



FILE

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

19 September 1984

Dear Mr. Kinnock

Thank you for your further letter of 17 September, about the six opposition leaders presently in our Consulate in Durban.

We fully understand the predicament of the six and others like them and have expressed our concern about the recent arrests and detentions to the South African authorities. We also, as you note, subscribed to the Declaration by the Ten on South Africa issued by Community Foreign Ministers last week.

But, as I said in my letter to you of 13 September, we cannot act as intermediaries between the six South African citizens and their own Government. It would not be right for us to intervene in the legal processes of another country, whether or not we agree with them. The six have free access to their lawyer. It is for him, not us, to negotiate with the South African authorities.

You ask that Ministers should see Mr. Yacoob, the lawyer who is acting for the six and who is currently in London. Mr. Yacoob had the opportunity on 17 September to put his arguments to a senior Foreign Office official responsible for Africa. The latter explained the Government's position, making clear our wish to see the matter quickly resolved by direct discussion between the lawyers representing the six and the South African

authorities. Since there is no role for Her Majesty's Government, I see no need for a Ministerial meeting. If Mr. Yacoob has additional points to put to us about the six, he is, of course, welcome to call again on Mr. Johnson at the Foreign Office.

You mention the physical conditions for the six. We have done our best to provide reasonable facilities in very difficult circumstances, not of our making. The Consulate is small, with no water and no toilet facilities. It is not designed as living accommodation. The largest room in the Consulate has been vacated for the six and makeshift sanitation provided. They can communicate at any time with their lawyers. Families have been allowed in to visit on three occasions, most recently yesterday, and the six have been medically examined.

I hope that Mr. Yacoob and the six will now quickly come to an arrangement with the South African authorities which will enable this very difficult situation to be brought to an early end.

Yours sincerely
Raymond Stalder

The Rt. Hon. Neil Kinnock, MP.