

**SACBC SECRETARIAT STATEMENT ON NATIONAL DETAINEES' DAY  
(5/3/91)**

On this National Detainees' Day, the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference wishes to join its voice to all those calling for an end to detention without trial. In the past we have constantly urged that South Africa return to the normal rule of law as the greatest guarantee of both individual human rights and of a stable society.

We congratulate President F W de Klerk on the many reforms he has initiated to normalise our society. However, these very reforms give added urgency to our appeal. People are still being held in detention and many exiles fear to return home because of the threat of detention. We call for a general amnesty for all in exile. The vast majority of South Africans are committed to negotiations as the best means of solving disputes. Just as this fact calls for the return to the normal rule of law as the best way of dealing with unruly and violent people in society whether these are motivated by criminal or political reasons. The repeal of security legislation must go hand in hand with the repeal of apartheid legislation. This is the way forward. We urge President de Klerk to take it.

People in detention must be released. Security legislation must be repealed. Ongoing detention cannot be justified and justice remains a prerequisite for peace.