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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

15 October 1984

**PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. 1174/1a**

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 27 September about the six men who sought refuge in our Consulate in Durban.

As you will appreciate, this has been a difficult problem. Humanitarian considerations have weighed heavily in our thinking and were a major factor in our decision at the outset that we would not require the six men to leave against their will. We also bore in mind that detention orders had been issued against the men and that the validity of those orders was then being tested in the Natal Supreme Court.

As you know, three of the men left the Consulate before the Court gave its decision on 8 October upholding the detention orders. We have explained to the three remaining in the Consulate that our position on eviction has not changed. But we do believe that all that could reasonably be done has been done and that we cannot countenance an indefinite stay which is seriously disrupting the work of the Consulate. It is also difficult to see what useful purpose is served by their remaining.

You mentioned the outcome of the recent elections in South Africa. I fully accept that the new Constitution is seriously flawed by the absence of any provision for the Black majority. Its racial nature is contrary to our democratic traditions and beliefs and it is clearly unacceptable to many of the Indian, Coloured and White communities, as well as to Blacks. Nevertheless, it does represent some movement in political thinking in South Africa. The Coloured and Indian leaders in the new

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Parliament say that they are committed to achieving changes for the Black majority as well as for their own communities. I do not know if such changes can be achieved. But I believe it would be wrong to do anything that might impede such a development. For these reasons we have refrained from condemning the new arrangements outright and decided to give them the test of time. I assure you that I shall be following this process closely.

Warm regards,

Yours sincerely

Raymond D. Lister

Her Excellency Shrimati Indira Gandhi.