

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 59/94 (AFR 53/12/94, 17 February 1994) - Legal concern/Fear of torture/prisoners of conscience

**SOUTH AFRICA :** Nathaniel NGAKANTSI, Executive member, African National  
(BOPHUTHATSWANA) Congress (ANC), Mafikeng Branch

and new names: Mr MODISE, cameraman for Bophuthatswana Television  
(Bop-TV)  
Pinky MOKOTO, Executive member, ANC Tlhabologo branch  
Paba NGOGANEDIWE, Executive member, ANC Mafikeng Branch

and other members of a crowd whose names are not known to  
Amnesty International

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Bophuthatswana Police have acknowledged today (18 February) that they are holding Nathaniel Ngakantsi, whom Amnesty International considers to be a prisoner of conscience, after he was arrested yesterday in connection with a demonstration called to demand free political activity in Bophuthatswana. When lawyers went to court this morning, police informed them that they intended to charge Nathaniel Ngakantsi with involvement in an "illegal gathering" under the terms of Bophuthatswana's Internal Security Act. The lawyers paid bail, but Nathaniel Ngakantsi was not brought to court. Amnesty International still has no confirmation of his release and remains concerned for his physical safety while he remains in incommunicado police custody.

Also on 18 February, the ANC Mafikeng branch organized a picket in Mafikeng town square to reiterate the demands for free political activity made the previous day and to call for the release of Nathaniel Ngakantsi. The Chairperson of the ANC Branch in Mafikeng addressed the picket with a loudhailer from the balcony of the ANC offices adjacent to the square. As a crowd gathered below, police armed with teargas, canes and shotguns began to assault people randomly, including people waiting at a nearby taxi rank. The police fired teargas repeatedly to disperse the gathering. At one point, a member of staff of Lawyers for Human Rights witnessed a middle-aged woman being beaten by a police officer and was assaulted himself when he tried to intervene. At least one person, a taxi driver, required medical treatment for an open wound on his head, possibly from a teargas canister. The taxi driver's condition is not known to Amnesty International.

At least one person, **Mr Modise**, a cameraman from the government controlled Bop-TV, was arrested when he attempted to film the incident. Two ANC members, **Pinky Mokoto and Paba Ngogangediwe**, were also arrested, apparently from within the ANC offices. Amnesty International does not have information regarding where they are being held or the reasons for their arrests. Relatively few arrests were made at the picket, but many people were assaulted by both uniformed Bophuthatswana police and security branch officers. Earlier on 18 February police raided the ANC office named above and removed all documents, posters and voter education materials. Some were torn up, the rest were confiscated.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in

**English or in your own language:**

- expressing continued concern for the safety of Nathaniel Ngakantsi, whom Amnesty International believes is a prisoner of conscience, and calling for his immediate and unconditional release;
- expressing concern also at the arrest on 18 February of Mr Modise, Pinky Mokoto and Paba Ngogangediwe, whom Amnesty International believes may also be prisoners of conscience, and calling for them to be released immediately if they are not promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- seeking assurances that those detained will not be subjected to threats, assaults or torture while in the custody of the Bophuthatswana Police and urging that they be granted immediate access to lawyers and relatives;
- expressing concern at the continued pattern of human rights violations committed against non-violent political activists in Bophuthatswana, apparently because of their involvement in activities related to the 1994 South African elections.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) Chief L M Mangope

President, Government Offices

Mmabatho, Bophuthatswana, South Africa

**Telegrams: President Mangope, Bophuthatswana, South Africa**

**Telex: 937 3008 BOP**

**Fax: + 27 140 842626**

**Salutation: Dear President Chief Mangope**

2) Major-General P J Selake

Commissioner of Police

Private Bag X2006, Mmabatho 8681

South Africa

**Telegrams: Police Commissioner, Mmabatho, Bophuthatswana, South Africa**

**Fax: + 27 140 812 711**

**Salutation: Dear Major General**

3) Mr Rowan Cronje

Minister of Defence, Department of Defence

Private Bag X2003, Mmabatho 8681

South Africa

**Telegrams: Defence Minister, Mmabatho, Bophuthatswana, South Africa**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

4) Mr R F Botha

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs

Private Bag X152, Pretoria 0001

South Africa

**Telegrams: Foreign Minister, Pretoria, South Africa**

**Telex: 0959 350060 EXTERNA TTX SA**

**Fax: + 27 12 325 8669**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

- Lt Col F Short, Office of the Commissioner of Police, Private Bag X2004, Mmabatho 8681, South Africa; **(Fax: + 27 140 812 711)**
  - Lawyers for Human Rights, Mafikeng Regional Office, PO Box 945, Mafikeng 8670, South Africa;
  - Mafikeng Anti-Repression Forum (MAREF), PO Box 158, Ratshidi 8681, South Africa;
  - The Editor, Sowetan, PO Box 6663, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa;
- and to diplomatic representatives of South Africa accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 April 1994.