



February 20, 1997

Ambassador Franklin A. Sonn  
Office of the Embassy/South Africa  
3051 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20008-3693

Ambassador Sonn:

It is my understanding President Nelson R. Mandela may visit the State of Oregon to engage in possible economic trade talks. If so, can you please share date(s), location(s), and time(s) reflecting his itinerary. Respectfully, we are requesting a block of time to host a reception for President Mandela in the Portland African American community. Numerically our community is small, but we labored intensely during the anti-apartheid struggle and managed to make significant gains here in Portland.

Under an umbrella group that was known as POSAF (Portlanders Organized for South African Freedom), we were a multiracial group of activists and I proudly served as one of the principle organizers. Permit us to briefly share some of our local victories:

- After two weeks of continuous acts of civil disobedience and several arrests occurred, the honorary South African Consulate in downtown Portland ceased operations.
- During the cultural boycott era, U.S. jazz musician Joe Henderson publicly apologized for going to South Africa here in Portland, and pledged to write to the United Nations in order to have his name removed from its listing. We had a lengthy discussion with him prior to his decision. We also met with Eartha Kitt to request she consider a public apology, but we never heard if she followed through. At a demonstration where Tina Turner performed, we turned back concert goers prior to their purchasing tickets.
- For close to ten years we held annual anti-racist rallies and marches which focused on national and international issues, and one year we were honored to have an ANC representative who was based in Los Angeles, serve as a featured speaker. Additionally, it was also an honor for us to have Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Rev. Allan Boesak, and a member of the Pan-Africanist Congress speak in our community.
- Our influence and work created an impetus for the Oregon State Legislature to divest its holdings in South Africa.

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- As a result of their help, longshoreman did not cross our picket lines and we subsequently held up a ship for forty-eight hours. The ship had a long history of transporting materials back and forth to South Africa, and the delay cost the company thousands of dollars.
- Many hours and at least fifteen years prior to President Mandela's release from prison, some of our organizational representatives were engaged in ongoing education within the community related to the then racist regime of South Africa. Namely, staffpersons who were with American Friends Service Committee.
- We were selected as a delegate to the United Nations when one of its Commissions obtained testimony regarding South Africa. The selection was based on the work we performed in the Pacific Northwest.
- We constantly targeted two locations in downtown Portland with pickets and demonstrations, I.B.M. and a coin dealer who sold the Krugerrand.

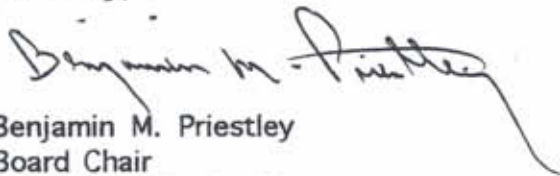
We have enclosed a few clippings for your review to support some of the above actions listed.

As stated, our community is not very large. However, we were able to do many of the above activities concurrently over a sustained period of time and it would be an honor for us to share with President Mandela and learn about future direction in your country, and what role we may play here in the United States.

I look forward to your reply and hope it will be favorable. The organization I currently represent would serve as President Mandela's host and please feel free to contact myself or Mrs. Amina Anderson at (503) 282-7973.

Finally, my son and I collect international business cards. Do you have one of President Mandela? Or yours which has a South African address? We will appreciate you sending.

Sincerely,



Benjamin M. Priestley  
Board Chair  
Black United Fund of Oregon

Enclosures