



Southern China International MUN

Official Background Guide

Historical Committee: On measures to eradicate apartheid in South Africa (1991)

Agenda overseen by Connie Chen

0. Chair's Letter

Future delegates of 2022,

Welcome to 1991.

Invictus by Willian Ernest Henley

*Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.*

“Invictus”, meaning unconquerable and undefeated in Latin, manifests every single one of the anti-apartheid fighters. Inspired by this poem, Nelson Mandela who kept on resisting during his 27 years of imprisonment was released in 1990.⁴⁴

Walk yourself through the era of apartheid. Would you be one of *the Invictus*?

Sincerely,
President Chair

1. Description of the issue

1.1 History of the issue

1.1.0 Key terms

Apartheid	South African policy that governed relations between South Africa's white minority and nonwhite majority, sanctioning racial segregation and political and economic discrimination against nonwhites. ⁵⁰
Cape Colony, the Cape of Good Hope, and Cape Province	Cape Colony was a British Colony established in 1806; Cape Colony became the Cape of Good Hope with the formation of Union of South Africa in 1910; the Cape of Good Hope was also known as the Cape Province. ⁴⁵
Afrikaner	South African population descended mainly from Western Europeans. They settled on the southern tip of Africa during the middle of the 17th century. The majority of the Afrikaners were white and spoke Afrikaans (Afrikaner's native language). ⁴⁶
National Party	National Party of South Africa (NP), one of the South African political parties. NP was founded in 1914 and had ruled the country from 1948 to 1994. Its following included most of the Dutch-descended Afrikaners and many English-speaking whites. The National Party was long dedicated to policies of apartheid and white supremacy. ⁴⁷
United Party	United South African National Party (UP), one of the South African political parties. UP was the governing party from 1934 to 1948 and thereafter the official opposition party in Parliament. ⁴⁸
African National Congress	African National Congress (ANC) was South African political party, black nationalist organizations, and one of the most impactful anti-apartheid organization. It was founded in 1912 with its main focus of maintaining voting rights for black and colored South Africans. ⁴⁹

1.1.1 Precursors

Racial segregation in South Africa did not appear all of a sudden. It is a historical issue carried over from the past.

Back in the 1760s, the pass laws which require slaves to carry authorized travel passes when moving between urban and rural areas¹ were implemented to segregate the population. In 1797, the pass laws were extended and slaves were required to carry passes around the nation for all purposes.²

Complying with the United Kingdom's **Slavery Abolition Act 1833** that had abolished slavery across the British Empire, South African legislation changed the status of slaves to indentured laborers.³ The implementation of various legislations limited the freedom of unskilled workers, which were mainly black, and further restricted the relations between races.

The Cape Colony, the precursor of South Africa, is a British colony established in 1806.⁴ In the **Cape Constitution of 1833**, it adapted the Cape Qualified Franchise⁵ which empowered all men the right to vote at parliamentary elections regardless of race.

However, the **Franchise and Ballot Act of 1892** raised the franchise qualification, disenfranchising the disadvantaged Africans, colored, and poor whites.⁶ The **Glen Grey Act of 1894** further excluded the black from voting and owning property by imposing labor tax and limiting individual landholdings.⁷ The **Mining Code of 1896** gave white men the sole right to work in particular professions including banksman, engine driver, and mine manager.⁸

In the early 20th century, racial segregation in South Africa intensified not only through the racial-specific restriction of franchise, property ownership, and occupations, but also the deprivation of non-whites' freedom to travel. Africans and Indians were required to carry badges at all times while their entrances to specific areas were highly restricted.⁹

The **South Africa Act of 1909** marked that the white had gained complete political control over other races. In the following year, this legislation was further promoted due to the formation of the Union of South Africa which united the four old colonies: the Cape Province, the Orange Free State, the Transvaal, and the Natal.¹⁰ Disagreement among the four colonies arose when all colonies, except for the Cape Province, were adamant that voting should be restricted for the whites only.¹¹ In the end, all provinces retained their existing voting systems and the extension of "Cape Liberalism" was denied. This had deprived the right of the non-whites to vote in the other three provinces. The South Africa Act also stipulated that only the white may sit in the parliament. Despite the wishes of the people-of-color, which consist the majority of the South African population, the colonial parliaments passed this act and thus laid the foundation of the union's formation.¹²

