

Namibia Newsletter

October, 1987



CAMPAIGN FOCUSES ATTENTION ON DETENTIONS—PHASE TWO

In apartheid South Africa and in Namibia, another person is detained every twelve minutes! No one is exempt: church and trade union leaders, community organizers, students, teachers and journalists have all been taken, detained without charge or trial. Even children are not safe. As of September 14th, the Parents Support Committee in South Africa reports 400 children known to be in detention.

A nationwide campaign, coordinated by the American Committee on Africa, was initiated on September 1st. Thousands of keys (including the official keys to various cities, presented by their mayors) were delivered to the South African Embassy in New York on October 13th, along with a call for freedom in Namibia and South Africa.

Because time for this campaign was so short, we have decided on a "second phase." For those who were unable to participate before, we are scheduling a second presentation at the South African Embassy in Washington, D.C. on December 10th, which is International Human Rights Day.

Please organize your group or congregation—a Thanksgiving offering of keys might be a good idea— or if you are unable to get others to join you at this time, send us your own key. For additional information or a poster, contact NNC. Keys should be in our office by December 3rd.

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Windhoek: September 13, 1987

SEVEN SWAPO AND UNION OFFICIALS RELEASED IN NAMIBIA

South African security police in Namibia obeyed a Supreme Court judge's order Friday and released seven union and SWAPO leaders from detention under the Terrorism Act. The seven reported that they had been held in solitary confinement under poor conditions but had not been physically assaulted.

Two of the released, Mr. Daniel Tjongarero and Mr. Anton Lubowski, attended an ecumenical thanksgiving service Sunday night in the Black township of Katutura. Both spoke of their joy at being released, but reminded the worshippers that unlike them, many unknown Namibians were still being detained.

Both Tjongarero and Lubowski had spent the last days of their detention in the hospital with kidney problems. Tjongarero, who lost 22 pounds in prison, had been the object of special concern because he is suffering from partial renal failure. He hopes to start specialized medical treatment to halt the spread of his disease.

The release order sets a new precedent in Namibia, for the Terrorism Act specifically states that "no court of law shall pronounce upon the validity of any action taken under this section, or order the release of any detainee."

London: September 21, 1987

SOUTH AFRICA'S GOVERNMENT IN NAMIBIA TO APPEAL RELEASE RULING, BUT JUDGE SAYS TERRORISM ACT IS "DRACONIAN"

by John Evenson, Namibia Communications Centre

The "interim government" in Namibia announced September 17 that it will apply for leave to appeal the Supreme Court order that freed Pastor Hendrik Witbooi, Mr. Ben Ulenga and five other SWAPO and union officials being held under the Terrorism Act.

In the ruling, Judge Bethune stated the police had not carefully followed the Terrorism Act. But the judge had even harsher words for South Africa's appointed government for not having repealed or amended the Act.

"It is incomprehensible that citizens of South West Africa should still be subject to the draconian provisions of a South African Act of Parliament," said the judge. According to Bethune, the Act is in conflict with the interim government's own Bill of Rights.

(continued from cover page)

In faulting the police, Judge Bethune agreed with the detainees' families that there were no reasonable grounds for their imprisonment. He found that the police had not interrogated the men prior to their arrest, and therefore the authorities could hardly give the "withholding of information" as a reason for the detentions.

Observers in Windhoek saw Bethune's ruling as damaging to both the police and the interim government. South African officials seem to have been trying to prosecute the union officials for "economic terrorism" because of strike actions that have been occurring during the last six months. But low wages and living conditions in migrant workers hostels have been the key reasons for the strikes. It is common in Namibia for workers to be paid less than 40 Rand (US \$16) per week. The stated reasons for the arrest of the SWAPO officials was for their supposed complicity in a bomb explosion near a shopping centre in July.

In both cases, it seems clear the police had no evidence for "terrorism." In arresting the leaders of unions and SWAPO the South Africans were attempting to clamp down on the nationwide dissent over their occupation of the country . . . in other words the authorities' motivation was political.

By ruling that the police could not be subjective in detaining people under the Act, (i.e., assuming without any evidence, that the men were or might be guilty), Bethune has challenged the blanket powers used by South Africa's police

in Namibia to imprison opponents of its colonial rule. And by declaring that the Act is itself contrary to the Bill of Human Rights, Bethune has dared the appointed government to try and act in a just manner. In past cases, the interim government has surprisingly argued that the Bill of Rights does not apply to the individual, existing only as a guide to the writing of legislation.

