

**STATEMENT
ON THE
RESTRICTION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES**

SACBC Plenary Session – 20th-23rd July 1971

The Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference re-affirms the right and duty of persons and communities to investigate, make public and combat grave injustices in society; and calls attention to its statement on this point in the joint pastoral letter of 1960.

A society's laws cannot be divorced from moral considerations, in particular considerations of justice. Therefore the Church has a special obligation to comment on the moral aspect of laws and their application.

In view of recent events the South African bishops formally protest against the restriction of civil liberties without the process of law or reasons given. They instance bannings, house-arrests, detentions, deportations and other restrictions without trial. Nor can they consider the assertion that similar things are done in other countries to be a justification for doing them here.

They vigorously repudiate the frequent suggestion that persons subjected to these measures, and others apposing government policies and actions may be presumed indiscriminately to be furthering the aims of communism.

They feel it opportune to point out that sectional interests and administrative convenience must always be subject to the rights and freedoms of all people within the frontiers of the State.