



South African Embassy
Trafalgar Square
LONDON WC2N 5DP

9 June 1988

Mr Charles Powell
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1A 2AL

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9/6

Dear Mr. Powell,

I felt that the enclosed Embassy statement on the so-called "Mandela Concert" transmission, scheduled by the BBC for 11 June, might be of interest to you. I have also taken the liberty of including a copy of the letter of 6 June from Ambassador Killen to the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the BBC.

Yours sincerely,

Justus de Goede
MINISTER



South African Embassy
MEDIA RELEASE

SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY REPRESENTATIONS TO BBC REGARDING
"MANDELA BIRTHDAY CONCERT"

The Embassy has recently directed representations at the highest level to the British Broadcasting Corporation.

These representations concern the projected broadcast by the BBC of the so-called "Mandela Birthday Concert" at the end of the week. Questions have been raised about the ultimate use of the funds which will be collected by the concert, as well as about the principle of giving a platform to events organised on behalf of the African National Congress. The ANC last week committed yet another in a series of car-bomb atrocities. The "Times" of 7 and 8 June published interviews with members of the ANC executive who proclaimed the organisation's intention to increase its attacks on South African civilians. According to the "New York Times", leaders of the military arm of the ANC have admitted responsibility for the recent spate of bomb attacks and defended "armed propaganda" in the townships. Chris Hani, head of the military arm of the ANC, is quoted as saying "But we shall also use revolutionary violence, or forceful persuasion, to stop blacks from collaborating." He is further quoted as having said that he would regard White Nationalist MPs and Conservative Party MPs, "Reactionary judges who dish out death sentences on our people" and other white individuals involved directly in enforcing apartheid as legitimate targets for attacks or assassination.

It is ironic that, while increased efforts are being made in the UK to curtail funding for organisations using violent methods, the ANC is offered this financial windfall. As the BBC evidently considers its investment in the event to be justifiable, the ideological dimension must have been deemed acceptable to the Corporation.

The Embassy has made representations to the BBC on many occasions over a number of years; these representations have been moderate in tone and detailed in content. Yet the BBC has consistently produced bland and non-committal replies, insisting that it maintains the same balance vis-a-vis South Africa which it displays on other matters. Many Britons, to name one instance, enquired as to why the October 1987 flood disaster, which claimed hundreds of lives and constituted South Africa's greatest natural disaster in living memory, or for that matter floods earlier this year, received virtually no coverage from the BBC.

That the BBC does acknowledge imbalances in certain circumstances is evidenced by the recent prompt apology to the Indian government concerning a programme on Prime Minister Gandhi.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that many BBC programmes, whether by commission or omission, are intended to project a consistently inaccurate and misleading image of South Africa.

ISSUED BY :

COUNSELLOR (MEDIA AND INFORMATION)
SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY
LONDON

8 JUNE 1988



South African Embassy

Trafalgar Square
LONDON WC2N 5DP

6 June 1988

Mr Marmaduke Hussey
Chairman
Board of Governors
British Broadcasting Corporation
Broadcasting House
LONDON W1A 1AA

Dear Mr Hussey,

A good deal of publicity has been given recently to the "Nelson Mandela Birthday Concert" which has been organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement and will be held in Wembley Park on 11 June. As you know the broadcast of part of the concert by the BBC and by television organisations in other countries has been the subject of comment in the British media and has also been raised in the House of Commons. It would appear from reports that the proceeds from this concert will be divided between the Anti-Apartheid Movement and various British charities; the exact use to which the proceeds will be put by the AAM and by these charities is not clear.

It is common knowledge that the Anti-Apartheid Movement, in this case as in others, promotes the aims and objectives of the African National Congress, which has claimed responsibility for a number of atrocities by way of car bomb explosions and summary executions of political enemies by the necklace method. I regret very much that the BBC should have agreed to give the ANC a public platform and to contribute by way of fees to the Anti-Apartheid Movement which is a purely political organisation.

Yours sincerely,

P R Killen

P R Killen
AMBASSADOR



FROM THE CHAIRMAN, MARMADUKE HUSSEY

BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION
BROADCASTING HOUSE
LONDON W1A 1AA
TELEPHONE: 01-580 4468
TELEX: 265781

7th June 1988

Dear Mr. Killen

Thank you for your letter of 6th June.

BBC-2 is televising the Nelson Mandela Birthday Concert this coming Saturday. It promises to be an outstanding musical event which will also be carried on BBC Radio.

Broadcasting organisations in nearly 50 countries have chosen to show the event too.

The BBC is paying no fee to promoters. We are investing some of our resources to enable the wider public in the U.K. to enjoy the music.

Yours sincerely
Derek King

His Excellency Mr. P.R. Killen,
South African Embassy,
Trafalgar Square,
London,
WC2N 5DP.