The arguments used by the "interim government" in their attempt to overturn Justice Bethune's ruling will give Namibians an indication of the oppression policies they can expect in future months.

"There is a mindless destruction of people and their living environment. It is the awful sideshow to the convulsion building up in South Africa itself."

An official of Oxfam, speaking of the devastation in the countries surrounding South Africa.

My column this month is direct and to the point. It concerns the financial survival of National Namibia Concerns. For several years we have operated on a shoestring; now that shoestring is getting frayed!

In the past twelve years, Namibia Concerns Committee/National Namibia Concerns has grown from six committee members at Wartburg Seminary to be a national network of information and advocacy. Until a couple of years ago, all work was done on a volunteer basis. We still spend less than one full-time salary for our three staff people.

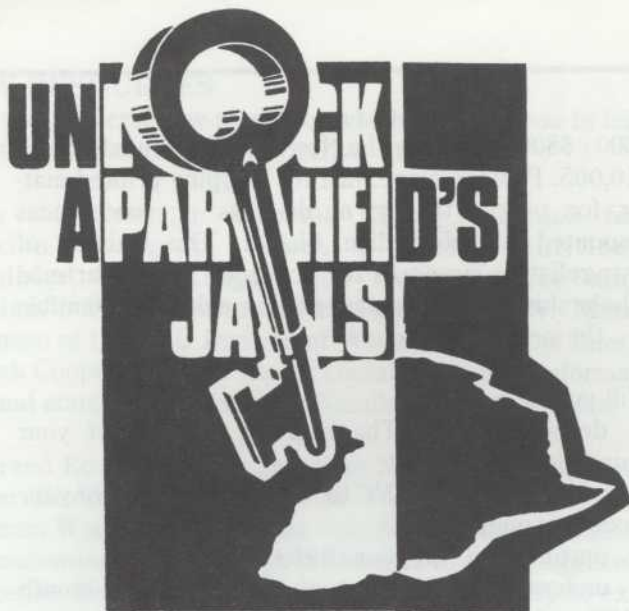
What we have tried to do during this time has been to call to the attention of Americans the plight of the Namibian people. For most persons in the U.S., Namibia is a non-issue. Most have never heard of the country, know nothing about South Africa's illegal occupation, and have no information on the suffering and the struggle of the Namibians. Even the recent, often sporadic attention given to South Africa by U.S. news media has done little to focus attention on Namibia.

The goal of NNC is to raise awareness, to educate the "grass roots" about the Namibia issue. Our hope is that as we become informed and concerned, we will take action in support of the Namibians' struggle for independence. Our efforts come out of a deep conviction that the people of Namibia are our sisters and brothers—that we are indeed "one body in Christ," and therefore their pain, and their struggle is ours.

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO CONTINUE! It has been your faithful support that has enabled all of us to "stand with" our Namibian friends. NNC cannot survive without your help. Recently Dr. Mark Thomsen, director of World Missions in the ALC, wrote, "We contribute annually to the budget of NNC because we believe that no one could use our advocacy funds better! We commend NNC to you for your support."

Please join the struggle! Through NNC, you can help tell the story of the suffering of God's people in Namibia.

Solwing Kjeseth



**YOU CAN HELP SET THEM FREE
SEND IN YOUR KEYS TO
UNLOCK APARTHEID'S JAILS**

The Africa Fund, National Namibia Concerns and Free Namibia Emphasis will present these keys by the thousands to the South African Government to demand that they free the detainees and political prisoners.

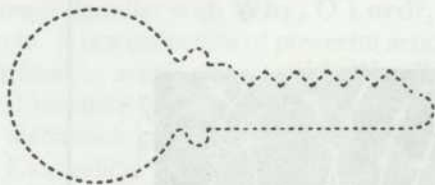
To:

President P. W. Botha
South Africa

Here is my key. I demand that you unlock Apartheid's Jails and free all detainees and political prisoners.

I support the immediate end to the racist system of white minority rule and the establishment of a free, democratic South Africa based on one-person, one vote. I also demand the withdrawal of South Africa from its illegal occupation of Namibia and the immediate implementation of U.N. supervised elections for a free and independent Namibia.

