

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of torture/legal concern

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12 November 1990

SOUTH AFRICA (Bophuthatswana):

**Dr Thabo RANGAKA, a hospital superintendent, member of the Mafikeng Branch of the ANC, and of the National Medical and Dental Association (NAMDA), and Mafikeng Anti-Repression Forum (MAREF)**

**Nomvula HLONGWANE (f), a secretary, member of the Mafikeng branch of the African National Congress (ANC) and MAREF**

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Dr Thabo Rangaka and Nomvula Hlongwane were arrested today in the nominally independent "homeland" of Bophuthatswana and are detained under the state of emergency regulations still in force there. The police also called at the homes of at least six other ANC activists in Mafikeng early today, but did not find them at home. The Bophuthatswana emergency legislation, like the regulations previously in force in other parts of South Africa, permit any security force member to detain people without charge for an initial period of 30 days, thereafter renewable for a further five months on the authority of the Minister of Law and Order, without automatic right of access to a lawyer, doctor, or relatives.

Dr Thabo Rangaka was arrested at about 2.30 a.m. on 12 November 1990 at his home in the grounds of Bophelong Community Hospital, Mafikeng, where he is hospital superintendent. The Bophuthatswana security police who arrested him said that he was being held under the Bophuthatswana state of emergency regulations. They told his wife that Dr Rangaka was being taken to Mafikeng police station, but when she later called there she was told he was not there. His current place of detention is unknown. He appears to have been detained because of his involvement with organizations which seek to monitor human rights in Bophuthatswana and to ensure that the rights of detainees are respected. Amnesty International regards him as a prisoner of conscience and is urging the Bophuthatswana authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally.

Nomvula Hlongwane was also arrested on 12 November 1990 under the state of emergency regulations, at about 8.00 a.m. at her place of work in Mafikeng. Her place of detention too is not known. This is her second arrest within a few days. On 8 November she was arrested by Bophuthatswana security force officers at her place of work, held at security police headquarters for questioning, and released later the same day. She is employed as a secretary and is the mother of two grown-up children. Amnesty International is concerned that she may have been detained on account of her involvement with MAREF, an organization which seeks to monitor human rights abuses, and because she is an ANC member. Amnesty International believes she may also be a prisoner of conscience and is appealing to the authorities to release her immediately if she is not to be charged promptly with recognizably criminal offences.

It is feared that other arrests may be taking place, following an announcement earlier today by the Bophuthatswana authorities that they had uncovered an ANC plot to overthrow Bophuthatswana's nominally independent government and kill the president. No details of the alleged plot were given in the announcement. However, in recent

weeks the "homeland" authorities have consistently targetted members of the ANC and affiliated organizations in an apparent attempt to prevent opposition organizations from operating freely and setting up local structures. Detentions, restrictions on public meetings, and confrontations with demonstrators have occurred repeatedly. As of 7 November 1990, 539 people had been detained under the Bophuthatswana state of emergency regulations since the beginning of the year and 41 were still in custody.

Amnesty International has frequently received reports of the torture or assault of detainees and of their lack of access to adequate medical treatment while in police custody in Bophuthatswana.

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

- expressing concern that Dr Thabo Rangaka has been detained without charge under the state of emergency regulations; stating that Amnesty International believes he is a prisoner of conscience, detained on account of his non-violent political activities and his human rights monitoring work; and calling for his immediate and unconditional release;

- expressing concern that Nomvula Hlongwane has been detained without charge; stating that Amnesty International believes she may also be a prisoner of conscience detained on account of her non-violent political activities; and urging that she be released immediately if she is not to be charged promptly with a recognizably criminal offence;

- seeking assurances that Dr Rangaka, Nomvula Hlongwane, and any other people detained under the Bophuthatswana state of emergency regulations will not be subjected to torture, assault, or any other forms of ill-treatment.

**APPEALS TO**

Chief L M Mangope

Mr F W De Klerk

President  
Government Offices  
Mmabatho  
Bophuthatswana, South Africa

State President  
State President's Office  
Private Bag X83  
Pretoria 0001, South Africa

Telegrams: President Mangope,  
Bophuthatswana, South Africa

Telegrams: President De Klerk  
Pretoria, S Africa  
Telexes: 321695 SPLIB SA  
321890 PRES SA  
or 322158 PRES SA  
Faxes: +27 12 323 3982

Minister of Law and Order  
Department of Law and Order  
Private Bag X2004  
Mmabatho 8681  
South Africa

Major-General P J Seleke  
Commissioner of Police  
Department of Police  
P/Bag X2004  
Mmabatho  
Bophuthatswana, South Africa

Telegrams: Minister Law/Order,  
Bophuthatswana, South Africa

Telegrams: Police Commissioner,  
Bophuthatswana, South Africa  
Telexes: 0937 3019 BOP

**COPIES TO:**

- Sowetan, POB 6663, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa
- Vrye Weekblad, PO Box 42637, Fordsburg 2033, South Africa
- Mafikeng Anti-Repression Forum, Private Bag X9, Mmabatho, Bophuthatswana, South Africa
- National Medical and Dental Association, PO Box 17160, Congella 4013, 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 17 December 1990.