

SACBC ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD CALLS FOR THE RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL DETAINEES (8/3/89)

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference called on Law and Order Minister, Mr Adriaan Vlok, to release all political detainees and requested that on National Detainees' Day all Catholics join in praying for and supporting detainees and their families.

"We express support for organisations and individuals who have intervened on behalf of detainees in order to try and avoid a possible hunger strike tragedy and to bring serenity and hope to the families and detainees.

"We reiterate our refutation of the Law and Order Minister's assertion that continued detentions are exercised for the maintenance of law and order. We stated (2/2/89) that we fail to detect any sign of the rule of law or vestige of moral or social order in the deprivation of liberty imposed upon detainees and its attendant hardship and sufferings, especially in regard to minors in detention.

"We welcome the Minister's move to release some detainees over the past two weeks. However, the number of those released to date is less than half the total number of those in detention and therefore does not help to allay our fears. We are also concerned by reports of the arrests of new detainees who seemingly take the places of those who have been released by the Minister.

"Those who have been released are placed under restriction orders which are tantamount to continued detention.

"We call upon the state authorities for the unconditional release of all detainees. We believe that in doing so they will be upholding the Christian values to which they so often appeal."