Signed: _____



Attach key and
send by December 3rd to:

UNLOCK APARTHEID'S JAILS
National Namibia Concerns
860 Emerson Street
Denver, Colorado 80218
(303) 830-2774



THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SWA/NAMIBIA (ELOC)
PRIVATE BAG 2018, PHONE (06762) 41, ONDANGWA 8000, TELEX 96-3267 WVK, NAMIBIA

77/87

Ms Solveig Kjesett
Executive Director
National Namibia Concerns
860 Emerson
Denver
Colorado 80218
USA

Onipa
28 August 1987

Dear Madam

Thank you for your letter of 1 July, 1987 expressing your sympathy with me and my family as well as my whole nation.

We do appreciate your concern and your Christian conviction in our belonging to One Family. We are having hope for a better future of our country because of you, our praying friends, and because we believe God is on our side.

We esteem your intercessions and your intervention. Keep on, we plead, until the burden has been removed from our shoulders.

May the Lord richly bless you. Matth. 25:40.

Yours in Christ

K. Dumeni
Bishop of ELCIN

Don't Forget

When freedom
Our Freedom
Walks Africa
When justice arrives
And I'm not here
Please pass by my
Grave
To tell me
That freedom
Is here and
Justice
Is attained
That colonial chains
Are broken
That heart-injuries
Are healed
Pains, soothed
Prejudice forgotten
Please pass by my grave
And whisper that
Africa is free and united
All-in-one, ebony free
Don't forget to call
During my absence

I'm a freedom fighter
I'm not
Dead, freedom fighters
Don't die
I will rise up, and with
You hand-in-hand
Comrades-in-arms, yes with
You carry on the struggle for
Freedom and unity of Africa
Oh, please
Don't forget to
Free and unite
Africa.

by Rahii wa-Kahimise

NNC spends most of its limited funds on the dissemination of information about Namibia.

★ Our quarterly **Namibia Newsletter** is distributed to 10,000 people.

★ News bulletins and suggestions for congregational action are sent more frequently to persons charged with doing Namibia education in their regions.

★ We maintain an extensive film and video library for loan to church, community and school groups.

In addition, as funds are available, we give assistance to educational projects within Namibia, projects recommended to us by the Lutheran Synods or the Council of Churches in Namibia.

All of this is expensive. A single film costs between

\$600 - \$800. Last year the Newsletter cost a whopping \$10,005. Postage alone, just for shipping printed matter for people to use at displays or conferences amounted to more than \$1,000. The training of evangelists, support for church kindergartens, scholarship needs, assistance to the elderly in Namibia . . . the needs are endless.

Will you help us by

★ designating the Thanksgiving offering at your church for NNC?

★ adding \$200 for NNC to the annual budget of your group or congregation?

★ putting NNC on your Christmas gift list?

★ underwriting the cost of postage for a month (\$100) or buying a new video (\$195)?

I cry in the Night from the Torture Chamber

Psalm 129

From the depths, I cry to you oh Lord!
I cry in the night from the prison cell
and from the concentration camp
From the torture chamber
in the hour of darkness
hear my voice

my S.O.S.

If you were to keep a record of sins
Lord, who would be blameless?
But you do pardon sins
you are not implacable as they are in their Investigation!

I trust in the Lord and not in leaders
Nor in slogans
I trust in the Lord and not in their radios!

My soul hopes in the Lord
more than the sentinels of dawn
more than the way one counts the hours of night in a prison cell.

While we are imprisoned, they are enjoying themselves!
But the Lord is liberation
the freedom of Israel.



NEW RESOURCES

There are several new resources which will help you to tell the story of Namibia in an effective way.

From the American Lutheran Church's "Vision for Mission" program comes a packet entitled, **Namibia: The Struggle for Independence and Justice.** With a historical background by Dr. Mark Thomsen of the ALC Division of World Mission and Inter-Church Cooperation, the packet contains resource information and statements by various Namibian church leaders.

Reverend Edward May, a long-time Namibia advocate and former Director of the Office on World Community for Lutheran World Ministries, has written a six page article on the relationship of the church in Namibia to the struggle of its people. He challenges the church in this country to examine our performance in terms of what we have done and what we have left undone.

From the National Conference on Namibia, held at Gustavus Adolphus College last spring, we have printed the address given by Bishop Kleopas Dumeni. This is a moving statement about the suffering of his people and a plea for the re-examination of U.S. policy toward his country.

Namibian pastor Julius Mtuleni and Wartburg graduate John Cawkins have written a series of Advent meditations and prayers. Namibians have much to teach us about the themes of Advent; "to wait is to hope," as Pastor Kameeta says. Wait with our sisters and brothers in Namibia this Advent season!

