



President of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience

The Honourable Prime Minister

Ulf Kristersson

Prime Minister's Office

Herkulesgatan 17

SE 103 33 Stockholm

Sweden

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Dear Prime Minister,

Ukraine has fallen victim to an unprovoked Russian invasion, resulting in an ongoing war. President Volodymyr Zelensky has demonstrated exceptional communication skills in not only explaining the cause Ukraine stands for, which is the fight against the Russian occupation but also persuading others to support Ukraine.

Regrettably, he failed to garner the support of African government leaders. In June this year, an African peace mission of six heads of government visited both Zelensky and Putin. It is curious that the leader of the peace mission, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, stated he is neutral while he is further strengthening ties with Russia. Yet Zelensky continues to appreciate Ramaphosa's participation in this peace initiative. So, in response to a telephone conversation with Ramaphosa, he tweeted on October 17:

During our lengthy and fruitful call, @CyrilRamaphosa and I noted that relations between Ukraine and South Africa keep building up on all levels. I welcome South Africa's participation in the Peace Formula talks and thank President Ramaphosa for confirming further engagement in their next rounds.

We are convinced it will be too much of a challenge for Zelensky to change Ramaphosa's mind, given his preoccupation with Russia. Sweden can assist in this regard.

The African National Congress (ANC) holds a prominent position within the South African government. The ANC asserts that it received support from Russia (previously the Soviet Union) during its struggle against apartheid. This assistance included weapons, publications/flyers, and training in the Soviet Union and various Central and Eastern European countries, notably the German Democratic Republic (GDR). As a result, the ANC argues that it does not need to heed Western "advice" since Western countries provided minimal or no support to the ANC during apartheid.

Western countries also admit this. This became clear again recently when the German Foreign Minister Analena Baerbock visited South Africa at the end of June and stated in her speech: 'West German governments failed to support the anti-apartheid struggle for far too long.' These countries aligned

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themselves against the Soviet Union during the Cold War and benefited from the anti-communist apartheid regime in South Africa despite their anti-apartheid initiatives, such as sanctions.

Sweden, however, stands as an exception. For instance, it maintained genuine neutrality and was not a member of NATO. This is why Sweden became the first Western country to provide financial support to the ANC. Sweden occupied a unique position in this regard and contributed approximately US\$400 million to the ANC, a substantial amount surpassing the financial assistance from the Soviet Union.

Two years after the assassination of Olof Palme (1986), the President of ANC, Oliver Tambo, delivered a speech praising the Swedish people, speaking about Swedish solidarity with the following words:

the unwavering involvement of the Swedish and other peoples in the struggle for the liberation of southern Africa, the establishment of a just and lasting peace in this region, and its development as a prosperous zone of free and equal nations. The durability of that legacy of solidarity and its fundamental long-term importance lies in the fact that it is an integral part of the political formation of the Swedish people. Without it, the definition of a Swedish national consciousness is incomplete.

As a token of appreciation for Sweden's active stance against apartheid in South Africa, Nelson Mandela visited the country in 1990, expressing gratitude for its political and financial support. Interestingly, it is worth noting that Mandela visited Moscow nine years later, in April 1999.

Due to Sweden's longstanding commitment to the African National Congress (ANC), it holds a favourable position regarding its relations with the South African government. This makes Sweden the ideal party to convey the message that the South African government's decision not to condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine and to maintain cooperation with Russia, such as through the Naval Exercise Mosi-2 (December 2022), is misguided. With privilege and influence comes the responsibility to act accordingly. In this context, Sweden's strong rapport with the ANC and its historical efforts against apartheid underlines its obligation to engage with the South African government and offer guidance on the matter.

Sweden's decision to join NATO signifies a recognition that not all conflicts can be resolved solely through negotiations. This perspective could be an essential message from Sweden to the South African government. Cyril Ramaphosa's ANC-led government would need to take a conversation with the Swedish government exceptionally seriously due to Sweden's historical support for the ANC and its unique position.

We appeal to the people of Sweden to engage in dialogue with the government of South Africa and emphasise the need for a policy shift towards Russia. It is essential to convey that the South African government should condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine, acknowledging the gravity of its consequences.

Most respectfully,



Marek Mutor

President of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience