

# PM: I'M NOT SURPRISED

(P)

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the decision of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group (EPG) to abandon its peace initiatives in South Africa was not surprising.**

He said Malaysia had all along been sceptical of efforts by the Commonwealth to end apartheid.

The Commonwealth had now to consider the alternative of imposing comprehensive mandatory economic sanctions in view of the EPG's failure, he said in a

statement.

Malaysia, he said, strongly believed that there was no other effective and peaceful weapon than economic sanctions to coerce the racist regime into demolishing the structure of apartheid.

The urgency to bring an end to the bloodshed and death in South Africa had become more acute than ever in view of the increasing repressive measures by the minority white regime in Pretoria against the black majority, he added.

Yesterday, the South African regime declared an unprecedented nationwide state of emergency and arrested more

than 1,000 anti-apartheid activists.

The clampdown came on the day the EPG finally published a widely-leaked report attacking the South African government for intransigence.

The report concluded: "The Government believes that it can contain the situation indefinitely by use of force.

"South Africa is predominantly a country of black people. To believe they can be indefinitely suppressed is an act of self-delusion."

Britain, West Germany and the United States, which are among South Africa's major trading partners and staunchest

allies in a hostile world, voiced concern and dismay at the emergency.

UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar expressed regret over the state of emergency and appealed for maximum restraint.

The UN Security Council would meet tomorrow (3.30am Malaysian time) at the request of African States to discuss the South African situation.

In Johannesburg, State-run Radio South Africa said in a commentary that the time had come for a showdown with the forces of anarchy and revolution.

The nationwide emergency gave police powers to detain people without charge, imposed severe restrictions on news coverage of black political violence and prohibited calls for economic sanctions.

Police raided homes and offices of dissidents around the country, detaining more than 1,000 unionists, clergymen, civil rights activists and political leaders.

It was the second time in a year the Government invoked emergency powers in an effort to quell racial violence that has claimed about 1,700 lives since 1984.

The previous move, from July to March, was confined to areas around Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town. — Agencies