

STATSMINISTERENS APNINGSTALE - International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF), årsmøte i Norge 4. mai 1979.

For the first time the International Defence and Aid Fund has decided to convene its annual meeting in Norway. The Norwegian Government welcomes this decision.

The International Defence and Aid Fund has since its establishment in 1964 performed a remarkable service in assisting political prisoners and their families in Southern Africa. I would not hesitate to say that it is the main source of international assistance for the oppressed people of South Africa and the members of the national liberation movements persecuted by the white minority regimes in the

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region.

I would also like to commend the International Defence and Aid Fund for its work to keep the conscience of the world alive to the situation in Southern Africa. By giving out information on the inhumanity of apartheid, racial discrimination and on the cause of the political prisoners, it contributes efficiently to bring forth the truth on apartheid.

Regrettably we have witnessed during the last years a great increase in repressive measures in South Africa. Torture and deaths of political detainees have continued. Political trials have been staged in remote areas to make legal assistance difficult and to avoid publicity. The execution of Solomon Mahlangu despite the many appeals

of the international community to save his life is yet another tragic testimony to human suffering in South-Africa.

The Norwegian Government has repeatedly stated its willingness to work for the total eradication of the policy of apartheid. While we are fighting for this in the political world, we cannot forget the human sufferings caused by the apartheid policies.

We will continue our policy to assist the victims of apartheid. We will therefore continue to give financial support to the noble work of the International Defence and Aid Fund. I have the pleasure to announce that the Government will now make a new contribution of 2 1/2 million kroner.

Before concluding I would like to express my appreciation to Canon John Collins, the founder of the Fund.

I had the pleasure to meet him in Lagos at the World Conference Against Apartheid in 1977. I thank him for the dedication with which he has led the work of the International Defence and Aid Fund in its untiring efforts to assist the victims of apartheid.