In 1936, African voters were disenfranchised as stated in the Natives Parliamentary Representation Act. Three whites were elected to the parliament in replace of the black. This act ended the colored populations' right to vote in parliamentary election, which was conferred since 1854.¹⁵

The **Natives Land Act of 1913 No.27** had been regarded as the cornerstone of territorial segregation in South Africa. The act sets aside 7.3% (it was then planned to be expanded to 13% in the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936 No.8 ¹⁴) of the South African land as reserves for the natives population. It helped the white landlords remove black sharecroppers by restricting the right of the natives to purchase lands outside the reserves.¹³ The **Urban Areas Act of 1923** introduced residential segregation by restricting the influx of African into urban areas. The Africans were only permitted within urban areas if their presence is demanded by the white population.

1.1.2 Introduction to Apartheid

"South Africa had allowed social norms and laws to govern the consideration of multiracial affairs and the allocation, in racial terms, of access to economic, social, and political status.¹⁶" The gaps in social structure between the white and the people-of-color laid the foundation for the gradual development of racial segregation regime. South African economy rapidly developed during World War II and caused wartime shortage of white labour. As a result of the large labour demand, black migrants were attracted to the chief industrial centers. This had led to an escalated rate of black urbanization. However, the South African government failed to recognize the African influx and to accommodate the migrants with parallel expansion in housing, infrastructures, and social services.¹⁶ The overcrowding of urban population resulted in social issues such as the increase of crime rates. The National Party convinced the majority of the voting bloc that the failure of the United Party in handling the nonwhite influx indicated its political inefficiency. At the same time, the United Nation's criticized South Africa's color classification and imposed pressure on the South African racial segregation policies. Jan Smuts's United Party gradually lost domestic support due to Smuts' advocacy of the United Nations.¹⁷

With the purpose of continuing and reinforcing white domination with systematic efforts, the Afrikaner nationalists (the National Party) offered the voting bloc a new policy that was initially drafted by Hendrik Verwoerd. Racial segregation had since been extended to all major matters of the society, including the separation of infrastructures and education. The National Party named the policy by "apartness" in Afrikaans, that is, "Apartheid". This introduced the basic ideological and practical foundation of the subsequent racial segregation.¹⁸

The support for the United Party gradually slipped away as the party struggled to manage the issue of black urbanization and the mounting tensions of the Cold War. The party failed to appeal to its working class constituents and was defeated in the majority of the rural districts.¹⁷

After the general election of 1948, the National Party came into power, leading by the first nationalist prime minister, Danial François Malan. The National Party aimed to implement the apartheid philosophy and silence liberal opposition.¹⁶ Apartheid had become the legally institutionalized racial segregation in South Africa.¹⁹

The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 No.55 forbade marriages between the white and the non-whites. It was marked as the first apartheid law.²⁰

The Immorality Amendment Act of 1950 No.21 forbade any sexual relationships between the white and the black.²¹ It was an extension of the Immorality Act that was passed in 1927, long before the introduction of apartheid.²² In 1957, this legislation was extended again. It was considered an offense for a white person to sexually interact with a person of color. Enticing, attempting, or conspiring such act also constitutes a crime that may result in seven years' imprisonment (maximum).²³

The Population Restriction Act of 1950 classified the South African population into three categories: White, Black (or as known as African/Native/Bantu), and Colored.²⁴ The classification was based on the person's physical appearance (skin color) and habits, including language spoken, education, and deportment. Persons with both parents being White were classified as White; members of an African race or tribe were classified as Black; the rest of the population was classified as Colored.²⁵ The colored was further subcategorized into Cape Malay, Griqua, Indian, Chinese, and Cape Colored.²⁴

Subsequent to the territorial segregation and residential segregation introduced in 1913 and 1923 respectively, racial classification had determined the place of residence between 1960 and 1983. 3.5 million non-White South Africans were removed from their homes and forced into segregated neighborhoods as a result of apartheid. These targeted removals were intended to restrict the non-White population to ten designated "Bantustans".²⁶ The Bantustans were also known as the "Bantu Homelands" or the "Black States" that were reserved for Black South Africans by the white-dominated South African government.²⁷

1.1.3 Opposition against apartheid / Resistance

As a result of the black dissatisfaction with the South Africa Act of 1909 that established the Union of South Africa, the **African National Congress (ANC)** was formed in 1912.²⁸ In 1909, the white had gained complete political control over other racial groups. A group of black delegates had therefore formed the **South African Native Convention (SANC)** to convey the objections of the disenfranchises of the people-of-color. The convention was considered as the precursor of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC, later renamed as ANC) that went to England in 1914 to plead for a new deal for South African blacks.²⁹ The peaceful resistance of the ANC had drawn the

attention of the British media who expressed sympathy towards the plight of the black South Africans. However, there was no change made by the delegation.