Books which will be of interest:

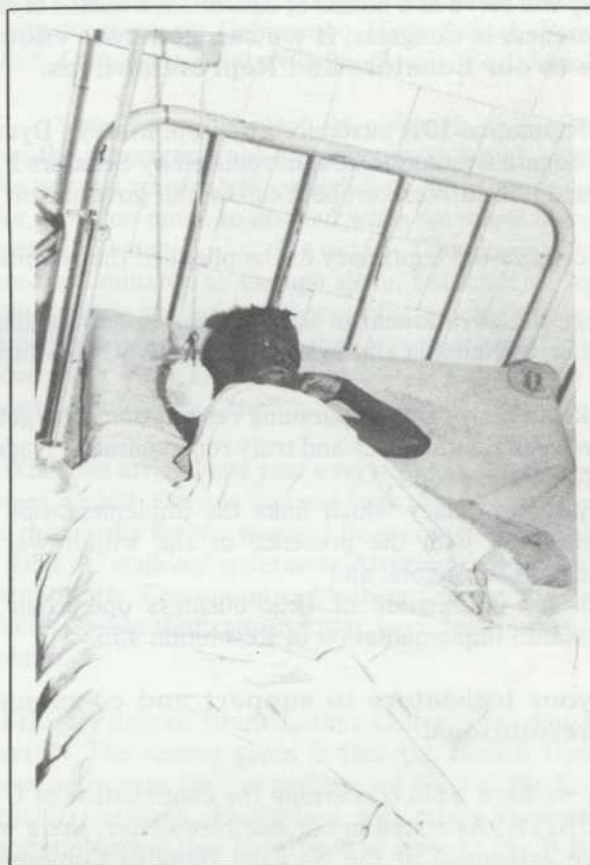
In **Diary From a South African Prison**, Dean Tschenuwani Farisani writes of his experiences during repeated detentions. He reveals the waiting, the doubts, the conflicts of conscience to which the detainee is subjected. Seeing his experiences as a part of the massive suffering of black South Africans, he says, "My story is their story. For the sake of the tortured . . . and those who are now dying in detention as I write . . . I call upon humanity to shout No to apartheid." Published by Fortress, \$4.95.

Some of you are already familiar with **Why, O Lord?**, by Dr. Zephania Kameeta. It is a collection of powerful articles and psalms, paraphrased to speak clearly to the Namibian situation. It is a good resource for special worship services, devotions, or adult discussion groups. Pastor Kameeta is a vice-bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA (Namibia). Fortress, \$3.50.

For an interpretation of the problems of the emerging nations of Africa, we recommend **The Trampled Grass** by George W. Shepherd, professor at Denver University's Graduate School of International Studies. Of particular interest is his discussion of the role of South Africa in the control of resources and the obstruction of liberation movements in the region. Praeger Publishers, \$12.95.

Apartheid In Our Living Rooms: U.S. Foreign Policy and South Africa by Prexy Nesbitt, is a study of U.S. presence in Southern Africa which demonstrates the need for a new policy of strong sanctions on South Africa and strong support for the surrounding countries. Midwest Research, \$4.00.

All of these resources are available at cost through National Namibia Concerns.



ANGOLA BECOMES WORLD LEADER IN PERCENT OF AMPUTEES

A main tactic of the UNITA forces in Angola is to plant land mines to disrupt the life and economy of that country. In some areas they have nearly destroyed agricultural production. The toll on civilians has been enormous. Angola now has the highest percentage of amputees in the world! Most of the victims are farmers and children. Ten-year-old Dominique Nakanda lost her arm in an attack that killed her father and brothers. **During the last two years, our country has sent more than \$30 million worth of military arms to assist UNITA in this deadly effort.** Watch for a new video from the Washington Office on Africa which gives details on this. And write to your congressperson to oppose any further aid to UNITA. As long as we help UNITA, Namibia will not be free!

Cason/Fleshman photo from Impact Visuals

ACTION ALERT

LEGISLATIVE

We now have two identical resolutions, in the House and in the Senate, which spell out the principles of what the U.S. policy should be toward South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia! They are not terribly strong; basically, they repeat what the U.S. has already agreed to at the United Nations. But they will serve as a means of education, a means of raising awareness in Congress, **if we can generate enough letters to our Senators and Representatives.**

House Resolution 131, introduced by Rep. Mervyn Dymally, and Senate Resolution 254, introduced by Senators Paul Simon and Lowell Weicker, both call for our government to:

1. recognize the legitimacy of the plight of the Namibian people;
2. urge the government of South Africa to end its illegal occupation of Namibia and to implement UNSC Resolution 435;
3. take an active role in pursuing resumption of negotiations between South Africa and truly representative leaders of the Namibian people;
4. reject any policy which links the implementation of Resolution 435 with the presence or the withdrawal of Cuban troops in Angola; and
5. call for termination of U.S. business operations in Namibia until implementation of Resolution 435.

