



FREE NAMIBIA NOW! CAMPAIGN

A Project of the Washington Office on Africa

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THE STRUGGLE FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN NAMIBIA

The Washington Office on Africa and the Washington Office on Africa Educational Fund believes that the anti-apartheid movement must place the struggle for Namibian independence alongside the fight for comprehensive sanctions, as a top political priority in 1989. In less than one month on April 1, 1989, the United Nations plan for Namibian independence, U.N. Resolution 435, will begin to be implemented as a result of the U.S. mediated Angola-Namibia peace accords adopted December 22, 1988.

The process for initiating independence for Namibia will culminate in elections on November 1, 1989 under United Nations Supervision and "control". The people of Namibia and the South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO), the liberation movement of Namibia, will face enormous obstacles in their efforts to ensure free and fair elections due to the nature of the 1978 U.N. plan itself, several developments within Namibia and the United Nations over the past five months, and the colonial legacy of underdevelopment and poverty inside Namibia. (See WOA action alert and memos on Namibia for details.)

A truly free and independent Namibia will be a severe blow against apartheid South Africa and will accelerate the struggle to dismantle the apartheid system inside the country by the anti-apartheid forces. We are witnessing what must be described as the most momentous development in this decade - a free and independent Namibia on the borders of apartheid South Africa. If Namibia achieves its independence we are one important step further towards dismantling apartheid. But South Africa will be doing everything within its power to undermine the independence process and deny a victory to SWAPO. Pretoria's strategy is to have widespread election fraud and voter intimidation in order to accomplish these goals. Therefore, it is imperative that anti-apartheid groups rally support for the Namibian people and SWAPO during this very critical period.

Namibia Program of Action

In order to help organize support for the Namibian people and SWAPO, WOA has outlined the following program of action under the auspices of our Free Namibia Now! Campaign:

- 1) Representatives of anti-apartheid, peace, civil, and human rights and legal organizations as well as elected officials, churches, religious and trade union groups and media, outlets must be organized to travel to Namibia to observe the election process and help ensure free and fair elections in Namibia;
- 2) Material aid and money must be organized for SWAPO to assist in the repatriation of refugees to Namibia **and for other purposes related to efforts to free Namibia;**
- 3) Congress must be pressured to vote for the unconditional release of the US assessment for the United Nations Peacekeeping Account which includes money targeted for the UNTAG forces which are to monitor the Namibian elections. The Bush administration which has stated its support for the election process must be pressured to press Congress to expedite the release of funds for this purpose;
- 4) The media must be pressured to provide adequate and balanced coverage of the independence process in Namibia;
- 5) The administration and Congress must be pressured to provide immediate U.S. emergency relief and humanitarian assistance to Namibians, particularly for the repatriation of Namibian refugees and exiles, and long term development and economic assistance to an independent Namibia;
- 6) Anti-apartheid groups should organize local, regional and national mobilization meetings on Namibia to inform people about the importance of the Namibian independence process and to encourage discussion and action on the above outlined program of action.