

Khulumani Support Group Responds to Dismissal of Lawsuit

1 December, 2004

On 29 November, 2004, Judge Sprizzo dismissed the so-called “apartheid lawsuits” brought to the New York Court under the US Alien Tort Claims Act.

The Khulumani Support Group is not deterred by the judgment made by Judge Sprizzo in dismissing the Khulumani Lawsuit along with the other so-called “apartheid lawsuits”.

In contrast to the broader lawsuits of the other parties, the Khulumani Lawsuit has a legal focus which is much more clearly defined. The Khulumani Lawsuit must be considered independently of these other lawsuits, and notice to appeal the judgment dismissing the lawsuit has been filed in a higher court in the USA.

Khulumani Support Group will shortly be commencing a national awareness campaign – “Say Yes to Redress” – on the Day of Reconciliation, 16 December 2004.

“We will never give up. Securing justice will be a long and arduous journey, but we will undertake it. This is just the beginning of the struggle for real justice.”

Khulumani will continue to be the voice for those South Africans living marginal existences, for those still searching for the remains of their children murdered by apartheid security forces; and for those left incapacitated in multiple ways by human rights violations.

On World AIDS Day 2004, Khulumani acknowledges that poverty and undernutrition are risk factors for the development of AIDS in those infected with HIV. It is befitting that we remember that the root causes of poverty in South Africa were part of a deliberate strategy by the apartheid government to keep the majority of the people of this country from developing their own voice. Khulumani means “speak out” and is the voice of over 44000 members.

Notes to editor:

Khulumani Support Group’s membership are direct and indirect victims of gross human rights violations committed during the apartheid era. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission stated that for reconciliation to take place, reparations and rehabilitation were needed. In the fifth year after the TRC handed in its report to government, reparations began to be paid out in the amount of R30 000,00 per identified victim.

The unheard voices of countless other victims have been ignored and instead, the process of amnesty has not only let many perpetrators completely off the hook; some of them have received handsome pension payouts and, ten years later are receiving

treatment, paid for by the State, for post-traumatic stress disorder. The post-traumatic stress of being a victim appears to have been completely overlooked.

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