



UNITED NATIONS

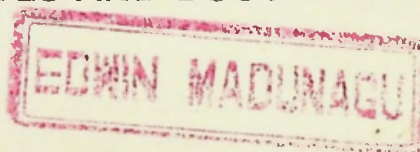
CENTRE AGAINST *APARTHEID*

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL
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NOTES AND DOCUMENTS*

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THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION IN SOUTH AFRICA:

AN IRRESISTIBLE TIDE **

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Call for effective United Nations sanctions
against apartheid South Africa

by

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Ambassador of Algeria to the Federal Republic
of Germany, Rapporteur of the World Conference
for Action against Apartheid
(Lagos, 22-26 August 1977)

** This statement was made on 14 November 1977 at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

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Ambassador Sahnoun was formerly Assistant Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity for Political Affairs, and Political Secretary of the International Conference of Experts for the Support of Victims of Colonialism and Apartheid in Southern Africa, held in Lagos in April 1973.

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It is worth while emphasizing the deep significance of this debate. Indeed, until recently this discussion was confined above all to the Special Political Committee, where facts known to all were repeated over and over in a more or less sincere tone or style and where the recent history of the people of South Africa was traced and retraced, without the impression really being given that this discussion was leading to a genuine mobilization of international opinion and concrete and effective action. Today the General Assembly is seized directly of this question, shortly after a discussion in and important decisions by what is usually called the executive organ of the United Nations - that is, the Security Council.

If we have achieved such a remarkable and encouraging result, it is first of all because the long and difficult struggle of the South African liberation movements has obviously become an increasingly irresistible tide, expressing the deep aspirations of the South African masses. Those movements, whether spontaneous or organized and structured, are the result of a tradition and experience of political struggle born at the beginning of this century. Through Sharpeville and Soweto the world has obtained a picture of the heroism of these people who must face the most sophisticated and inhuman machinery of war and repression of our times.

The significance of this debate should be sought also in the outcome of long-term political action by the African peoples and Governments, particularly since the beginning of the 1960s.

I need hardly recall that the very creation of the Organization of African Unity was due essentially to the will of the Africans to put an end to colonialism and racism on their continent. It might be worth-while reminding all those who are banking on the division of our peoples that even before 1963 there already existed contradictions in Africa which were reflected moreover in really antagonistic groupings. And yet the rallying call, the common platform in May 1963 was none other than an expression of the awareness of the need to overcome our divergences on the methods of emancipation and development and work for the total liberation of our continent and for the elimination of racism and colonialism. If today there still persist certain discordant notes which are regrettable and which hinder the completion of that process of liberation, we remain convinced for our part that in particular circumstances Africa, as in May 1963, will recover its unanimity. The action of the Liberation Committee of the Organization of African Unity and other bodies of that institution has supported the struggle of the liberation movements of South Africa and helped to initiate today an open discussion in this important forum on the ways and means to put an end rapidly to racism and apartheid.

The significance of this debate is to be seen lastly in a vast convergence of the many and generous actions carried out by all the progressive forces of the world; all those groups and individuals which have set for themselves as an ideal the struggle against injustice in southern Africa. This is a vast movement and we can retrace its course in detail from the meeting in Oslo in April 1973 to the recent and historic Conference in Lagos of August 1977.