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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

11 July 1980

Dear Mr. Ntshy,

Thank you for your letter of 28 June.

The Government has not remained silent about the violent disturbances in South Africa. As you acknowledge, I referred to this in the House of Commons on 19 June. Britain also voted in favour of United Nations Security Council Resolution 475 of 13 June expressing concern at the disturbances. I understand that a delegation from the Anti-Apartheid Movement called on Mr. Luce, Parliamentary Under Secretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 26 June specifically to discuss these issues.

The Government has made clear that it finds the policy of apartheid abhorrent and that it deplors the suffering caused by the repressive measures used to enforce apartheid. However, we feel it best to attempt to bring about peaceful change in South Africa by dialogue and contact rather than further ostracism. We have no standing in the case of Mr. Mandela. But, Sir Ian Gilmour told the House of Commons on 16 April that his release would be widely welcomed in this country as a symbol of the desire for reconciliation in South Africa. The Government has also on several occasions voiced its concern to the South African authorities about detentions without trial in Namibia. We have frequently called for the release of such prisoners. We are working for the implementation of the UN plan for the independence of Namibia, which provides for the release of all political prisoners, and which is the best hope for an end to the violence.

/ You mention

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You mention the United Nations Security Council debate on 27 June. In this debate the UK Permanent Representative, Sir Anthony Parsons, said clearly that 'We profoundly regret the loss of life and property in Angola. We cannot in any way condone the actions of the South African armed forces.' The UK abstained from voting on Security Council Resolution 475 because of the inclusion of certain language drawn from Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter; and above all because adoption of the Resolution would not promote early agreement on implementation of the UN plan for the independence of Namibia to which I have just referred. But while we could not support the Security Council Resolution itself we support its main objectives, South African withdrawal and respect in future for Angolan sovereignty; and we are working as a member of the Five to secure the realisation of the UN plan.

Yours sincerely
Raymond Dabben

Mr. Abdul S. Minty