

WORLD BRIEFS

MANDELA THANKS CHURCH COUNCIL FOR HELP DURING APARTHEID

HARARE (IPS) — South African President Nelson Mandela thanked the World Council of Churches earlier this month for its role in providing the financial and material support that helped his generation receive an education during the colonial era. "Without the missionaries, I would not be here," he told the Eighth Assembly of the WCC in the Zimbabwean capital of Harare on Dec. 13. "The colonialists didn't care," he said. "But, the church bought the land, built the schools and educated the African children." Mandela, 80, said he left behind important issues in South Africa and flew to Zimbabwe to say "thank you" to the WCC for everything it did for the Blacks in South Africa during the apartheid era. He said the dismantling of apartheid was heightened by the WCC's program to combat racism and a special fund it created to support liberation movements like the African National Congress, which now governs South Africa.

DISPUTE CONTINUES OVER DATE FOR ZAMBIAN ELECTIONS

LUSAKA (IPS) — Zambian President Frederick Chiluba has set next Wednesday as the day for holding the long-awaited local government elections, but the opposition wants the voting deferred to next year. Opponents say it is "too soon and has caught them quite ill prepared." Elections have not been held since 1992, a year after the Movement for Multi-party Democracy took power. However, Zambia's constitution requires that local government elections be held every three years. As a result, local government has virtually collapsed in Zambia. The elected councils have stopped offering services such as garbage collection and providing social amenities like medical care and water supply. Many Zambians, feeling apathetic, did not register to vote for the upcoming elections. Public dissatisfaction with services was highlighted when only a very few bothered to register for the elections, which have been extended several times. Even after two extensions, the election office only managed to attract 59,000 people out of a target of 1.5 million nationwide.

AFRICAN ACTIVIST DOROTHY NYEMBE DIES AT 67

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — Dorothy Nyembe, a black activist who led rural women into the struggle against white rule in South Africa, has died. She was 67. Nyembe, a member of parliament in the post-apartheid government, died last week of asthma and was buried Sunday in Umlazi, a sprawling black township outside of Durban. Nyembe, who was jailed for 18 years by the apartheid government, was a key organizer of the 1956 women's campaign against apartheid-era laws that forced nonwhites to carry identity documents at all times and strictly limited their movements within the country. After Nelson Mandela's African National Congress party was banned in 1960, Nyembe joined the underground military wing, Spear of the Nation. She served two jail terms — one for three years, another for 15 — for her political activity. Nyembe was elected a member of parliament in the 1994 elections that ended apartheid. Several thousand ANC supporters, including several Cabinet ministers, attended her funeral, said Bheki Cele, an ANC spokesman.

SOUTH AFRICA JOINS AIDS VACCINE EFFORT

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — South African researchers will participate in an international AIDS vaccine project that will focus on two African strains of HIV, a newspaper reported Sunday. The \$9.1 million project is funded by the New York-based International AIDS Vaccine Initiative, the *Sunday Independent* reported. The South African government will contribute \$830,000 to the project, said Dr. William Makgoba, head of the country's Medical Research Council. The project will mark the first major efforts for a vaccine against two HIV strains found in South Africa and Kenya. Most vaccine research has focused on an HIV strain found mainly in Europe and the United States, the newspaper said. About two-thirds of the 33 million people worldwide infected with the HIV virus live south of the Sahara, the United Nations has said. Controversy has surrounded the development of a reputed AIDS remedy, Virodene, in South Africa.

INTERNATIONAL

Party that set up apartheid changes name

By Paul Harris

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — Seeking to overcome its image as the party that set up apartheid, the National Party is changing its name to the New National Party.

The leader of South Africa's former ruling party, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, said last week the party has applied to the Independent Electoral Commission to participate in next year's national elections under the new name.

Politicians had already been adding "New" before National Party in speeches and it has been on the party's letterhead for several months. Last Tuesday's announcement makes the change official.

"With this move the New National Party has established itself as a future-orientated party," van Schalkwyk declared.

The National Party swept to power in 1948, riding on a wave of votes from Afrikaners, the descendants of Dutch

settlers. Under the party's apartheid system of government, millions of blacks were moved into "homelands" and allowed to work in South Africa only if they carried a pass.

Amid pressure from black liberation movements and international sanctions, the party was forced into gradual reforms, eventually resulting in 1994's all-race elections which marked the end of white rule and which swept the African National Congress into power.

The National Party performed better than expected in the 1994 election, retaining control of one of South Africa's nine provinces. But it has struggled in the past four years.

Despite appointing blacks and people of mixed race to prominent positions, it is still unpopular with blacks, who make up 77 percent of the population.

Latest opinion polls show the party with 10 percent support, down from 16 percent shortly after the 1994 election.

White doctor appeals prison term in racially charged case

By Angus Shaw

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — A white anesthesiologist accused of experimenting on poor blacks appealed a prison sentence last week imposed for the deaths of two patients.

Lawyers for Dr. Richard McGown said he varied dosages of morphine injected in the spine to alleviate the pain of patients undergoing surgery.

"He followed a practice he thought was beneficial," attorney Chris Andersen told the Supreme Court in Harare.

McGown, 62, was at the center of a racial storm in 1994 when lawmakers in the Harare Parliament accused him of experimenting on black patients and likened him to a "death camp doctor" in Nazi Germany.

He was sentenced in 1995 to six months imprisonment for professional negligence in the death of a 10-year-old black girl after an appendectomy and a 20-month Asian infant after a circumcision operation.

He was cleared on charges of culpable homicide in the deaths of three other patients, one of them a white woman, who received epidural morphine anesthetics.

Andersen told the nation's highest court last Monday McGown successfully administered caudal and epidural anesthetics with morphine to hundreds of patients, including at least 500 children.

Breathing complications linked to morphine arose in five cases where patients died under McGown's postoperative care.

McGown was charged with causing death through negligence.

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Expert medical witnesses called by the state at his trial failed to agree on much of the technical evidence but conceded that doses of morphine McGown administered were sometimes "just above the accepted range but not excessive," Andersen said.

Parliament members in 1994 portrayed McGown as a racist who deliberately tested the tolerance of blacks to morphine for research and to win scientific recognition for his work.

The case touched off street protests against whites by militant black students who threatened to attack and mutilate whites unless

McGown received a death sentence.

McGown was accused of epitomizing whites who had not shed racist attitudes long after Zimbabwe, the former British colony of Rhodesia, became a black-ruled state in 1980.

A decision by the appeals court is expected in several weeks.

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