PRESS RELEASE

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DEMONSTRATORS TO PROTEST DEATH OF SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH, CALL ON CBS NEWS TO CONTINUE UNCENSORED NEWS REPORTING

Saturday February 6, 1988; 12:00 noon; CBS Headquarters

NEW YORK, NY -- The American Committee on Africa will join with New York-based community activists to hold a demonstration protesting the recent death in South Africa of Godfrey Sicelo Dlomo on Saturday February 6, 1988. The protest will begin at 12 noon at CBS National Headquarters [51 West 52nd Street (at Sixth Avenue)].

Dlomo, 18 years of age, was found murdered in the South African Black township of Soweto 5 days after being detained by South African police for questioning regarding statements he made in the CBS News' documentary, "Children of Apartheid" (the documentary aired in December). In addition to speaking out courageously about his own detention, Dlomo was a staffmember of the Johannesburg-based Detainees Parents' Support Committee, an organization that provides support for detainees and their families inside South Africa.

The demonstrators are protesting the murder of Dlomo and calling for the unconditional freedom of all political prisoners in South Africa. They are also demanding that his murderers be brought to justice. The demonstration outside CBS will also demand that the U.S. media do more to cover the full story of the situation in South Africa. CBS bears a particular responsibility to cover the Dlomo case, to protest his death and to inform the American public about the ongoing detentions in South Africa.
The CBS filming of "Children of Apartheid" was an important contribution to improving coverage of the situation in South Africa. But CBS television, reportedly succumbing to pressure, delayed the broadcasting of the report for almost six months and then aired the documentary on a Saturday evening in a timeslot that does not have high viewer ratings. Under pressure from the South African government, CBS and other national media, have complied with rigid prohibitions against unauthorized filming of internal "unrest" or other protests. Yet the detentions, torture, killings and other forms of government repression continue. As a result Americans are being denied accurate reporting on events in South Africa.

Demonstrators are demanding that CBS re-broadcast the "Children of Apartheid" program as part of this effort to provide the public with much needed information regarding the true nature of life under apartheid. They are also demanding that the U.S. media not succumb to South African government censorship and work harder to cover the full story in that country.

The American Committee on Africa, as part of its Unlock Apartheid's Jails campaign, has been organizing demonstrations against detentions and jailings in South Africa for the past nine months. In October 30,000 keys--collected by activists from across the country--were dumped at the South African consulate in New York with the demand that the South African government unlock apartheid's jails and release all political prisoners. Another 35,000 keys were dumped at the South African Embassy in Washington on December 15 to reiterate the above demand.

This Committee for Godfrey demonstration is endorsed by the American Committee on Africa, the Patrice Lumumba Coalition, Westpac, and the New York Rainbow Coalition.

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