



Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/16054
19 October 1983

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 19 OCTOBER 1983 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 message from the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs and Information, the Honourable R. F. Botha, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lesotho, the Honourable E. R. Sekhonyana, which was conveyed on 18 October 1983.

I should appreciate it if this letter and its annexure could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

Kurt von SCHIRNDING
Permanent Representative

Annex

Text of message dated 18 October 1983 from the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs and Information to the Foreign Minister of Lesotho

I have just read the remarks on South Africa made by the Honourable M. V. Molapo on behalf of the Government of Lesotho in the general debate of the United Nations General Assembly. His remarks contain serious inaccuracies, and the contents of his speech do not accord with the sentiments expressed by Minister Molapo that Lesotho "genuinely wants a return to normalization of relations with her neighbour". The speech may further retard progress towards mutually constructive relations.

Minister Molapo makes the extraordinary allegation that South Africa is pursuing a policy of destabilization which "manifests itself in diverse ways, straddling and affecting the entire independent States in southern Africa". The truth of the matter, as you will know, Mr. Minister, is that South Africa's infrastructure, technology and services in all the important spheres of life are daily being used by Lesotho and our other neighbouring States, enabling these States to survive in relative stability. What instability there is in Lesotho derives from internal political opposition coupled with your Government's refusal or inability to settle political differences by way of conciliation or an electoral process.

South Africa and Lesotho have had numerous discussions on the actions of anti-South African subversive elements located in Lesotho, but South Africa does not, as alleged by Minister Molapo in his speech, view Lesotho as "the source of all security problems within her territory". In discussions with other neighbouring States, South Africa has made clear its concern about the presence of anti-South African subversive elements. Such exaggeration by Minister Molapo can only be intended to whip up support for a weak case.

I am not aware, as is stated by Minister Molapo, that "it is now a matter for the record that South Africa's own investigations have failed to show Lesotho as being a party to any action intended against the security of South Africa". I am aware, however, that following recent discussions, Lesotho has, at last, commenced with some action against persons mutually recognized as actively involved in anti-South African activities. It is thus clear that these persons had not abided by the condition imposed on them by Lesotho as "refugees" not to use Lesotho to plan and launch attacks against South Africa.

Minister Molapo's statements that South Africa demands, as a condition for normalization of relations, the return to her of all refugees of South African origin on their expulsion from Lesotho are not in accordance with the facts. In our discussions, we have clearly identified the categories of persons in Lesotho who constitute a security threat to South Africa, and they by no means amount to all the "refugees" of South African origin in Lesotho. This considerable exaggeration by Minister Molapo misleads international opinion for propaganda purposes and casts doubt on the bona fides of your Government.

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I have made it clear in other communications that South Africa's tightening up the border control has been directed at anti-South African subversive elements and does not amount to an economic and arms embargo, as alleged by Minister Molapo.

Minister Molapo ventures gratuitously into the area of South Africa's domestic politics by criticizing, firstly, the decision of four national States for independence from South Africa, and, secondly, the new South African constitution adopted by Parliament. We find these comments presumptuous. The interests of bilateral relations, and the interests of southern Africa as a whole, will be best served by adherence to sound principles of inter-State behaviour, which should include non-interference in domestic affairs, and will enable the development needs of the people to receive more attention.

If we are to return to normality in our relations, there is no room for statements which distort the truth, make false allegations and criticize domestic policies. I would hope that Lesotho will be able to extricate itself from the stereotyped patterns of the past, and base its relations with South Africa on a foundation that recognizes geographic proximity and economic interdependence. It is your right to decide not to do so. But you will then have to account to your people for neglecting their interests, and you ought not to put the blame for your injudicious decisions on the South African Government.

(Signed) R. F. BOTHA