The ANC remained active in the resistance of racial segregation since then and had gone through three phases: dialogue and petition, direct opposition, as well as armed struggle.²⁹ From 1940s to 1960s, the form of resistance in the country remained relatively peaceful. The resistance transformed to armed struggles and underground activities after a massacre in the March of 1960.¹⁹

In 1949, the introduction of apartheid resulted in a more militant resistance of ANC. At the same time, the congress proposed their Programme of Action which supported non-violent resistance. On 26 June 1952, the Defiance Campaign was launched. This was the first joint political action under a common leadership (ANC) that involved the black, the colored, and the white South Africans.³⁰ The volunteers led by Nelson Mandela, Yusuf Dadoo, and Walter Sisulu³¹ signed the following pledge with a sense that history was being made:

“I, the undersigned, Volunteer of the National Volunteer Corps, do hereby solemnly pledge and bind myself to serve my country and my people in accordance with the directives of the National Volunteer Corps and to participate fully and without reservations to the best of my ability in the Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws. I shall obey the orders of my leaders under whom I shall be placed and strictly abide by the rules and regulations of the National Volunteers Corps framed from time to time. It shall be my duty to keep myself physically, mentally, and morally fit.”³¹

Volunteers of the Defiance Campaign purposely broke apartheid laws and offered themselves to be arrested. They refused to carry passes, entered “White-only” areas, and used “White-only” facilities. It was hoped that the resistance would lead to a rapid increase in prisoners, which would cause the collapse of the system. The ANC also hoped that this non-violent resistance would gain international support.

In the end, over 8000 volunteers were arrested and ended up in jail. Leaders of the ANC, including Nelson Mandela, were found guilty of “statutory communism”. Despite the repression of the South African government, the membership of the ANC increased by tens of thousands. At the same time, the resistance of Defiance Campaign won the recognition of the United Nations. The South African apartheid policy was considered as an international issue and thus investigation was established by the UN commission. Although the resistance caused little threat to the apartheid regime at the moment, it demonstrated the potential power of the ANC leadership in anti-apartheid movements. The Defiance Campaign marked the beginning of non-racial cooperation in the resistance against racial segregation in South Africa.³¹

1.2 Recent Development

1960 — The Sharpeville Massacre took place in which the participants surrendered their reference books, or as known as the passes for non-white South Africans, and offered themselves for arrest. The police forces responded with armed suppression, fired on the crowd, causing hundreds of woundings and 69 deaths. Anti-apartheid organizations including the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) were then legally banned by the South African government.

1963-1964 — The Rivonia Trial was known as a landmark event in the history of South Africa. It was the trial for 12 members of the ANC, who were accused of “attempting to violently overthrow the South African government”. Nelson Mandela, one of the defendants who acted irreplaceable roles later in the anti-apartheid movements, was accused of death penalty. He delivered a three-hour long statement at the opening of the defense case, which sparked global attention towards the negative impact of the apartheid regime:

“During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.” — Nelson Mandela, 1964 ³⁷

On 12 June 1964, the defendants were sentenced to life imprisonment.

6 September 1966 — Hendrik Verwoerd, who developed and applied the apartheid policies in South Africa, was stabbed to death in the parliamentary chamber. Back in 1960, there was another assassination attempt that had failed.³⁹

1970 — The Black Homeland Citizenship Act 26 of 1970 forcefully removed all non-white South Africans from their original residence to Bantustans that were designated for their particular racial groups. The act required them to become citizens of one of the self-governing territories.⁴⁰ In this case, the South African citizenship of the non-White would be stripped and thus their remaining civil and political rights were deprived.⁴¹

16 June 1976 — The Soweto Youth Uprising, or known as the Soweto Massacre, was a rebellion initiated by non-white South African students and marked one of the foremost resistances in the field of education. The students protested that the Afrikaans language that was mainly spoken by the white South Africans, was used as instruction language in Soweto high schools which served the non-White. The police and the army responded violently and resulted in the deaths of 600 youths.⁴³

1978 — P.W. Botha, an outspoken apartheid supporter, replaces John Vorster as Prime Minister.

