

## **SACBC STATEMENT**

### **ON**

#### **EUROPE'S PROTEST AGAINST DETENTIONS (28/7/87)**

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference thanked the West German ambassador who on behalf of the European community protested to foreign minister Mr. Pik Botha against security-law detentions and the treatment of detainees. The bishops noted with appreciation that the powerful 12-nation body had taken a clear stand on human rights in South Africa, and addressed it to such a high level of government. The bishops' gratitude and appreciation stemmed from the fact that their vocation as church leaders is defend Christian principles and the rights and dignity of the downtrodden.

Mr Botha replied to the protest and said that any maltreatment of detainees that might occur is not condoned by the South African authorities. Every effort is made to investigate specific charges of ill-treatment.

Is Mr Botha telling the truth?

One instance last year which effects the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference was when Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, Conference secretary general, said in papers before the Pretoria Supreme Court that he had been tortured while in state of emergency detention. Minister of Law and Order Louis le Grange promised an investigation.

Why is it that, after almost a year, no report of the findings of that investigation – if it was indeed ever carried out – ha been made known to the public? Why has action against the culprits in the security forces not been made known?

Signed by: Bishop Wilfred Napier of Kokstad, President of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference on behalf of the Conference Administrative Board.