboards and other items. Their daily use is entirely in the hands of the guerrilla group.

A United Nations official who asked that his name not be used explained: 'As long as there is no military activity, this is legitimate. We know of no guns here nor of any direct military training. This is a humanitarian venture for refugee children forced to leave their homes'.

There is little prospect for the United Nations to discover either arms or military training. An official from the High Commissioner's office said he makes the tough drive over broken roads to inspect the camp about once a month

The visitors are shown classrooms of corrugated iron, far sturdier than the thin tents used for sleeping. Mathematics and the teaching of English is demonstrated. 'Social studies' is also on the curriculum but according to Mr Mbumba, this is where 'political education' begins, and the reporters are not invited

As the visitors leave, a contingent is brought from the adult women's camp. They are a chorus and imitate the breaking of chains. They sing: 'We are

determined that Namibia must be free. Marxism-leninism is our ideology, founded on scientific socialism'."

The New York Times of 1 April 1981.

In a follow-up article the same correspondent reported in The New York Times of 7 April 1981:

"Some conservative aid givers worry about the High Commissioner's supervision of openly political refugees camps. In Angola, Namibian guerrillas have put 10 000 children in a centre separated from their parents, for indoctrination as 'liberation fighters'."

Knowing that the aims and purposes of the African National Congress and of the Pan Africanist Congress are to destroy institutions, people and property in South Africa through violence and terror, it is incomprehensible that Your Excellency could, in the context of refugees blandly state:

"...104 South African student refugees left Botswana to pursue their education under the auspices of the African National Congress (ANC) and 6 left under the auspices of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC)".

United Nations document(A/35/149, P. 5).

On the basis of this statement and other United Nations sources there is adequate reason to state that much of

the expenditure on persons classified as refugees by the United Nations is political in nature. A considerable proportion of the funds dispensed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme goes to programmes executed by or for the benefit of SWAPO, the ANC and the PAC in promoting their political aims.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

R.F. BOTHA
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INFORMATION"
