



PRIME MINISTER

98/92

**STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING, MP
SOUTH AFRICA : CISKEI MASSACRE**

The Australian Government was appalled by, and condemns unequivocally, the deliberate and unprovoked massacre of peaceful protesters by the Ciskei Defence Forces on 7 September 1992. About 28 people were killed and around two hundred more wounded. These people were legitimately demonstrating against the continuation of the apartheid structure of "independent homelands".

Australia conveyed its horror at these events to the South African Ambassador, who was called in to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade yesterday.

The South African Government, which, under international law is responsible for the actions of the Ciskei authorities, must take action to ensure that the perpetrators are quickly brought to justice. No other country in the world - including Australia - recognises the independence of the homelands.

This latest violence further undermines the prospect of an early resumption of constitutional negotiations through the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). Ciskei is a party to the CODESA talks and the military leader of Ciskei is identified as a close ally of President De Klerk. The President's failure to condemn the massacre puts in question his commitment to eliminating political violence and the structures of apartheid which Ciskei represents.

To establish an environment of confidence in which the constitutional negotiations can resume, the Australian Government believes it is crucial that all parties exercise self-restraint and that the South African Government exercise more effective control over the security forces.

These tragic events also demonstrate the correctness of the Australian Government's approach, in concert with its Commonwealth partners, of delaying further lifting of sanctions until concrete changes have taken place in South Africa. People-to-people sanctions were lifted last year under the Commonwealth's phased approach to removing sanctions, but trade, investment and financial sanctions will remain until South Africa is irrevocably on the road to non-racial democracy.

As Senator Evans and I have indicated previously, Australia stands ready to contribute to the international efforts to address the problem of violence in South Africa.

CANBERRA

9 September 1992