

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 53/17/91

Distr: UA/SC

24 May 1991

Further information on UA 173/91 (AFR 53/15/91, 20 MAY 1991) - Hunger Strike

SOUTH AFRICA:

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Gordon WEBSTER | Absalom MDLUDI |
| Muhammad Rafiq ROHAN | Elphus MABILU |
| Atty Attzaxes PHIRI | Jacob MATHEMANE |
| Chris MOFOKENG | Albert MGOMANE |
| Vusumuzi Peter KHUBE | Rodney MAGOLOANE |
| Bafana Charles TLHAPANE | Petrus SHABANGU |
| (Robben Island prisoners in Somerset Hospital) | Moses NKOSI (Barberton Prison) |

Amnesty International is concerned by a report that Absalom Mdludi and the six other hunger-strikers from Barberton Prison have not been given any medical care since their admission to Barberton Hospital on 17 May 1991. All seven men are in a seriously weakened condition after 22 days on hunger-strike. The hospital authorities, apparently on instructions from the police, refused to allow an independent medical practitioner to examine the seven prisoners when he visited the hospital on 24 May in the company of their lawyer. He was allowed only to see and talk to them. The prisoners complained of having blood in their urine and had difficulties in speaking, showed a loss of concentration and appeared to be very dehydrated. The only people who appeared to be attending to them were the prison warders keeping them under guard.

A number of political prisoners from Robben Island on hunger-strike have been released during the past week. Muhammed Rafiq Rohan was released on the evening of 20 May. Chris Mofokeng, who lapsed into a state of unconsciousness on 22 May, was released at midnight on 23 May. Vusumuzi Peter Khube was released on 24 May. They are still in hospital recovering from the effects of their hunger-strike. According to reports the government indicated in parliament on 24 May that Gordon Webster, who is in a very weak condition, is "in the process of being released", but there was no confirmation at the end of the day of his release. As of 23 May nearly 100 political prisoners nationwide were still on hunger-strike.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at reports that political prisoners on hunger-strike and held in Barberton Hospital are being denied medical care despite the advanced stage of their hunger-strike;

- urging that all prisoners on hunger-strike be granted full access to a medical doctor of their choice, both during their hunger-strike and thereafter, and to prompt hospital treatment if recommended;

- urging that all prisoners on hunger-strike be allowed regular access to their lawyers and relatives;

- urging that the government complete its review of cases of political prisoners speedily, in order to prevent further suffering to prisoners and their families.

APPEALS TO

Mr F W de Klerk
 State President
 State President's Office
 Private Bag X82
 Pretoria 0001, South Africa
Telegrams: President De Klerk, Pretoria, South Africa
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Mr H J Coetsee
 Minister of Justice
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Dr G Van N Viljoen
 Minister of Constitutional Development
 Department of Constitutional Development
 Private Bag X645
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Telegrams: Constitutional Development
Minister Viljoen, Pretoria, South Africa

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COPIES TO at least one of the following (all in South Africa):

- The Editor, Cape Times, PO Box 11, Cape Town 8000
- The Editor, South, PO Box 13094, Sir Rowry Road, Cape Town 7900
- The Editor, Beeld, POB 5425, Johannesburg 2000
- The Editor, New Nation, PO Box 10674, Johannesburg 2000
- The Editor, The Star, POB 1014, Johannesburg 2000
- Hunger-Strike Support Committee, care/of Human Rights Commission, PO Box 32723, Braamfontein 2017, Johannesburg

- The African National Congress, Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Department, PO Box 61884, Marshalltown 2307, Johannesburg

and to diplomatic representatives of South Africa in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat or your section office if sending appeals after 5 July 1991.