

Amani Trust's Response

15th November 2002

The Board of Amani Trust, Zimbabwe expresses its deep concern at the statement in Parliament on Wednesday 13th November by Cabinet Minister July Moyo, wherein he referred to Amani Trust as an “illegal organisation”.

The statement made reference to an advertisement in “The Herald” newspaper in September 2002, requiring all non governmental organisations to register in terms of the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Act, Chapter 17:05.

Amani Trust is a duly registered Trust in terms of the Laws of Zimbabwe. The original Deed is filed in the Deeds Office which is the correct place of registration. An attempt was made to lodge the Trust Deed with the Master of the High Court Harare and that office confirmed in writing, that no legal mechanism exists for the High Court to undertake such a “registration”. It is the belief of the Board that Amani Trust, as a private duly registered Trust, is exempt from the definition of “private voluntary organisation” as given in the Act.

The Amani Trust is performing a vital function at this time of crisis in Zimbabwe, by offering health and counselling services to torture victims in Zimbabwe, regardless of their political affiliation, in accordance with our mandate.

The Board takes the Minister's threat of closure and of arrest of Amani staff very seriously, occurring as it does in the context of relentless attacks in the government controlled media on Amani Trust, and the recent arrest of Dr Frances Lovemore, Medical Director, Harare.

While Amani's legal position seems clear, we fear this is no guarantee in Zimbabwe at this time, that the authorities will not carry out their threats of further harassment and arrest.

Signed: + PIUS A. NCUBE

ARCHBISHOP OF BULAWAYO

CHAIRPERSON

AMANI TRUST, MATABELELAND