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LETTER DATED 20 SEPTEMBER 1979 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SPECIAL
COMMITTEE AGAINST APARTHEID ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE
SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith, for the attention of the Security Council, a statement issued by the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid on 11 September 1979 on the proclamation of the so-called "independence" of Venda.

(Signed) B. Akporode CLARK
Chairman
Special Committee against Apartheid

Annex

Chairman of Special Committee against Apartheid condemns
"Independence" of Venda

The Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, B. Akporode Clark (Nigeria), issued the following statement today:

On behalf of the Special Committee against Apartheid, I condemn the proposed proclamation by the apartheid régime of the so-called "independence" of Venda on 13 September as another crime against the African people of South Africa and a serious challenge to the international community.

I would recall that the General Assembly - in resolution 32/105 N of 14 December 1977 - unanimously reaffirmed its denunciation of the establishment of bantustans as designed to consolidate the inhuman policy of apartheid, to destroy the territorial integrity of the country, to perpetuate white minority domination and to deprive the African people of South Africa of their inalienable rights. It declared that proclamations of so-called "independence" of bantustans are totally invalid and reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the African people of South Africa in the country as a whole. It called upon all Governments to deny any form of recognition to the so-called "independent" bantustans; to refrain from any dealings with them; to reject travel documents issued by them; and to take effective measures to prohibit all individuals, corporations and other institutions under their jurisdiction from having any dealings with the so-called "independent" bantustans.

Venda is a small territory of about 700,000 hectares divided into two pieces. According to the apartheid régime, it has a so-called de jure population of about 450,000. Of these, 32 per cent are resident outside the territory in the rest of South Africa. Three fourths of the people of the territory are said to be engaged in subsistence agriculture. The bantustan is so poor that it depends on grants from the Pretoria régime even for its regular budget.

The apartheid régime has, moreover, appropriated a strip of territory between Vendaland and the Limpopo River to deprive it of a border with Zimbabwe.

The people of Venda have a long tradition of struggle for freedom. The territory was the scene of heroic resistance by students in the national uprising following the Soweto massacre: several students were killed and many imprisoned.

Despite the opposition of the people, the apartheid régime, in collusion with tribal chiefs led by Chief Patrick Mphephu, has tried to impose sham independence as part of its diabolic strategy.

In the elections held in 1973, his party won only 4 of the 18 elected seats, but he was appointed chief minister with the support of the 42 chiefs, headsmen and other nominated members in the so-called legislative assembly.

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In the elections of July 1978 for an enlarged assembly of 84 members, his party won only 11 of the 42 elected seats despite intimidation of voters and electoral irregularities. The régime then imprisoned over 50 opposition leaders - including 13 members of the assembly and several candidates who had appealed against election irregularities, as well as many intellectuals - and ensured that Chief Mphahlele would continue as chief minister to "negotiate" the so-called "independence".

The proclamation of the so-called "independence" of Venda - in order to create another dependency in an enclave of South Africa and deprive 450,000 Africans of their inalienable rights - is a crime which must be denounced by the international community.

It demonstrates that while advertising so-called cosmetic reforms in apartheid, the racist régime is inexorably proceeding to implement its diabolic scheme. Any delay in effective action against apartheid, whatever the excuse, only enables that régime to proceed with its plots at a grave risk to peace.
