

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 221/91 (AFR 53/23/91, 28 June 1991) and follow-ups AFR 53/24/91 (4 July 1991), AFR 53/26/91 (18 July 1991), AFR 53/31/91 (17 September 1991), AFR 53/32/91 (27 September 1991), AFR 53/36/91 (24 October 1991) -

Hunger-Strike/Medical Concern/Ill-treatment

SOUTH AFRICA (Bophuthatswana):

Johannes "Bushy" MOLEFE, aged 30

and 20 other prisoners on hunger-strike including:

George BIYA, aged 26

Lawrence MAHILA, aged 44

Zachariah SEABI, aged 28

Vincent SEKHU, aged 27

David MOSEBI, aged 25

Timothy PHIRI (transferred to Odi Prison near GaRankuwa on about 16 October 1991)

The hunger-strike protest among prisoners in South Africa's Bophuthatswana "homeland" is continuing, with 21 prisoners currently on hunger-strike. Those who are named above were previously on hunger-strike in June and July 1991. As of today twelve prisoners have been on hunger-strike for 46 days or longer and are thus facing increasing risk of health problems. Amnesty International is urging the authorities to review their cases urgently in order to prevent further suffering and possible long-term damage to their health.

Of the 21 hunger-strikers, seven are currently at Thusong hospital and the remainder are at Bophelong hospital. Amnesty International continues to receive reports that prisoners on hunger-strike experience problems, particularly at Bophelong hospital, in getting their health properly monitored and sympathetically treated by the medical staff.

Human rights workers have expressed particular concern for the health of Johannes "Bushy" Molefe, who has been on hunger-strike since 23 September 1991, and George Biya, who has been on hunger-strike since 7 October 1991. Johannes "Bushy" Molefe has suffered from spells of dizziness, low blood pressure, and considerable weight loss. On 18 November 1991 he lapsed temporarily into unconsciousness and medical staff were apparently unable to revive him, though he did regain consciousness later that day. This deterioration in his health was reportedly not recorded in his medical notes by the staff concerned. George Biya has suffered painful kidneys, continuous headaches and general body pain, as well as a drop in his blood pressure and considerable weight loss. Both prisoners are at Bophelong hospital. Despite their serious health problems, and because of their dissatisfaction with the treatment they receive from medical staff there, both are refusing medical treatment and have asked for medical care by an independent doctor. It is reported that doctors at Bophelong hospital authorized their transfer to Odi hospital near GaRankuwa, where the prisoners would be willing to accept appropriate supplementary treatment, but despite the authorization they have not been moved. The authorities have refused a request for Johannes "Bushy" Molefe to be examined by an independent doctor of his choice and, in addition, continue to place restrictions on the access to prisoners in hospital by human rights workers.

Particular concern has also been expressed about Lawrence Mahila, who is in Thusong hospital. He began a hunger-strike on 11 November 1991 but was already

in hospital receiving treatment for psychological problems related to his imprisonment. On 9 November 1991 the "homeland" authorities ordered the release of a further 27 prisoners. It appears that Lawrence Mahila was deliberately led to believe he was among those to be released, but was turned away at the last minute. Shortly afterwards he commenced his hunger-strike. An independent psychiatrist who examined him recommended a change to his treatment which the hospital staff have refused to implement, and human rights workers are concerned for his mental as well as physical well-being.

Amnesty International has received no further news of Timothy Phiri since his transfer from Rooigrond Prison to Odi Prison on about 16 October 1991, and remains concerned for his physical safety in view of his effective isolation from his fellow-prisoners and relatives.

The Bophuthatswana "homeland" authorities have ordered an investigation into the allegations that Frans Mokomane, Johannes "Bushy" Molefe and Patrick Mongake were assaulted by prison warders at Odi Prison on 3 September 1991.

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

- welcoming the fact that the Bophuthatswana authorities have undertaken to investigate the allegations that Frans Mokomane, Johannes "Bushy" Molefe and Patrick Mongake were assaulted by prison warders at Odi Prison on 3 September 1991;
- noting the release of a further 27 prisoners on 9 November 1991;
- seeking assurances that Timothy Phiri will not be subjected to torture or ill-treatment following his transfer on about 16 October 1991 from Rooigrond Prison to Odi Prison, where he appears to be kept in isolation from other prisoners, and urging that he be given access to visits from his lawyer and relatives;
- expressing concern for the health of prisoners who are continuing their hunger-strike (refer to health concerns about Johannes "Bushy" Molefe, George Biya, Lawrence Mahila or other named prisoners in your letters);
- urging that the South African government speedily complete its review of the cases of all political prisoners, and that the Bophuthatswana authorities urgently complete their own review of the cases of political prisoners in Bophuthatswana, in order to avoid further suffering to the prisoners and their families.

APPEALS TO:

Mr F W De Klerk
State President
State President's Office

Dear President

Private Bag X83, Pretoria 0001, South Africa
Telegrams: President De Klerk, Pretoria, South Africa
Telexes: 321695 SPLIB SA, 321890 PRES SA or 322158 PRES
Faxes: +27 12 323 3982

Mr R F Botha
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Department of Foreign Affairs

Dear Minister

Private Bag X152, Pretoria 0001, South Africa
Telegrams: Foreign Minister, Pretoria, S. Africa
Telexes: 0959 350060 EXTERN TTX SA
Faxes: +27 12 323 1664

Dr E H Venter **Dear Minister**
 Minister of National Health
 Ministry of National Health
 Private Bag X399, Pretoria 0001, South Africa
Telegrams: Health Minister, Pretoria, South Africa
Telexes: 321320 SA or 321366 SA
Faxes: +27 12 323 0093

Chief L M Mangope **Dear President**
 President
 Government Office, Mmabatho, Bophuthatswana, South Africa
Telegrams: President Mangope, Bophuthatswana, South Africa
Telexes: 937 3008 BOP
Faxes: + 27 140 842626

Dr D N C O B Khaole **Dear Minister**
 Minister of Health and Social Services
 Department of Health and Social Services
 Government Offices, Mmabatho, Bophuthatswana, South Africa
Telegrams: Health Minister, Mmabatho, Bophuthatswana, South Africa
Faxes: +27 140 23846 marked:Please forward to the Ministry of Health

Mr R Cronje **Dear Minister**
 Minister of State
 Department of State Affairs
 Private Bag X2172, Mmabatho 8681
 Bophuthatswana, South Africa
Telegrams: Minister of State Cronje, Mmabatho, Bophuthatswana, South Africa

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National Medical and Dental Association (NAMDA)
 PO Box 2346, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa

Medical Association (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 1 January 1992.