

NAMIBIA INDEPENDENCE WATCH

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Dear Fellow Trade Unionists,

A crisis of major significance is being played out in the vast region of Southern Africa known as Namibia. It is a crisis affecting all of Namibia's people, especially its working people, but it is a crisis with implications for working people in our country as well.

After decades of armed resistance and international condemnation of South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia, the United Nations recognized SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization) as the legitimate representative of the majority population. With the help of the independent nations of the region and other nations, including the United States and the Soviet Union, a negotiated settlement was achieved. This settlement specifically called for UN supervised elections, now scheduled for November 6, and recognition of UN Resolution 435 leading to independence in Namibia.

However, the South African Government is sabotaging the election process. On April 1, the day the initial ceasefire was to go into effect, South Africa attacked and massacred over 300 SWAPO soldiers and civilians. To the present day, South Africa continues to violate and disregard provisions of the agreement.

The U.S. anti-apartheid movement, the National Council of Churches and many unions and community organizations have appealed to the U.N. to send more monitors and international observers to ensure free and fair elections. While the UN is making a very significant contribution to the elections process, it cannot provide adequate support to SWAPO because of its supervisory role.

Namibia desperately needs our assistance and financial aid. SWAPO has its roots in the labor movement of Namibia, especially the National Union of Namibian Workers. Many Namibians work for subsidiaries of US corporations, such as Tsembe, a subsidiary of Newmont Mining, Phelps Dodge and others. The South African sponsored apartheid system produces low wages and cheap prices for raw materials, affecting production by the same companies in the U.S. Effort by workers in Namibia to organize are met with prison and bullets. The National Council of Churches and the Africa Fund have issued appeals for support.

WE THEREFORE DIRECTLY APPEAL TO YOUR SENSE OF JUSTICE AND SOLIDARITY. We ask your union to join many others during the month of October to raise financial aid for Namibia. Namibia Independence Watch is prepared to help facilitate your efforts with additional literature, an up-to-date movie or video of events or someone to speak to your congregation. We hope to hear from you soon.

Respectfully yours,

For more information, please contact: TECNICA, 655-3838
or San Francisco Anti-Apartheid Committee 661-9492 or 563-8645