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LETTER DATED 6 FEBRUARY 1976 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SOUTH  
AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to attach the text of a letter addressed to you on  
6 February 1976, by the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
Dr. the Honourable H. Muller, on the question of Angolan refugees.

I should be glad if this letter could be issued as a document of the Security  
Council.

(Signed) R. F. BOTHA  
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 6 February 1976 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of South Africa addressed to the Secretary-General

It will be recalled that on 22 January 1976, by letter and through the South African Permanent Representative to the United Nations, I raised with Your Excellency the question of Angolan refugees stranded on boats in the South African port of Walvis Bay and of displaced persons in various refugee camps. I expressed my Government's particular concern at the plight of those who were not Portuguese citizens and requested Your Excellency to ask the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to assist in resolving this problem.

Despite my request, the High Commissioner has not yet taken any action to render such assistance, and I am therefore constrained again to raise the matter with Your Excellency as one of urgency.

Regarding the approximately 2,450 refugees who have to date been stranded in Walvis Bay, I would bring to Your Excellency's notice that the Portuguese authorities having accepted responsibility for some 1,920 of them who were Portuguese citizens, the latter were allowed to disembark and were provided by the South African authorities with food, shelter and transportation from the time of disembarkation until their subsequent departure from Windhoek to Portugal. Of the remainder, 205, comprising mostly the owners and crews of the boats and their families, will proceed to Portugal by sea. The balance of 324 - all non-Portuguese citizens - decided of their own volition to return to Angola and consequently were transported by the South African authorities from Walvis Bay to Calai, which is one of the original three refugee camps set up and maintained by South Africa in southern Angola near the border with South West Africa. Since 22 January a further 2,000 displaced persons in Angola have fled to that camp and to the other two camps at Chitado and Cuangar. The South African authorities are also providing all necessary services and provisions for about 6,000 other displaced persons at Pereira De Eca, a fourth camp which South Africa has recently been obliged to set up and maintain. In total, over 11,000 displaced persons are now being protected and cared for by the South African authorities, while at least another 1,000 are reported to be heading for these camps. It may be expected that these numbers will rapidly grow.

In bringing these matters to Your Excellency's attention I must stress that the ability of the South African Government to provide these refugees and displaced persons with the necessary provisions and assistance is not unlimited and its resources not inexhaustible, and I would point out that it cannot maintain these camps indefinitely. The South African Government would therefore like to learn urgently whether the High Commissioner for Refugees proposes to render meaningful assistance in the very near future, failing which my Government might be forced to limit its relief measures.

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S/11970  
English  
Annex  
Page 2

I would therefore again request Your Excellency to ask the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to lend his active assistance in resolving a problem which so clearly falls within his competence. My Government has noted that representatives of the International Red Cross who were in South West Africa will report on the situation to the High Commissioner in order to assess what may be done. I must however reiterate to Your Excellency that the matter is extremely urgent and that immediate relief measures are required in the interests of the unfortunate persons concerned.

(Signed) H. MULLER  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

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