



Nelson Mandela National Reception Committee Press Statement

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PRESS STATEMENT

Nelson Mandela was arrested on 5th August 1962 a few weeks after making a short visit to London having left South Africa underground. For over 27 year he has been kept in continuous incarceration despite world-wide appeals for his release.

Throughout this period people in Britain have campaigned actively to secure his release and that of all South African political prisoners. He has been honoured by cities and towns; universities and polytechnics; by trade unions and students; by musicians and sculptors; and by many many more people from all walks of life.

Nelson Mandela is by far the world's most famous political prisoner and through the campaigns organised in Britain, the people of Britain have made an important contribution to this process.

With the possible impending release of Nelson Mandela in early 1990, a Nelson Mandela International Reception Oimmittee has been established. It is being convened by Archbishop Trevor Huddleston following consultations with the ANC and with the full support of its President Oliver Tanbo. This International Reception Committee has appealed for the creation of National Reception Committees in as many countries as possible.

At the joint initiative of the African National Congress and the Anti-Apartheid Movement a National Reception Oonmittee is being established in Britain. A meeting of Sponsoring Organisations is to take place tomorrow night at the House of Commns. The purpose of the National Reception Committee is clear:

- * to intensify the campaign to release Nelson Mandela;
- * to prepare to celebrate Nelson Mandela's release especially in the many places which have honoured Nelson Mandela
- * to step up the on-going struggle to secure the release of all South African political prisoners and detainees
- * to intensify the struggle to end apartheid.

We will be finalising our plans tmrrow evening, however we envisage:

- * approaching praninent figures who have participated in the campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela to secure their sponsorship
- * identifying all the places and organisations throughout Britain which have honoured Nelson Mandela and to ask them now to start planning celebrations, such as street parties or other appropriate events
- * asking the Universities which have granted Nelson Mandela honorary degrees and Cities which have granted him the Freedcm of the City to extend invitations to receive these awards on his release
- * producing stickers, tee-shirts, etc for people to wear to celebrate his release
- * asking local authorities to fly the ANC flag on the day of Nelson Mandela's release

We are confident that the many people throughout the length and breadth of Britain who have participated in the "Free Nelson Mandela" campaign will join in these celebrations and will also ensure that they provide an opportunity for us all to re-dedicate ourselves to the struggle to free all political prisoners and to end apartheid.

With best wishes,

Mendi Msimag Robert/ Hughes MP
Chief Representative, Chair,
African National Congress Anti-Apartheid Movement