

28 February 1975

The Rt Hon. James Callaghan MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Downing Street
LONDON SW1

Dear Mr Callaghan,

I am writing to you on a matter which is of grave concern to us at present. For more than three months now at least 43 supporters of the Black consciousness movement in South Africa have been held in solitary confinement. A further 15 are to be brought to trial on 3 March under the Riotous Assemblies Act.

We now know for certain that 12 of the remaining 43 will be brought to trial on 12 March under the Terrorism Act and that the charge sheet runs into well over 100 pages. Because of the numbers involved and the gravity of the charges which have been made, we think that this trial is extremely important since it will be the largest in South Africa since the Treason Trial of 1956.

We therefore consider it extremely important that the trial should be observed by the outside world in order that a presence of the world may be seen to be there by the South African authorities.

I am therefore writing to you to request that arrangements be made for a representative from the British Embassy in Pretoria to be present at the South African Supreme Court when the trial commences on 12 March.

I hope very much that this will be possible and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Basil Manning
for SATS Committee