

SACBC ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD STATEMENT ON THE VIOLENCE (8/5/92)

The Administrative Board of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference at its meeting in Pretoria addressed the issue of political violence. The Board examined with grave concern the recent tragic escalation of political killings: 110 in January, 239 in February, and 437 in March.

These deaths cannot be argued away as the result of 'black on black' violence or an African National Congress and Inkhata Freedom Party feud. Though the latter is still very much in evidence in Natal, the violence in the Transvaal is of a predominantly random nature. Statistics show that of those killed in March, 70% of the people in the Transvaal area had no political affiliation. This violence has proved a constant shadow to the negotiation process.

There is no doubt that sinister forces are at work within our country. Accusations and counter accusations by political parties have not helped in unmasking these forces. The aim of the violence appears to be destabilization. Those who carry out the violence do not want peace or new democratic South Africa. We condemn in the strongest possible terms this use of violence aimed at destroying the efforts at building a new country.

We also notice with regret that the Security Forces, be they the Police or the Defence Force, have been largely unsuccessful in bringing the perpetrators of this violence to justice. Given the continues increase in violence and the inability of the Security Forces to respond effectively, we feel obliged to add our voice to the growing number of Churches and organisations calling for international monitoring of the violence.

We pray our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ in this Easter time to touch with His grace those hearts of stone who see violence as a solution to the problems of our country.

Finally, we lend our support to make June 5th a National Day of Prayer and Healing asking all people of goodwill to pray for a speedy end to this senseless violence.