

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 221/91 (AFR 53/23/91, 28 June 1991) - Hunger-Strike

SOUTH AFRICA: Approximately 60 Political prisoners in Rooigrond Prison, (Bophuthatswana), including the following:

Lawrence MAHILA, aged 44	Frans MOKOMANE, aged 29
Timothy PHIRI, aged 34	Patrick CEBISA, and 23
Johannes SIMELANE, aged 33	Davis MATSHEGO, aged 30
Johannes MOLEFE, aged 30	Michael RANKU, aged 25
Zachariah SEABI, aged 28	Simon LEFAKANE, aged 27

Amnesty International is concerned by reports that political prisoners on hunger-strike and under medical care in Bophelong Hospital, in Mafikeng, (Bophuthatswana), have been forcibly removed from the hospital and relocated to different hospitals. Bophuthatswana prison officials apparently entered the hospital on 28 June 1991 and, ignoring protests of doctors and nurses that the patients were in no condition to be moved, ordered the patients to pack their belongings and prepare to be relocated. The prisoners were then directed by the prison officials to carry their own intra-venous drips and were loaded onto a minibus.

Fifteen of the hunger-strikers, including Lawrence Mahila, Frans Mokomane, Davis Matshego, Patrick Cebisa and Johannes Simelane, were allegedly flown to the Pretoria military base and were then transported to Odi Hospital near GaRankuwa, north of Pretoria. GaRankuwa is within Bophuthatswana's borders and is approximately a four hour drive from Mafikeng. All but six of the remaining hunger-strikers were then moved to Victoria Hospital, a private hospital in Mafikeng.

On 1 July 1991, prison officials forced the six remaining hunger-strikers at Bophelong Hospital into a police van and took them to Victoria hospital.

Amnesty International is concerned that this forced relocation of the hunger-strikers from Bophelong Hospital by the authorities has caused physical and psychological suffering for the prisoners. In addition, Amnesty International is concerned that relocation of some of the hunger-strikers to Odi Hospital will make visits from lawyers and family members even more difficult for the prisoners.

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

- expressing concern that political prisoners on hunger-strike and under medical care at Bophelong Hospital were forcibly removed from the hospital despite opposition from medical staff treating them;

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

- urging that all hunger-strikers be allowed regular access to their families and lawyers;

- urging that the South African government speedily complete its review of cases of all political prisoners, including those in the "homelands", in order to prevent further suffering to the prisoners and their families.

APPEALS TO:

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 Mmabatho

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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 Department, 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 15 August 1991.