EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 280/91 Possible Extrajudicial execution

16 August 1991

SOUTH AFRICA Reverend Edward Nkomo, a priest with an independent African church, killed 26 July 1991

Reverend Edward Nkomo, a priest with an independent African church, was shot dead on 26 July 1991 outside his home in Mshenguville squatter camp, in the Mofolo area of Soweto. He was shot at point blank range, allegedly by members of the Inkatha Freedom Party during one of a series of violent attacks they carried out on residents of Mshenguville squatter camp in which they were allegedly assisted by police. The attacks began on 19 July 1991 and at least 10 people may have been killed in these attacks, though reports are still unclear. Between 30 July and 2 August alone approximately 30 shacks were reportedly burnt down. Many squatters have been forced to abandon their shacks and flee to places of refuge outside the camp. Some are still in hiding, fearing for their lives. Residents have claimed that the attacks were carried out by members or supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party and were aimed at those who did not support the Inkatha Freedom Party, and that the attacks were coupled with attempts to recruit members to the Inkatha Freedom Party.

Reports received by Amnesty International strongly suggest that the attackers received the active assistance of the police in the course of these raids. Eyewitnesses have alleged, for example, that on the night of 21 July armed Inkatha members were seen alighting from a police vehicle and entering the squatter camp, and about an hour later shacks were burning but residents were prevented by a large group of Inkatha members from approaching the burning shacks. On the night of the first attack, 19 July, shacks were allegedly set alight in the presence of the police and the police refused to allow local residents access to put out the fires.

Amnesty International is urging the South African authorities to investigate the circumstances of Reverend Nkomo's death and the allegations that those who attacked Mshenguville squatter camp on successive days received the active assistance of the police. In addition Amnesty International remains concerned for the safety of residents of Mshenguville squatter camp. Many families are still unable to return to their homes, even to collect their belongings, for fear of further violent attacks.

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

- calling upon the authorities to urgently investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of Reverend Edward Nkomo and any others who have been killed in Mshenguville squatter camp, Mofolo, since 19 July 1991, and to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice without delay;
- expressing concern about allegations that the police gave active assistance to those who attacked Mshenguville squatter camp, and calling for an independent

and impartial investigation into these allegations, and for any officers found responsible for unlawful conduct to be brought to justice without delay;

- urging the authorities to ensure that members of the security forces are given a clear understanding regarding their duty to protect all members of the community, in accordance with international standards.

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APPEALS TO

Mr F W De Klerk Dear President

State President

State President's Office

Private Bag X83

Pretoria 0001, South Africa

Telegrams: President De Klerk, Pretoria, South Africa

Telexes: 321695 SPLIB SA, 321890 PRES SA or 322158 PRES SA

Faxes: +27 12 323 3982

Mr A J Vlok Dear Minister

Minister of Law and Order

Private Bag X463
Pretoria 0001
South Africa

Telegrams: Minister Law/Order, Pretoria, South Africa

Telexes: 321353 HABS SA or 321358 HABS SA

(via Ministry of Home Affairs)

Faxes: +27 12 322 2559

PLEASE NOTE that as from 30 August 1991 there will be a new Minister of Law and Order, Mr H J Kriel. Communications sent on or after that date should therefore be addressed to Mr Kriel.)

Lt-Gen Van Der Merwe Dear Commissioner

Commissioner of Police Police Headquarters Private Bag X94

Pretoria 0001, South Africa

Telegrams: Police Commissioner Van de Merwe, Pretoria, South Africa

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Major-General J Swart Dear Commissioner

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Telegrams: Regional Police Commissioner Swart, Midway 1816, S Africa

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Johannesburg 2017, 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 27 September 1991.