

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 53/26/91  
Distr: UA/SC

18 July 1991

Further information on UA 221/91 (AFR 53/23/91, 28 June 1991, and follow-ups; AFR 53/24/91, 4 July 1991; AFR 53/25/91, 10 July 1991) - Hunger-strike

SOUTH AFRICA: Hunger-strikers from Rooigrond Prison  
(Bophuhatswana), including the following:

Lawrence MAHILA, aged 44

Frans MOKOMANE, aged 29

Johannes SIMELANE, aged 30

Johannes MOLEFE, aged 30

Zachariah SEABI, aged 28

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Amnesty International has received reports that nearly all of the political prisoners on hunger-strike in Bophuthatswana have suspended their hunger-strikes as of 17 July 1991. Reports are unclear, but either one, two, or three prisoners remain on hunger-strike.

The prisoners at Odi Hospital in Bophuthatswana suspended their hunger-strike on Sunday, 14 July 1991, after a midnight visit from Nelson Mandela and South Africa's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs who assured them that their release from political imprisonment was imminent. However, on 15 July 1991, General Delpont, Commissioner of Prisons in Bophuthatswana, stated, "Reports that the Odi Hospital hunger-strikers are to be released soon are false. These prisoners will serve their full sentences."

The prisoners at Victoria Hospital suspended their hunger-strike on 17 July 1991, only after they were urged to do so by the prisoners at Odi Hospital. Most of the prisoners at Bophelong Hospital also suspended their hunger-strike on 17 July 1991, following the same request. Despite these suspensions, it appears that one to three prisoners may still be on hunger-strike at Bophelong Hospital.

Amnesty International is concerned that the prisoners may not receive proper medical care now that they have suspended their hunger-strike. According to the protocol for the treatment of hunger-strikers agreed to between the South African government, medical and human rights organizations and the ANC, it is necessary for former hunger-strikers, especially after a prolonged hunger-strike, to remain in hospital and receive a particular diet and any care they may need. Past experience has shown that prison authorities have not implemented the recommended diets and have returned ex-hunger-strikers precipitously to prison. Furthermore, it appears that the prisoners when on hunger-strike have not been allowed access to independent medical doctors. It is very important for the prisoners remaining on hunger-strike, as well as for those who have suspended their hunger-strike but who are in a fragile condition, to receive independent medical treatment. Amnesty International is concerned that they receive all the proper medical care required to rehabilitate them completely.

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

- urging that all prisoners still on hunger-strike and those who have suspended their hunger-strike be granted full access to a medical doctor of their choice and to the treatment prescribed by the doctor, both during and after their

hunger-strike;

- urging that all prisoners on hunger-strike or who have recently suspended hunger-strike be allowed regular access to their families and lawyers;
- urging that the South African government speedily complete its review of the cases of all political prisoners, including those in the "homelands", in order to prevent further suffering to the prisoners and their families.

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**APPEALS TO:**

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**COPIES TO one or more of the following:**

- The Editor, The Star, PO Box 1014, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa
- The Editor, New Nation, PO Box 10674, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa
- Human Rights Commission, PO Box 32723, Braamfontein 2017, South Africa
- Mafikeng Anti-Repression Forum (MAREF), PO Box 158 Ratshidi 8681, South

Africa

- African National Congress, Legal and Constitutional Affairs Dept, PO Box 61884 Marshalltown 2307, Johannesburg, South Africa
- National Medical and Dental Association (NAMDA), PO Box 17160, Congella 4013, South Africa
- Medical Association of South Africa (MASA), PO Box 20272, Alkantrant, Pretoria 0005, South Africa

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 29 August 1991.