Urge your legislators to support and co-sponsor these resolutions!

Finally, we have a bill concerning the continuation of U.S. aid to UNITA! As stated in our last Newsletter, there was complete agreement at the National Namibia Conference that we must find a way of ending U.S. support for UNITA. (If you need a copy of "Six Reasons to Oppose Aid to UNITA," please contact our office.)

At last one Senator has had the courage to propose open discussion about this issue! Senator William Bradley has introduced a bill which would prohibit further aid to UNITA without full Congressional debate. (In 1987, we have already sent \$15 million to assist the UNITA rebels, a force whose main ally is South Africa.)

Please urge your Senators to support the Bradley legislation. (S. 1474)

Please insist on no more aid, overt or covert, to UNITA.

Please send Senator Bradley a post card, thanking him for sponsoring this legislation.

THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

Increasingly attention in the United States is being focused on the 1988 Presidential campaign. We need to make the most of this opportunity. In solidarity with our oppressed brothers and sisters in Namibia, we must ask hard questions of the candidates. We are called to be "the voice of the voiceless."

The independence of Namibia has been delayed because of the U.S. tendency to see only an East/West, U.S./Soviet Union conflict in Angola and Namibia. We have forgotten that the real issue is the self-determination of the Angolan and Namibian people. In a very real sense, the entire Namibian nation has been held hostage to a couple of U.S. foreign policy goals: to eliminate a Cuban presence in Angola, and to avoid offending the white government of South Africa.

We need to raise the issue of Namibia in this campaign. Important questions that must be asked of every candidate include:

★ What steps would your administration take to encourage implementation of UNSC Resolution 435 (1978) which calls for free elections under U.N. supervision in Namibia?

★ Would your administration drop the so-called "Cuban linkage" condition for free elections in Namibia? Namibians sharply challenge the claim that elections in their country must be delayed until Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola.

★ U.S. aid to Jonas Savimbi, the former Maoist and political opportunist, whose UNITA forces terrorize the civilian population of Angola, has been a major factor in delaying the independence of Namibia. Will your administration pledge to end all aid to UNITA?

★ Since some U.S. companies have interests in the mining industries of Namibia, what will your administration do to stop the plundering of Namibian resources—a violation of U.N. Council for Namibia Decree #1?

"Not even under the savagery of Adolf Hitler's concentration camps were children in particular singled out. Yet South Africa is making a deliberate attempt to break the will of an entire generation."

U.S. Representative Major Owens, speaking of the detention of children in Southern Africa.

WHAT'S HAPPENING . . .



Pictured above is the Namibia Concerns Committee at Bethel Lutheran in Rochester, Minnesota which has been particularly active in support of work in the north of Namibia. Ray and Carrie Harney write: "Pastor Shekutaamba Nambala, and his family, from Luther Seminary, visited our congregation. He preached at all three services and spoke at the adult forum. We had a luncheon for the Nambala's and celebrated their son's birthday with cake and a Minnesota Vikings sweatshirt. . . ." So far we have sent more than 35 mail bags of books (over 2100 pounds) to the library in the north. Through our Thankoffering we were able to send \$1000 to the children who have lost their parents.



ALC Presiding Bishop David W. Preus recently contacted Mr. Chester Crocker of the U.S. State Department regarding the recent detention of church and SWAPO officials in Namibia. Bishop Preus also contacted Gordon Parker of the Newmont Mining Company to protest the firing of striking mine workers in Namibia.

JOHN MASON AND TRINITY LUTHERAN IN VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON

Preaching on the Jeremiah text, "God rescues the needy from the hands of the wicked," Pastor John Mason told the story of Namibia to parishioners at Trinity Lutheran in Vancouver, Washington. They responded by collecting \$1300 in scholarship money, and by sending nearly 200 letters to their Senators.

