

SACBC STATEMENT
OF
CONCERN FOR TREASON DETAINEES (1985)

The administrative board of the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference expressed deep concern over the arrests of a further seven on charges of treason.

Their trial, like that of the eight previously arrested on the same charge, is likely to be a protracted one which means that, whether innocent or guilty, they are effectively removed from active life and involvement for a lengthy period.

Is this a repetition of the tactics of 1956 and 1961 when 156 persons were arraigned for treason and none found guilty? If this turns out to be the case (and there is the strongest expectation that it will) the South African government will have proved itself guilty of using the process of justice to perpetuate injustice.

Talk of reform has little meaning when brave men and women are prevented in this way from striving for freedom. The crime attributed to them becomes the crime of all who share their hopes and endeavours.

May God grant our government the grace to see that there must be real change towards accepting the principle of participation of all citizens in the life of the country. May He comfort and sustain those who suffer for this cause, those arrested and their anxious families. All those who strive honestly and justly for a healthy transformation of our society are assured of our support.