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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Thirty-seventh session  
SUB-COMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION  
AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES  
Thirty-third session

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS,  
INCLUDING POLICIES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION AND OF  
APARTHEID, IN ALL COUNTRIES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL  
AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

COMMUNICATION DATED 30 AUGUST 1980 ADDRESSED TO THE DIRECTOR OF  
THE DIVISION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
AND INFORMATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
The Hon. R.F. Botha, M.P.

"Compliments. Have honour to transmit following reply to message from  
Chairman of Commission on Human Rights conveyed in your telegram MSC 7406:

'Your message transmitted by the Director of the United Nations  
Division of Human Rights in telegram MSC 7406 of 25 August 1980 reached  
my office on the morning of 26 August after you had already released the  
contents to the media and they had formed the subject of radio broadcasts.  
Quite apart from the propriety of such action, it leaves the impression  
with me that you are more interested in deriving propaganda advantage from  
your communication than in resolving matters in which you purport to be  
interested.

I totally reject the accusations of the Ad Hoc Working Group of  
Experts and yourself on behalf of the Commission on Human Rights. The  
Working Group, following its usual practice, has fabricated a series of  
untruths and you have accepted them without any attempt to verify their  
accuracy. This confirms the Working Group's, the Commission's and your  
own total lack of impartiality and objectivity. While impugning my  
country's judicial system you in your capacity of Chairman are yourself  
guilty of violating an elementary legal principle by setting yourself up  
as a policeman, prosecutor and judge and rendering judgement without  
bothering to examine evidence that does not suit you. The Working Group  
and the Commission are clearly biased and are pursuing a vendetta against  
my country, relying on propaganda material generated by organizations  
whose raison d'etre is waging of a campaign of vilification of South Africa.  
Their ritualistic annual repetition of concocted accusations against  
South Africa, designed to heighten credibility through familiarity, in  
fact serves merely to underline the absence of any factual substance to  
the allegations.

Civilized legal practices are followed in South Africa and the Working Group's accusations in regard to the imprisonment of children are absurd. Our courts function openly and any departure from internationally accepted standards and norms of court procedure would be exposed and condemned domestically long before they could be carried abroad by political opportunists. Our prisons are periodically visited by representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross and if the practices alleged by the Working Group and the Commission did in fact occur, they would undoubtedly be exposed. This has not happened. Furthermore evidence published by The Sunday Tribune in South Africa on 24 August 1980 suggests that the report regarding the alleged exploitation of black children as farm labourers is based on children's books published as literacy aids by a commercial printing concern in Johannesburg.

The Working Group and the Commission expresses concern for the welfare of children in South Africa and South West Africa/Namibia, yet they remain silent on the regular abduction by SWAPO of school children in Ovambo. You will undoubtedly know that 70 school pupils were abducted in Northern South West Africa by SWAPO terrorists within the past week. Latest reports indicated that 53 of these pupils are still missing. Last year about 140 pupils, some of a very young age, were abducted from the same school. Does the plight of these children not merit the attention of the Commission and the Working Group?

I am arranging for this communication to be brought to the attention of the Secretary-General and the appropriate organs of the United Nations as an official document, as you did with regard to the contents of telegram MSC 7406.'

R.F. Botha,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Information."