

February 1989

**WASHINGTON, PRETORIA UNDERMINE NAMIBIA FREEDOM PLAN
FREE ELECTIONS, GENUINE INDEPENDENCE THREATENED**

After decades of bloody repression and diplomatic evasion, the apartheid regime seems finally ready to implement the UN plan for Namibian independence, Resolution 435. Under the terms of the U.S.-brokered peace agreement between South Africa, Angola and Cuba, United Nations peacekeeping troops and civil personnel are scheduled to arrive in the illegally occupied territory on April 1 to supervise both the withdrawal of South African troops and free elections in November. After over 100 years of colonial domination and courageous resistance, the Namibian people are at the very threshold of freedom.

But according to Namibian church leaders, the national liberation movement SWAPO and local press accounts, South African violations of both the letter and spirit of Resolution 435 are already threatening prospects for free elections and genuine independence in the territory. In January, Pretoria forcibly conscripted thousands of young Namibians into the army—even though the UN plan calls for the total demobilization of the territorial force within six weeks. Thousands of Angolan rebels loyal to South Africa have been issued citizenship papers and moved to northern Namibia, where they will try to vote for pro-apartheid parties in the November elections. And although Pretoria has promised to disband Koevoet (literally "Crowbar" in Afrikaans) a paramilitary police unit accused of torturing and murdering SWAPO supporters, its members have instead been reassigned to the "civilian" police force, where they can continue to brutalize and intimidate.

Because Resolution 435 leaves law and order, civil government, and even the elections in South African hands, only strict monitoring by the United Nations can prevent Pretoria from stealing the elections. But in January the United States, supported by the other permanent members of the Security Council, demanded that the Namibia peacekeeping force be cut in half—leaving the Namibian people exposed and vulnerable to the apartheid army and police.

By demanding radical reductions in the UN force, the Bush administration is undermining any hope for democracy and genuine independence in Namibia.

Washington and Pretoria must be prevented from sabotaging Resolution 435 and stealing the birthright of the Namibian people.

Contact the White House and demand full and vigorous U.S. support for Security Council Resolution 435 and free elections. Write your Senators and Representative to oppose any reduction in the UN presence in Namibia and support strong economic sanctions for South African violations of the independence plan. Educate others in your community about Namibia and monitor developments in the territory in the year ahead.

In January The Africa Fund and the Namibia Communications Center assumed sponsorship of the nationally-distributed Lutheran newsletter Dateline: Namibia. In partnership with the national Lutheran and Episcopal churches and other denominations and ecumenical groups, Dateline will become an ecumenical resource designed to keep the American religious community informed about Namibia over the coming challenging year. The final Lutheran edition of the newsletter, a special issue on Resolution 435 prepared in cooperation with the Africa Fund, is enclosed. As part of its Namibia Freedom '89 campaign, The Africa Fund will be working with religious, labor, civil rights and legislative leaders in the United States and Namibia to monitor implementation of Resolution 435 and keep the American public informed.

Independence for Namibia, Africa's last colony, will be an historic victory for the peoples of southern Africa in their struggle against racism and apartheid. But now as never before, the Namibian people need our support. Help put Namibian liberation on the American agenda for 1989. Write:

President George Bush
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Secretary of State James Baker
Department of State
Washington D.C. 20520

The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable _____
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

January 16, 1989

TO: UN Secretary General and members of the Security Council

FROM: The Executive Committee of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN),
representing over 900,000 Namibian Christians

RETAIN UNTAG GROUP AT 7,500

We, the leaders of the Namibian churches, make a desperate and urgent plea to the members of the United Nations Security Council to retain the size of the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group at 7,500 and not to reduce it in any way.

Our plea is made desperate by our conviction that the independence process in Namibia will be seriously jeopardized if the UNTAG force is reduced.

Our conviction is based on our awareness of what is now happening in Namibia. We have strong reasons to believe that:

1. Arms are being cached at strategic places in Namibia by forces unfriendly to Namibian independence.
2. Some people in Namibia are being supplied with arms in order to destabilize the independence forces.
3. Young Namibians are not only being recruited but are being integrated into the present military groupings in Namibia. They are being subjected to anti-Namibian propaganda and training.
4. UNITA members are being issued with Namibian citizenship documents to enable them to vote against SWAPO.
5. The South West African radio and television services and the core government press are continually producing biased propaganda aimed at influencing the cause of elections in Namibia.
6. The South African military buildup is continuing in northern Namibia. Long convoys of army trucks are seen moving north even in Kavango. New police stations are being built in Ovamboland with the South African flag flying higher.
7. Members of Koevoet, the brutal South African counterinsurgency force, are to be integrated into the regular police force.
8. Police and army forces are already campaigning for elections. They call people to meetings, offer to plow their field, or provide piped water. This must be urgently and adequately monitored by UNTAG members of the elections will be unfairly influenced.
9. If the UNTAG force is reduced the Cuban withdrawal, already begun in good faith, will be seized by certain parties at any opportunity to bolster UNITA, hurt Angola and allow South Africa to retain its grip on Namibia.
10. The South West African Administrator General's proclamation of white elections on first March 1989 will further confuse the independence process.

Thus we are convinced that to reduce the size of the UNTAG force will seriously jeopardize the Namibian independence process. Namibian people will be left at the mercy of the South African forces and the whole of Southern Africa will remain unstable.

In addition the delay occasioned by the Security Council debate is frustrating the planning and fundraising of well-intentioned people here. The repatriation programme is particularly at risk. This delay in itself may weaken the effectiveness of the independence process in Namibia.

We therefore plead with the United Nations Security Council most desperately and urgently that the UNTAG be held at 7,500 and that this force be constituted and established in Namibia without delay.

(signed)

The Rt. Reverend Hendrik Frederik -- Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church
Dr. Abisai Shejvali -- General Secretary, Council of Churches in Namibia
The Rt. Reverend James Kauluma -- Anglican Diocese of Namibia
The Rt. Reverend James Prinz -- Methodist Church
The Reverend Peter Lamoela -- United Congregational Church
The Rt. Reverend Kleopas Dumeni -- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
The Rt. Reverend Bonifatius Haushiku -- Roman Catholic Church
The Reverend Bartolemeus Karuaera -- African Methodist Episcopal Church