CONGREGATION RECEIVES LETTER FROM SHIVUTES

Recently the congregation of Bethel Lutheran in Rochester, Minnesota, received a letter from Usko and Frieda Shivute, who returned to Namibia last year after several years of study in the States. Since many of you know the Shivute family, we share parts of Usko's letter, and urge you to write to them at: Oshigambo High School, Private Bag 2026, Ondangwa 9000, Namibia/South West Africa.

"... Your letters did reach us, although after a long time, and the messages were indeed enjoyable and encouraging. We wanted to respond immediately, but time is so scarce. We have too much to do, and when we come home we are usually exhausted. . . . We realize that physical tiredness can be eliminated by enough sleep, but since we arrived in this country, we learned that psychological fatigue is never ended by sleep. Only when the cause is eliminated will it be done away with. Therefore our fatigue has become chronic, a part of our daily life. . . .

"When we arrived last year everything seemed calmer than when we left. Only to find out later that things have changed drastically for the worse. Life seems to be calm, but it is a kind of 'stalking' quietness. Atrocious events happen intermittently. Corruption and bribery are rife in government circles, while theft and murder have become daily occurrences.

"Frieda's degree (from Luther College) has not been accepted. The reason given is that the Health Department does not accept foreign degrees (of blacks? We have many others, Germans, Philipinos and other Europeans with foreign degrees that have been accepted.) My B.A. degree was accepted. My M.A. (from the University of Minnesota) is still under consideration. This is frustrating. What can you expect of a School Inspector with a high school education?

"Tala and Tega are fine. Tala is in Std 4 (grade 6) and Tega is in Std 1 (grade 3). However, there seems to be no progress as the level of education is very low. We are helping them at home, but the environment seems to have more influence than what we try.

"We do want you to remember us in prayers as the war situation is worsening every day. Also, don't stop contacting your representatives in government. Please try by whatever means so that the U.N. Resolution 435 can be implemented which would lead to Namibia independence.

"Give greetings to all who know us. We pray that God may give you courage to remember fellow Christians in Namibia."

Windhoek: September 23, 1987

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN NAMIBIA DESTROYED IN NIGHTTIME EXPLOSION

The 500 seat Roman Catholic Church at Omuulukila, in the Ombulantu section of northern Namibia, was destroyed by heavy explosives at 8:30 p.m. Sunday, September 20. According to Catholic sources, the church, built with the aid of West German funds about 10 years ago, was reduced to rubble. The church had been filled for mass Sunday morning. A nearby school was not touched, nor were any persons injured.

South African controlled radio has already blamed the blast on the Namibian liberation movement, SWAPO, but Catholic officials dispute this version.

Father Heinz Steegman, Provincial of the Order of Mary Immaculate, said today that while the church does not know who placed the bombs, he is highly skeptical of South Africa's pronouncement. "Personally, I am sure I know it wasn't SWAPO," he said. "It is not the pattern, SWAPO does not do this, they don't have a reason to do it."

Father Steegman reported that the demolished church is in a "troubled area" where Catholic laymen have regularly complained about the brutality of South African troops. "I would say that I am afraid this is a warning to the Catholic church to be quiet," said the West German priest.

"Keep knocking at the doors of your government. If you are quiet about this, we shall die in silence."

Pastor Zephania Kameeta, speaking about the wave of detentions and assaults in Namibia.

Windhoek: September 20, 1987

ARCHBISHOP TUTU VISITS NAMIBIA — CALLS FOR INDEPENDENCE

Desmond Tutu, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, last week completed his two-week tour of Namibia with a call for the independence of the territory by next year, the tenth anniversary of the United Nations peace plan for the territory. Speaking in the capital Windhoek on the 21st anniversary of the anti-colonial war, he pointedly addressed South Africa with the question: "Why should you want to be where you are not wanted by the majority of the population?"

The Archbishop had been enthusiastically received at ecumenical services across the country. In the war zone at Oniipa, headquarters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, he was told by Bishop Kleopas Dumeni that "not too many people from outside this country have the courage to enter this region where a war has been waged for many years. Tutu's wife, Leah, accompanied him on the tour.

The Anglicans are the third largest Christian community in Namibia, and are part of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, which Tutu heads. His stature as a spokesman for the oppressed has recently been enhanced by his election as president of the All Africa Council of Churches. Bishop Dumeni reflected a Christian consensus by describing him as "a hero in the struggle for justice and peace for all men, especially in southern Africa where black people are being oppressed by evil laws."

The articles on this page have been provided by the Namibia Communications Centre.



National Namibia Concerns

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