Dear Friends:

Three young South Africans, all members of the African National Congress, are currently facing execution by the Pretoria regime, after losing the last round in a 2 year series of appeals. The three, Johnson Lubisi (28), Naphtali Manana (24), and Petrus Mashingo (20) were sentenced to death in November 1980, having been found guilty of "high treason", in a major trial orchestrated by the South African authorities to show that they would crush all resistance. Despite state attempts at suppression, much unwanted evidence emerged at the trial—including details of confessions and witness statements extracted by brutal torture. Nevertheless Lubisi, Manana and Mashingo were found guilty of participating in an ANC guerrilla attack on the Soekmekaar Police Station on January 4, 1980. No one was killed in the attack, but the state pressed hard for the death sentence, constantly stressing that the action had to be seen in the context of a conspiracy aimed at overthrowing the State by a sustained process of violence.

Calling for international action on behalf of the three condemned men the African National Congress has stressed that "In South Africa, it is treason to fight for basic democratic rights which most of the rest of mankind take for granted. These three young South Africans are involved in a just struggle for national liberation which the international community and indeed the United Nations General Assembly has recognized as legitimate."

In this context there have been repeated appeals by the international community to the South African authorities to grant "prisoner of war" status to captured freedom fighters. Intransigent, the South Africans refuse to concede the legitimacy of the freedom struggle and continue to maintain and defend the entire apartheid system. On April 7, 1982 the South African Supreme Court upheld the death sentences of Lubisi, Manana and Mashingo.

On April 9 the UN Security Council passed a unanimous resolution (503) calling on the South African authorities to commute the death sentences and urging all states and organizations to take urgent measures to save the lives of these three men.

The US government supported this resolution. We ask you to write, call or cable the White House and the State Department urging action to save the lives of the three men.

We ask you to communicate with the South African Consul in your area, or with South Africa's Ambassador Donald Sole calling for commutation of the death sentences imposed and calling on the South African government to recognize the right of the entire population to full democratic rights.

Act swiftly, sentence is likely to be carried out soon.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Davis
Executive Director

President Ronald Reagan
White House
Washington DC, 20500

Chester Crocker
Asst. Sec. for Africa
Department of State
Washington DC 20520

Amb. Donald Sole
South African Embassy
3051 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington DC 20520