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Correspondence: Letter of Apology To Dr. Chikane

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Fos to Chikane (1)
cc ex TAC Commissioners

Dear Dr Chikane,

Thank you for your recent letter which my office in Cape Town has forwarded to me in the USA which explains the delay in my reply for which I apologise.

In a sense, I do not know what to say. I am puzzled & deeply distressed. It appears that you and President Mbeki believe that what happened was the result of a deliberate & calculated act of malice on the part of the Commission or some members of it. My apology to you even before the dreadfully unfortunate mistake was a matter of public knowledge buttressed by the more detailed explanation by Ms Sue de Villiers who was in charge of the whole process of producing the 2 Volume Report seems not to have had the desired effect of assuring you that this was a very bad & indeed embarrassing slip on our part which understandably caused you deep hurt. Had you been able to accept our assurances that it was a bad mistake which we would attempt to rectify first by my written apology to you (followed by that of Ms de Villiers)

and second by the proposal of the practical steps we would undertake to correct the contempt, then your hurt would have been considerably assuaged.

Unfortunately you seem to believe that it was not just an innocuous slip but a calculated and malicious act designed to malign you & cast considerable aspersions at your integrity and person. As it happens, I can produce the young woman who was responsible for adding "the Red Frank" to the relevant texts. When she wanted to write to you to apologise & to take the blame I said it would not be necessary as I believed that anyone would realise just how utterly bizarre the allegations were & would accept the explanation of its being a genuine error made under the enormous pressure of completing a daunting task because the Court interdict obtained by the NFP precluded any kind of work ~~being~~ on the Codicil until the matter had been settled. I can vouch for her bona fides. As the former Chairperson of the TRC I accept full responsibility for this distressing mistake, and will have to run the gambler of your wrath.

Because of the exigencies^s of the situation, we were not able to check the final text although we had kept ~~an~~ ^{meticulous} eye on the process of production upto that point.

With regard to the way forward which you have suggested, may I remind you that the TRC is no longer a legal person. It has been succeeded by the Dept of Justice which would be the proper recipient of ^{any} suggestions. Ms de Villiers indicated that as far as is possible with the 50 volumes that were distributed it would be relatively straightforward to black out from the text the offending words 'the Rens'v' 'Frank' the TRC did not itself distribute copies to the media. It was done by the relevant Govt Dept which hosted the Press Conference on that day. It would probably have a list of those who received copies. These volumes could be recalled or treated in the fashion outlined the words being deleted or blacked out. 'Believe' the website could be dealt with in an appropriate manner. Apropos my apology, I have indicated I no longer have any legal standing. I thought it received wide circulation through being mentioned in ~~the~~ President Mbeki's address to Parliament. I must say I have been surprised that

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The Press has hardly referred to that mistake at all as if they realized that it was a bad but not sinister slip. I got into a single question at the Press Conference relating to this issue nor have I been quizzed since. I have watched our SA Press online & not once has there been any reference to this issue.

I believe that in a different dispensation when they were poisoning your clothes & trying to assassinate members of your family, you would have laughed this episode off as so absurd. Had you been as hypersensitive then as you seem to have become you would not have survived the vicious attempts of the apartheid regime to destroy you. I am sad. I apologise again on my own behalf & that of the former Commission. More I cannot do - as you have said you reserve your rights.

God Bless You