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CHOGM-APARTHEID

KUALA LUMPUR, OCT 16 (BERNAMA) -- THE RELEASE OF EIGHT TOP POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SOUTH AFRICA OVER THE WEEKEND IS A **+DIRECT** RESULT OF THE ECONOMIC SANCTIONS IMPOSED ON SOUTH AFRICA, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

HE WELCAME WHAT HE TERMED AS **+SOME ACCOMODATION+** BY THE PRETORIA REGIME TOWARDS THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE BLACKS AND COLOURED PEOPLE.

**+THERE** HAVE BEEN SOME CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN SOUTH AFRICA BUT THAT IS NOT **ENOUGH,** HE TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE HERE.

THE PRIME MINISTER WILL CHAIR THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING (**CHOGM**) BEGINNING HERE WEDNESDAY WHICH IS EXPECTED TO REASSERT THE COMMONWEALTH'S STAND ON SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA.

HE SAID SANCTIONS MUST CONTINUE TO BE TIGHTENED IF MORE POSITIVE RESULTS WERE TO COME OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA. -- MORE

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID APARTHEID REMAINED THE CENTRAL ISSUE IN THE COMMONWEALTH'S AGENDA ON SOUTH AFRICA, ADDING THAT THE RACE SEGREGATIONIST POLICY WAS STILL VERY MUCH EVIDENT IN THE COUNTRY.

ASKED WHETHER THE COMMONWEALTH SUMMIT WOULD DISCUSS WAYS TO STOP A POSSIBLE BOYCOTT OF NEXT YEAR'S COMMONWEALTH GAMES IN AUCKLAND BY SOME MEMBER COUNTRIES, HE SAID NEW ZEALAND AS HOSTS OF THE GAMES COULD PREVENT THIS BY NOT SENDING ANY SPORTS TEAMS TO SOUTH AFRICA.

AMONG THE PRISONERS RELEASED WERE WALTER **SISULU, 77,** FORMER SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE BANNED AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (**ANC**) AND A CLOSE COMRADE OF NELSON **MANDELA,** THE KEY FIGURE OF RESISTANCE TO APARTHEID WHO IS STILL IN DETENTION.

THE EIGHT WERE AMONG THOSE DETAINED IN 1963 DURING A MASS ARREST OF ANC LEADERS.

REPORTS SAID SOUTH AFRICA SHOWED SHREWD **TIMING** IN FREEING THE PRISONERS AHEAD OF THE COMMONWEALTH SUMMIT AND WAS LIKELY TO DEFUSE SUPPORT FOR A MOVE AT THE CHOGM TO TIGHTEN SANCTIONS THAT HAD DEPRIVED SOUTH AFRICA OF MUCH-NEEDED FOREIGN CAPITAL. -- BERNAMA

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