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KHULUMANI SUPPORT GROUP welcomes the September 1, 2009 decision of the South African government not to oppose the litigation of the remaining South Africa Apartheid Litigation claims in the United States Southern District Court

In a move hailed by South Africa's victims and survivors of apartheid-era gross human rights violations, the South African government has informed the judge presiding over the South Africa Apartheid Litigation claims, Judge Shira Scheindlin, that it is now of the opinion that that Court is an appropriate forum to "hear the remaining claims" in the South Africa Apartheid Litigation, given that it is clear that these claims are based on aiding and abetting very serious crimes such as torture and extrajudicial killings committed in violation of international law by the apartheid regime.

This represents a very significant shift from government's July 2003 position that the South African government "is not and will not be party to litigation" against companies that did business with and in South Africa during the apartheid period. Several factors have facilitated this shift amongst them the fact that the claims have been substantially narrowed and the causal links between the commodities supplied by certain corporations and particular plaintiffs have been established. This breakthrough in the case opens the way for the South African government to begin to play a role in the facilitation of a possible negotiated settlement outside of the court process.

In responding to the news, Khulumani plaintiff Mr Mpho Masemola said, "This is a relief after many long years of waiting for justice. We believe justice is on our side. We appreciate that the South African government is opening the door to begin negotiations. There is now some light at the end of the tunnel."

"The letter of the Minister of Justice is not only legally the right thing to do, but also paves the way for the Plaintiffs and Defendant Corporations to get together in the spirit of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission and bring this matter to a resolution." Charles Abrahams, attorney for the Khulumani plaintiffs.

Further more information, please contact:

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