

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

RE: DISMISSAL OF CHARGES AGAINST FRANCES T. FARENTHOLD OF CRIMINAL TRESPASS AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONSULATE, CRIMINAL COURT NO. 11, JUNE 5, 1985, 11:00 A.M.

Today, on the scheduled day of trial, the District Attorney of Harris County, Texas, moved to dismiss charges against Frances T. Farenthold and Genevieve Vaughan for trespassing at the South African Consulate in Houston, Texas. The District Attorney advised the Court that the South African Consul, Johan Van Rooyen, refused to appear as a witness because his testimony would not be in the best interests of the South African government. Because of the Consul's diplomatic immunity, the Court was forced to grant the dismissal.

"We were ready for trial," the two defendants said. "The discussion between us and the South African Consul on the day he ordered us out of the Consulate Office and called the police to arrest us centered, among other things, on treason prosecutions in South Africa against peaceful protesters who had demonstrated against the South African hate laws."

"We feel certain the Consul's refusal to appear in an American court was a decision by the South African government that its best interests are not served by disclosure in an American court that the Consul emphatically told the defendants that black South Africans will never attain equal citizenship in South Africa." At this point, he ordered the defendants out of his office and called the police when they failed to comply, they said.

"Diplomatic immunity has its place," the defendants said, "but it should not be available where a diplomat causes persons to be arrested and then avoids telling the court why he did so. This seems to be the custom in South Africa."

Frances T. Farenthold