

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 53/25/91 (10 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), AFR 53/42/91 (20 November 1991) - Hunger-Strike/Medical Concern/Ill-treatment

SOUTH AFRICA (Bophuthatswana):

former hunger-strikers from Rooigrond prison including:

Johannes "Bushy" MOLEFE, aged 30)
George BIYA, aged 26)
Zachariah SEABI, aged 28) released
Vincent SEKHU, aged 27) 28 November 1991
David MOSEBI, aged 25)

and Laurence MAHILA, aged 44, released 9 December 1991

and Timothy PHIRI, still in custody

On 28 November 1991 the Bophuthatswana authorities released 13 hunger-strikers including those whose health was causing the gravest concern - Bushy Molefe and George Biya. Three hunger-strikers at Thusong Hospital were not released, but on 28 November the authorities indicated that further releases would take place. Seventy-eight political prisoners were then released between 9 and 12 December, including the three remaining hunger-strikers. The wave of releases occurred as the process of constitutional negotiations, in which the Bophuthatswana authorities are expected to take part, gathered momentum towards multi-party talks in December.

Timothy Phiri, convicted of treason in 1989 in connection with the 1988 coup attempt, has not been released but has been transferred from Odi prison to Mafikeng prison. Frans Mokomane and Patrick Mongake and all other prisoners convicted for their role in the 1988 coup attempt, many of whom were the subject of earlier appeals while they were on hunger-strike, have been released.

At least five other political prisoners remain in custody. Two are members of the Leeuwfontein community who are still serving sentences arising from conflict with the Bophuthatswana authorities over the forced incorporation of their village into the Bophuthatswana "homeland", and three are prisoners convicted during the 1980s of armed activities on behalf of the African National Congress. It appears that at present none of those still in custody are on hunger-strike.

Some of those prisoners who were previously on hunger-strike are still receiving hospital treatment, but all are reported to be making satisfactory progress. They expressed the wish to pass thanks to all who appealed on their behalf.

No further action is requested.