

# Conference of Editors Redakteurskonferensie

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27 July 1993

Dr. T. Eloff  
Head, Administration  
Multi Party Negotiating Process

**PER FAX : 397-2211**

Dear Dr. Eloff,

Several members of the Conference of Editors have expressed concern at the five day embargo imposed on media reporting of the contents of the draft interim constitution. It is felt that so long an embargo is an infringement of the public's right to be informed timeously of important political developments. Another source of dissatisfaction is that overseas newspapers are not subject to the same sanction as local newspapers and have less compunction about obeying the rules. It is surely wrong that details of the constitution are made public in other countries while being kept under wraps here.

No-one can have any objection to a short embargo to enable a report to be distributed and the news media to prepare their coverage properly, but a long period of enforced silence is not acceptable and is not likely to be observed by all newspapers in the future.

I should be glad if you would convey these sentiments to your committee.

Yours sincerely

  
**R.S. STEYN**  
**CHAIRMAN**

c.c. Mr A. Harber, Co-Editor, Weekly Mail

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**PEACE IN OUR LAND**

## **MEDIA LIAISON OFFICER**

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### **OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICAN AND ITS POLITICAL LEADERS**

South Africans must stop killing each other. It is unthinkable that a country whose political leaders are locked into sophisticated and serious negotiations to bring peace and stability to this country, can tolerate the violence sweeping the country and threatening to destroy us all.

We must all thank God for the National Peace Accord. Without it, who knows where we would be. The National Peace Accord succeeds in spite of the political leadership and thanks to the work of the thousands of dedicated South Africans and international observers who labour day and night, often in life-threatening circumstances, to prevent the pot of violence from boiling over.

In signing the Peace Accord our leaders promised to stem the rising tide of the dehumanising violence and to ease the burden of the millions of South Africans living in fear. That was in September 1991. Since then more South Africans live in fear than ever before.

The political violence is overshadowed by the rising crime rate that forces South Africans to live in fortresses - be it on the farms, in the suburbs or townships or informal settlements. The solution is political and therefore, the snails pace at which we are moving, is close to becoming a war crime in itself.

The National Peace Accord provides protection for all South Africans including politicians. A Peace Accord debased by contemptuous disregard, polarises society, increases insecurity and exposes people to the despicable acts which we now see daily on our television screens.

Enough! We demand an urgent meeting of the signatories to re-commit themselves to the National Peace Accord and this time, regional and local leadership must sign.

Non-signatories who may have problems with the wording, must sign a peace pledge to give legitimacy to their participation in negotiations.

Security forces must be held to the Code of Conduct and private armies must be made transparent and held equally accountable. Their need for existence, must be examined with sensitivity, but, above all, with great urgency. The commanders of security forces must be responsible to the National Peace Accord structures for their adherence to their codes of conduct.



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In the wording of the Accord, South Africans will find both a Constitution and Bill of Rights. How can South Africans trust politicians to honour the new constitution if the National Peace Accord is not honoured to the letter?

South Africans should be ashamed of the face of violence which they present to the world. Enough is enough!

This open letter is supported by Richard Goldstone and Antonie Gildenhuys, the church leaders, the business community and the people of South Africa.

**J.C. HALL - CHAIRMAN NATIONAL PEACE COMMITTEE**  
**S. MOGOBA - DEPUTY CHAIRMAN NATIONAL PEACE COMMITTEE**

**MAY 27, 1993**