

SACBC STATEMENT

ON

SHARPEVILLE SIX (16/3/88)

Because Mr Dlamini, Deputy Mayor of Lekoa, died at the hands of an angry crowd and the Sharpeville six were part of that crowd, it may be in conformity with the South African law and legal tradition to pronounce them guilty on the grounds of common purpose. But when the law has condemned to death there is still a civilised recourse to clemency. What an opportunity for clemency there is here for there is no clear evidence that any of the six directly caused the killing or that they suspected others of intent to kill.

Refusing clemency in these circumstances and in the face of the great volume of pleading from many parts of the world has a heartless and incomprehensible ring about it.

Those who struggle for liberation in South Africa will not forget. They will add six new names to the list of martyrs, and martyrs, as we know from history, fortify and perpetuate the cause in which they die. If the state wishes to promote the cause it is choosing the right way, but is a cruel and unnecessary and irrational way. We strongly support the plea for a stay of execution to allow the matter to be reconsidered.