



MEDIA STATEMENT For

Immediate Release

28 January 2026

**MEDIA STATEMENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CHAPTER
OF THE ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT**

**A CALL TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA TO STAND TOGETHER AND UNITE AGAINST
THREATS TO OUR SOVEREIGNTY AND INTIMIDATION AGAINST THOSE WHO STAND
FOR JUSTICE GLOBALLY**

The South African Chapter of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) reaffirms its unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people and its principled opposition to apartheid, occupation, and genocide wherever they occur. Our commitment is rooted in South Africa's own history of struggle and our lived experience of what systemic oppression looks like and how it must be confronted.

South Africa's case of genocide against Israel that stands before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), is not just the position of government alone. It reflects the moral will of the South African people, shaped by our experience of apartheid and sustained by our commitment to international law as a shield for the oppressed, not a tool of the powerful. Our solidarity is directed against systems of domination and colonial violence, never against any people based on their religion, ethnicity, and identity.

At this critical juncture, the proposed appointment of Mr Leo Brent Bozell III as United States Ambassador to South Africa raises profound and legitimate concerns. Based on his public record and ideological posture, his appointment must be understood as part of an intensifying campaign of political pressure aimed at compelling South Africa to withdraw its genocide case against Israel at the ICJ. Such pressure, reportedly encouraged by the highest levels of the United States administration, constitutes an unacceptable escalation of coercive diplomacy. It challenges and undermines South Africa's sovereignty and its right to pursue an independent foreign policy grounded in international law.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement unequivocally rejects all attempts to intimidate, coerce, or retaliate against South Africa for fulfilling its obligations under the Genocide

Convention, the United Nations Charter, and the Statute of the ICJ. These actions represent a direct assault on South Africa's sovereignty and a dangerous erosion of the international legal order, particularly the right of Global South nations to pursue justice without fear of punishment.

These concerns are neither speculative nor abstract. Mr Bozell's public statements and history reflects a sustained hostility towards multilateralism, international human rights frameworks, and non-aligned foreign policy. His past attacks on Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress, whom he labelled "terrorists" during the 1980s, reveal an ideological position fundamentally at odds with South Africa's liberation history, constitutional values, and commitment to international law. This record raises serious questions about the role such an individual seeks to play in a country that has consciously chosen to pursue justice through lawful global institutions.

His proposed appointment must therefore be understood within a broader pattern of coercion against states that challenge impunity. This pattern includes sanctions against international courts, punitive measures against judges and officials, disinformation campaigns, and the selective application of international law. These practices undermine the integrity of the global justice system and threaten all nations that seek accountability through lawful means. Within South Africa, these external pressures are increasingly mirrored by internal destabilisation efforts, including disinformation framed as "religious freedom," the manipulation of faith leaders, and divisive false narratives like "white genocide in South Africa" – designed to fracture social cohesion. We reject these tactics unequivocally.

Across political, religious, and social differences, South Africans remain united. Trade unions representing millions of workers, Christian, Muslim and Jewish faith communities representing many more millions of people of faith in the country, student and youth formations, civil society organisations, and political movements continue to stand together in solidarity with Palestine and in defence of international law. Our unity is rooted in memory: we know what apartheid looks like, and we recognise it when we see it.

In terms of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, South Africa retains the sovereign right to refuse the credentials of an ambassador-designate without providing justification. This is a lawful and legitimate prerogative of any receiving state, and South Africa is fully entitled to exercise it in defence of its sovereignty, constitutional values, and international obligations.

Israel's ongoing genocidal campaign carried out openly and in defiance of the international community, the escalating terrorism by illegal Israeli settlers in the West Bank, and open disregard and defiance of rulings of international judicial bodies have witnessed new levels of impunity that are intolerable by any rational and moral standards. Failure to act to stop this slide to primitive days of "might is right" renders states complicit to violation of international law.

The Palestinian struggle for self-determination is inseparable from the struggles of peoples resisting imperial domination across the Global South. This is demonstrated more clearly by the recent invasion of Venezuela and capture of its President and the more than 65 years of the blockade of Cuba by the USA among others, whilst the UN Security Council is rendered impotent by the imperial forces.

CALLS TO ACTION

In light of these developments, the South African Chapter of the Anti-Apartheid Movement calls for the following:

- Mobilise the people of South Africa – region by region, sector by sector, and community by community – to stand together in resisting pressures on our democratic government to withdraw from its legal responsibility, as a state party to the UN Genocide Convention, to “prevent and punish” genocide by the apartheid Israeli state in Gaza.
- Call on the international community to join South Africa in pursuing the case at the ICJ to prevent and punish apartheid Israel for its genocidal acts in Gaza, and to prevent and punish countries that aid and abet apartheid Israel in committing genocide against Palestinians, which constitutes an international crime against humanity.
- Act in solidarity with all victims of imperial forces that act outside international law and binding international treaties.
- Fast-track the formation of the Global Alliance in solidarity with the people of Palestine.
- Urge that the President of the Republic of South Africa consider all lawful options available to the State, including the refusal to accept the credentials of

the United States ambassador-designate, to stop the destabilisation of our country and the unravelling of our social cohesion built since our democratic elections in 1994.

- Demand that FIFA withdraw the hosting of the 2026 FIFA World Cup from the United States, and that global civil society mobilise for a boycott should such hosting proceed.
- Call on the AAM Executive Committee to engage the South African Football Association (SAFA) and international partners to support and advance this call.

We reaffirm our full support for South Africa's actions in pursuit of justice for the Palestinian people. We reject intimidation, coercion, and political blackmail, just as we reject the denial of sovereignty and self-determination to Palestine.

South Africa will not withdraw.

We will not be silenced.

We will not be isolated.

International law applies to all.

ENDS

Issued by the South African (SA) Chapter of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM)

The SA Chapter of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) is the largest and most representative movement in South Africa consisting of all Palestine solidarity groups in South Africa, including Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanction (BDS), Africa for Palestine (AFP), the South African Jews for Palestine (SAJFP), and South African Christians for Palestine (SACFP); the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU), the South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU) and other unions; the South African Council of Churches (SACC); The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (TEASA); the Muslim Judicial Council (MCJ); and other faith based organisations; the majority of parties in the Parliament of South Africa, including the African National Conference (ANC), Umkhonto weSizwe Party (MKP), Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), Pan-African Congress (PAC), Al Jama-ah (ALJAMA), and others; Abahlali Basemjondolo movement, The Coalition For Good (TC4G), community organisations and civic associations; etc.

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