

SACBC ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD STATEMENT ON NAMIBIA (12/5/89)

“If all goes well, South African forces in Namibia will be recalled and confined to base. After the crisis of the first week of April, this is good news and once again offers hope for just and peaceful settlement in Namibia.

“However, to ensure that this may come about, the pleas of Namibian church leaders need to be addressed. We, the Administrative Board of the Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference, join our voice with the call they issued after the tragic events of April.

“In particular we express the earnest hope that South African armed forces will be confined to base permanently; that SWAPO will ensure that all members of PLAN (SWAPO’s military wing) will be kept north of the sixteenth parallel and that the UNTAG military component will be increased.

“We cannot understand the South African decision to integrate Koevoet (COIN) in SWAPOL, the police force of Namibia. Police service is surely incompatible with the training and practice associated with a counter-insurgency unit known for its ruthlessness. Koevoet should be removed from the scene immediately.

“We call for much prayer for the Namibian people in this time of transition and join with Namibian church leaders in appealing for compassionate and costly love involving forgiveness and reconciliation so that peace may be established.”