1989 — F.W. de Klerk replaces PW Botha as president. He then met Nelson Mandela, desegregated public facilities, and freed multiple ANC activists.

1990 — The ANC ban was officially lifted. Nelson Mandela was released from the prison after 27 years of imprisonment.

2. Emphasis of the Discourse

2.1 Stance of Intergovernmental Organization

2.1.1 Commonwealth

Commonwealth is an association of countries that recognizes the British monarch as the head.³² The organization aims to advance democracy and human rights as well as to aid economic development.³³ The initial members included the United Kingdom, Canada, the Irish Free State, Newfoundland, and the Union of South Africa.³⁴ In the 1960s, as the growing commitment to racial equality among the Commonwealth member states, South Africa's apartheid policy caused conflicts. At the same time, the Union of South Africa became a republic after a referendum on 5 October 1960. As a result of the change of status, South Africa had to reapply for the Commonwealth member in order to maintain its current trade cooperation with the other member states. However, African and Asian member states strongly opposed the Republic of South Africa due to its racial discrimination. South Africa was forced to withdraw from the Commonwealth on 16 March 1961.³⁵

2.1.2 United Nations ³⁶

1946 — Indian government complained about the South African apartheid policy and the legislations that discriminated against the Indian origins in South Africa. The General Assembly declared that “ the Indians should be accorded treatment in conformity with international standards”.

1948 — South Africa contributed to the Universal Declaration of Human Right. The introduction of apartheid by the National Party of South Africa violated the Universal Declaration of Human Right. The apartheid policies were later transferred on South-West Africa. South Africa became “an international embarrassment” and “a pariah state” due to its racial segregation ideology.

1952 — The General Assembly stated that considering the legally binding commitment of the UN to the international protection of human rights, the apartheid issue in South Africa was subject to the UN's jurisdiction. The UN requested the South African government to revise its apartheid policies.

1960 — Subsequent to the Sharpeville Massacre, the Security Council “condemned apartheid as a crime against the conscience and dignity of mankind” and stated that the current situation of apartheid had led to international friction and could possibly endanger international peace and security.

1962 — The General Assembly called upon all member states to break up diplomatic relationships with South Africa, boycott South African goods, and refrain from exporting to South Africa.

1963 — The Security Council called upon all member states to establish an arms embargo against South Africa.

1966 — The General Assembly condemned the apartheid of South Africa as a “crime against humanity”.

1948-1966 — Due to the economic interests of the United Kingdom, France, and the United States, the United Nations failed to take resultful actions to end the South African apartheid.

1970 — The Security Council criticized the violations of the arms embargo that was proposed in 1963. It requested the international community to further strengthen the embargo: not to supply equipment for use by South African military and police forces; to revoke all licenses and patents of arm manufactures granted for South Africa; to cease all military cooperation with South Africa.

1973 — The General Assembly declared that “the South African regime has no right to represent the people of South Africa” and that “the liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) are the authentic representatives of the overwhelming majority of the South African people”. The African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania were invited to participate in the debates on apartheid. The above organizations were later recognized by the UN as the “authentic representatives of the majority of the South African people”. At the same time, South Africa was “excluded from participation in international organisations and conferences held under the auspices of the UN”.

1976 — Following the Soweto Massacre, South Africa was condemned once again by the General Assembly. It was reaffirmed that the apartheid policy of South Africa was “a crime against the conscience and dignity of mankind” and “seriously disturbed international peace and security”.

1977 — The Security Council imposed mandatory arms embargo on South Africa.

Late 1970s to early 1980s — The “Bantustanisation” embarked by the South African government, which granted independence to homelands occupied by the black population, was refused to be

recognized by the United Nations. The UN called up all member states to refuse recognition to Bantustan States.

1983 — In response to the international pressure upon South Africa's struggle to establish a democratic society that include all racial groups, the South African government announced the South African Constitution of 1983. The constitution "provided chambers of Parliament for colored persons and Indians, but not for black South Africans" and "was approved by a referendum in which only white South Africans were entitled to participate". The United Nations refused to recognize this constitution.

