



SWISS  
APARTHEID DEBT  
AND REPARATIONS  
CAMPAIGN

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## **Media release**

### **The federal council (Swiss government) should apologise to the victims of Apartheid and pay reparations**

An open letter from the Swiss Apartheid Debt and Reparations Campaign (ADR) to the federal council (Swiss government), signed by 268 public figures and 17 organisations from the fields of politics, culture, the sciences, the church and development cooperation, has called upon the federal council to apologise to the South African victims of gross human rights violations for the Swiss policies practiced during Apartheid, and to pay them reparations. Switzerland's supportive position vis-à-vis the Apartheid regime contributed to the fact that murder, abduction, rape, forced relocation, torture, repression and further gross human rights violations legitimised by the state lasted for so long. The signatories further criticise the fact that Switzerland refused to participate in international sanctions against South Africa.

The letter was delivered to the federal council exactly one year after the final report of the Swiss National Science Foundation's programme NFP 42+, "Relations between Switzerland and South Africa", was published in German. The report written by Professor Georg Kreis concluded that Switzerland's political and economic cooperation with the Apartheid government was far more intense than had previously been assumed. The federal council and the Swiss parliament did not utilise the options open to the government which legally existed to take a clear stance against the Apartheid regime. On the contrary. In favour of good relations with the Apartheid regime, they sometimes even moved into the grey area where they came close to breaching the laws of neutrality and public international law. The ten studies addressing aspects of relations between Switzerland and South Africa presented by the NFP 42+ programme revealed a considerable number of explosive facts incriminating Switzerland's behaviour. The federal council has not yet clarified its position on the research results, however, even though this has been demanded by a parliamentary motion supported by more than 100 members of parliament.

The Swiss Apartheid Debt and Reparations Campaign will continue to campaign for the federal council to take responsibility for official Swiss policy during the Apartheid regime. This means that both the wrongs allowed by the federal council and its share of responsibility for the suffering have to be recognised vis-à-vis the victims of Apartheid, and an apology made. Out of respect towards the victims of Apartheid. The victims should also be paid reparations, as has happened in similar cases thanks to the adjudication of international human rights courts.

The letter to the federal council and a list of signatories (german or french) can be found on:  
<http://www.apartheid-reparations.ch>

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