



**FREE  
NELSON**

**MANDELA!**

**SOLIDARITY WITH  
SOUTH AFRICAN  
AND NAMIBIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS!**

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## 'NO EASY WALK TO FREEDOM'

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Nelson Mandela, leader of South Africa's liberation movement – the African National Congress – was sentenced to life imprisonment at the Rivonia Trial in June 1964. He was found guilty of planning acts of sabotage and making preparations for guerrilla warfare against the apartheid state.

Mandela explained his actions with these words from the dock:

**It was only when all else failed, when all channels of peaceful protest had been barred to us, that the decision was made to embark on violent forms of political struggle, and to form Umkhonto we Sizwe. We did so not because we desired such a course, but solely because the government left us with no other choice.**

And in South Africa a life sentence for a political prisoner means imprisonment until death.

Nelson Mandela has been a key figure in South Africa's liberation struggle since the early 1940s. An attorney by profession, he was a founding member of the ANC Youth League. In 1952 he was the 'Volunteer in Chief' during the Defiance Campaign. Then, in 1956, he was charged with 155 others in the 'Treason Trial'. After a trial lasting five years, all 156 were acquitted. The charges arose from the adoption, at the Congress of the People in 1955, of the *Freedom Charter*, which, the apartheid state argued, was High Treason. Its preamble states:

**We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know: that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people.**

Following the Sharpeville massacre and the banning of the ANC and the PAC, Mandela played a key role in the founding of Umkhonto we Sizwe, which was to become the armed wing of the ANC. This marked a turning point in the history of the liberation struggle – a recognition of the inevitability of armed confrontation, a struggle which the United Nations General Assembly has overwhelmingly endorsed.

Since Mandela's imprisonment his wife, Nomzamo Winnie, has sought to continue the struggle to which he dedicated his life. She has been detained, tried, acquitted, then retried and acquitted, banned and constantly harassed by the security police. Currently she is banished to a remote location in the Orange Free State.

The fate of Nelson Mandela and all South African political prisoners must be of concern to the whole world. There can be no real change and certainly no peace whilst the true leaders of South Africa are imprisoned, detained or in exile.

A new international campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela was launched on 11 October 1982 by the United Nations with the support of organisations all over the world.

There is much that can be done by individuals and organisations:

- support the international petition campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela
- help distribute publicity material, eg leaflets, stickers, badges, etc
- send a message to Nomzamo Winnie Mandela at 802 Brandfort Location, PO Brandfort 9400, Orange Free State, RSA
- encourage any organisation you are active in to support the campaign
- raise the campaign with your MP and ask her/him to urge the government to intervene to secure the release of Nelson Mandela
- contribute to the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa at 104 Newgate Street, London EC1
- join the campaign to free all South African political prisoners.

I would like to receive the Free Nelson Mandela Campaign Briefing  a Free Mandela Petition Form  an order form for campaign material  more information about campaigns for the release of political prisoners  or general anti-apartheid activities . [Tick appropriate box(es)]

Please return to Free Nelson Mandela Campaign, 89 Charlotte Street, London W1P 2DQ