1967-1989 — Initiated by independent African Countries such as Ghana and Ethiopia, the United Nations embarked on international campaigns and imposed pressure on all states to end the apartheid regime in South Africa.

2.2 Pro-Apartheid

The support of the apartheid regime in South Africa was mainly demonstrated in the following aspects:

- Maintaining diplomatic relations with the Republic of South Africa.
- Neglecting the arms embargo requested by the United Nations; supplying equipment for use by South African military and police forces; providing military support or cooperation with the apartheid regime.
- Neglecting the economic sanctions against the Republic of South Africa requested by the United Nations; importing or exporting South African goods, especially arms.
- Refusing to recognize anti-apartheid organizations.
- Recognizing any apartheid legislations that were denied by the United Nations.
- Implementing racial segregation policies within its own country.
- Imposing racial segregation policies upon foreign countries.

Countries that demonstrated pro-apartheid stance include but are not limited to the following: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Israel, India, China, Singapore, Malawi.

2.3 Anti-Apartheid

The opposition of the apartheid regime in South Africa was mainly demonstrated in the following aspects:

- Condemning the South African apartheid regime.
- Prohibiting any military relations with the South African apartheid regime.
- Sanctioning the Republic of South African economically, academically, athletically, etc.
- Initiating anti-apartheid movements.
- Providing military support or cooperation and providing equipment for anti-apartheid organizations.
- Committing to the racial equality within its own country.

Countries that demonstrated anti-apartheid stance include but are not limited to the following: Nigeria, Ethiopia, Zambia, Tanzania, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Mozambique, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Kenya, Ghana, Mauritius, Cuba, Angola, New Zealand

3. Possible solutions

3.1 International pressure

One of the key factors that may eradicate apartheid in South Africa is the pressure from the international community. Intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations had explicitly condemned apartheid as a crime against the conscience and dignity of mankind. It is essential for all countries to isolate the apartheid regime in aspects such as but not limited to: arms and ammunition, trade, academics, technology, and athletics. All nations should follow the request of the United Nations in order to commit to racial equality. However, the national interests of several countries hindered the effort of the international community. Any diplomatic relations with the Republic of South Africa may impede the eradication of apartheid and thus all nations should refrain from any private, illegal, or non-transparent trade for the purpose of its own national interest. Such relations can be considered as pro-apartheid and should be condemned by the international community. Yet, the delegates should also consider whether receiving support from the Republic of South Africa impede the eradication of apartheid.

3.2 Resistance

Anti-apartheid organizations and movements should be supported by the international community. The recognition or initiation of anti-apartheid events not only define a nation's stance but also provide support for other anti-apartheid organizations. However, the form of resistance had been

debatable. The delegates should evaluate the influence of armed resistance on ending apartheid. As for the inner resistance in South Africa, the delegates should consider the South African population that may have kept silence such as the white civilians and the effectiveness of the past anti-apartheid resistance.

4. Keep in Mind the Following

When the delegate is researching their country's stance on this topic, they should keep in mind the timeliness of the committee (1991). Then, they could consider that past involvement of their country through both pro-apartheid and anti-apartheid approaches. Note that a country's action can always differentiate from the country's stance. It is the delegate's responsibility to evaluate their country's stance with respect to their past actions. Lastly, a valuable solution should recognize influences on all stakeholders through all aspects. Please consider the following questions:

- Have your country's stance updated throughout the apartheid era? If so, what are the reasons?
- What are the anti-apartheid contributions of your country?
- What are the pro-apartheid actions of your country?
- What is your country's stance on the violent resistance against the apartheid regime?
- What is your country's stance on the influence of apartheid on South Africa's neighboring countries?
- What are the possible actions that the international community can adopt in order to eradicate apartheid?

5. Evaluation

Apartheid, the racial segregation in South Africa, was not only the struggle of the non-White but also the tragedy of the international community. The apartheid regime were developed over hundreds of years and thus such ideology was deeply ingrained. The resistance both within the country and across the globe significantly contributed to the gradual weakening of the apartheid regime. As a global citizen in the 21st century, it could be straightforward to condemn the racism. Yet, as a delegate in 1991, it is your mission to find a balance between your country's interest and the global commitment towards racial equality.

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