

**PRESS STATEMENT**

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**SPORTS BOYCOTT**

**ULUNDI. 17TH APRIL 1985**

## Sport is healthy as a human activity

Sport is a healthy human pursuit and it is a pursuit in which barriers which normally divide people are irrelevant. When one adds the further thought that politicians should woo people for support and not intimidate them, and deny them freedom of individual choice, the question of whether or not to support sports boycotts against South Africa turns into a used question.

A case can be made out to support sports boycotts. Asking people to forego sport is not the same thing as asking them to forego their jobs. I reject most economic boycotts against South Africa because they will hurt Blacks more than they will assist in bringing about real changes. I can not reject sports boycotts for the same reason. Sportsmen lose skills and competitive advantages by being precluded from national sport. They do not, however, lose income. They do not see their children suffering from malnutrition and their futures as human beings are not deeply prejudiced because they cannot play sport in international venues.

I believe that sports boycotts have actually achieved results. South African sports bodies have put their houses in order, and there have been substantial moves towards normalising sport in this country. This would not have taken place had there been no boycotts.

My problem in making judgements about sports boycotts is that friends abroad seem bent upon pushing South African sports bodies on to an ever more demanding treadmill. I object to sports being used as a political weapon by those who have no interest in sport. It seems wrong to me to keep shifting the grounds of one's demands. The best that has been done has been far greater than the sports boycott movement of yesterday ever hoped for. How will South Africans ever be encouraged to change if they respond to pressures and to meet demands to move away from apartheid, only to find that there were no rewards for having done so.

The sports boycott movement has notched up victories. One could argue that we should see those victories as being evident in the way in which sports bodies now genuinely strive for multi-racialism in sport.

In the final analysis, however, I believe that ordinary Black South Africans encourage cultural and sports boycotts of South Africa. Black have a right to feel jubilant when the best reforms within the fore corners of apartheid are rejected by the international

community. They tend to play soccer happily amongst themselves and they are aware of the fact that a great many of those in this country who oppose sports boycotts are motivated by their commitment to the status quo to do so. It is true that we will not have normal sport until South Africa has been normalised, and I believe that our continued ostracisation in sports and cultural fields, is a price this country has to pay for not embarking on meaningful reform in the social, political and economic sphere.

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CHIEF MINISTER KWAZULU  
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