

Cape Town, South Africa, October 12 (Infosplusgabon) - Apartheid-era politician Pik Botha who joined the African National Congress following the release of Nelson Mandela from prison, died at his Pretoria home in the early hours of Friday. He was 86.

Botha was the world's longest-serving Foreign Minister in history. He was born in 1932 and entered politics in 1953. He was not related to former President P. W. Botha but he served in his Cabinet for many years.

In April 1977, he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. Botha was a controversial figure within the National Party government which enforced Apartheid because he acknowledged that black majority rule was inevitable.

He was instrumental in setting up the 1984 Nkomati Accord, a non-aggression pact signed by Pretoria and Mozambique and he played an important role in ending the Angolan War which led to the independence of Namibia.

After the country's first all-race elections, in 1994, Botha went on serve in President Nelson Mandela's government as Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs from 1994 to 1996.

He then retired from politics but in 2000 he publicly declared his support for President Thabo Mbeki.

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