

## **Govt forks out R50m for apartheid crimes**

Pretoria, 05 December 2002 (Mail & Guardian online)

The government has made reparation payments of R50-million to 18 000 South Africans so far for harm they suffered under apartheid rule, government representative Joel Netshitenzhe said on Thursday.

This was an interim measure and in line with recommendations by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) — which put forward 18 800 cases requiring urgent reparation, he told reporters in Pretoria.

Briefing the media on Cabinet's final meeting of 2002 on Wednesday, Netshitenzhe said the government's approach to longer-term reparations would be finalised once the TRC submitted the last draft of its final report — probably next year.

The handing over of the report was delayed in August when the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) applied for an interdict halting its publication pending litigation against the TRC over the previous draft. The review application against the TRC is to be heard in the Cape High Court on January 29. In its final report, issued in 1998, the TRC described the IFP as the "primary non-state perpetrator ...responsible for approximately 33% of all the violations reported to the commission". The IFP contends this conclusion is not supported by the evidence and has been challenging the findings in court for more than three years.

The latest version of the report includes a codicil detailing the work of the TRC's amnesty committee, and identifies perpetrators and victims of apartheid-era human rights violations. "Immediately after the court ruling on this matter, government will interact with various role-players to ensure a common national approach," Netshitenzhe said. "The government will pronounce itself on this matter then."

He pointed out that the government's perspective of the matter leaned towards reparations which emphasised "a collective approach to communities and society as a whole". However, individuals identified by the TRC would obviously have to benefit from some sort of "long-term or permanent arrangement".

Cabinet noted reports of litigation by South African groups against international companies which operated in the country during apartheid, Netshitenzhe said.

"Cabinet reiterated its recognition of the right of all citizens to undertake legal action on any matter. Government, however is not party to this litigation, and it neither supports nor opposes it."

Netshitenzhe pointed out that an appeal made about four years ago for all sectors of society to contribute to the reparations process "still stands". - Sapa