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LETTER DATED 25 AUGUST 1978 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF ZAMBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF
THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On the instructions of my Government, I have the honour to inform you of the latest act of wanton aggression perpetrated against my country's sovereignty and territorial integrity by security forces of the racist Government of South Africa.

On Tuesday, 22 August 1978, at midnight, security forces of the apartheid régime commenced premeditated and wanton bombing operations against the civilian town of Sesheke, situated along Zambia's border with Namibia, which were continued through the early hours of Thursday, 24 August 1978.

As of today, fighting is continuing between Zambian National Defence Forces and fascist South African forces. Meanwhile, Sesheke district has been completely deserted following the despicable bombing raids, and the district's main hospital has been closed and all medical staff and equipment have been removed to a surrounding village.

This shameless and dastardly operation has, so far, resulted in the death of twelve (12) innocent Zambian civilians, including eight (8) men, three (3) women and one (1) child, serious injury to six (6) civilians and substantial damage to civilian property, including the destruction of a power station, the local airport and school buildings.

At a time when world attention is focused on current efforts to resolve the problem of Namibia by peaceful means, this most recent act of armed aggression by racist South Africa against the freedom and peace-loving people of Zambia cannot but evoke a sense of grave concern, deep indignation and unreserved condemnation.

In particular, this recent manifestation of a systematic pattern of aggressive behaviour, typical of the Pretoria régime, raises serious questions concerning the credibility and genuineness of that régime's professed desire to reach a negotiated peace settlement on Namibia. In the view of my Government, this incident raises the ominous spectre of South Africa reneging on solemn undertakings made in relation with the existing United Nations peace efforts on Namibia.

It is evident to my Government and to others intimate with the behaviour of the Pretoria régime that its strategy aims at provoking the already tense and

delicate political situation prevailing in Namibia, the international Territory South Africa continues to rule illegally, to the point beyond which prospects for a peaceful solution will recede irreversibly and dissipate.

Zambia is aware that the racist and apartheid régime in South Africa aims resolutely at provoking SWAPO, the authentic representative of the Namibian people, and neighbouring independent countries, such as my own, into open armed confrontations which might only serve to derail the existing United Nations peace efforts on Namibia. In the event of such a negative and retrogressive development, racist South Africa would readily attribute blame to SWAPO. The Pretoria régime would thus have a ready and much desired excuse to proceed with its planned internal settlement with puppet elements inside Namibia.

My Government does not view this latest ignominious act in isolation from the unprovoked raid into Angola perpetrated by the security forces of the apartheid Pretoria régime in May of this year; for, we are only too aware that South Africa's diabolical strategy is to destroy SWAPO's dependable rear-guard, thereby rendering SWAPO ineffectual and amenable to the whims and dictates of the racists in Pretoria.

We urge once again all those Governments in a position to wield decisive influence on the Pretoria régime, in particular, its principal Western allies, to do their utmost and demonstrate beyond any reasonable doubt their declared commitment to a negotiated peaceful settlement of the Namibian problem. This is vital if only to salvage the remaining prospects for a peaceful solution.

Unless immediately arrested, South Africa's evil policy of unprovoked aggression and trumped-up retaliation against SWAPO and neighbouring independent States will undermine any confidence or impetus that may have been engendered by recent peace efforts. Such a suicidal policy or strategy will only serve to bolster confidence in the intensification of armed struggle as the sole effective means for the oppressed people of southern Africa to achieve self-determination and independence.

I need not reiterate that in the face of repeated wanton aggression by the racist régime of South Africa, the Government and the people of Zambia remain undaunted in their firm support of the struggle for the liberation of southern Africa.

I would be grateful if you would kindly arrange for the circulation of this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Gwendoline C. KONIE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
