

Dateline: Namibia

Editorial

A Time for Vigilance!

On November 6, the people of Namibia will go to the polls. After more than a hundred years of brutal colonial rule they are preparing to select their own government — and their own future.

The process is fraught with exhilaration, fear, and the desperate hope that at last Namibia may claim its birthright. The result can be a free Namibia — or a shambles that will deny to Namibians the future for which they have struggled so long and so valiantly.

Namibian Christians — Anglican, Lutheran, African Methodist Episcopal, Roman Catholic — have played a crucial role in that struggle.

Their profound conviction that all men and women are created equal before God, has provided the bedrock for resistance to apartheid and colonial rule. It is a belief for which they have paid a bitter price in harassment, detention, imprisonment, and blood. And not until every Black Namibian can exercise a free vote, will the churches be content. They do not call for the election of any one party, but they insist that the elections truly reflect the will of the people.

Tragically, such an outcome is far from assured. The possibilities for corruption, intimidation, and deception are limitless.

American Christians who care about Namibia dare not be naive in the face of such dangers. The risk is too great. Even now all can be lost — and Namibians appeal to us for our support. We need to be vigilant. We need to be outspoken. We need to continue our advocacy for free and fair elections in Namibia with our legislators, with United Nations officials, with President Bush. And, as Christians, we must pray for our Namibian sisters and brothers that at long last they, too, may breathe the air of freedom.



Returning refugees are welcomed to a church-run reception center at Dobra.

Credit: Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

HOPE AND FEAR AS ELECTIONS APPROACH

Buoyed by the lifting of the dusk to dawn curfew and the arrival of United Nations forces, Namibians have reason to hope that the November elections will actually take place.

In the few months since the UN troops arrived, church leaders report, there has been a decrease in violence in the areas patrolled by the UN, the first round of discriminatory and restrictive laws has been repealed, and many South African soldiers have been demobilized or withdrawn.

Tens of thousands of refugees who fled South Africa's occupation over the last twenty years, are returning to their country to participate in the democratic process.

As the United Nations-sponsored timetable for elections advances, Namibians are drawing up their election platforms, developing campaigns, and preparing for elections. In early July, people all over the country began lining up at registration points to enter their names on the voter rolls.

But for many Namibians the arrival of United Nations peacekeeping forces

on April 1 has not brought an end to the war. Some of the harshest discriminatory laws remain on the books; South African soldiers who have been demobilized remain in the country; and the elections process remains under South African control. The returning refugees, some of whom have not seen family and friends for more than twenty years, are crowding temporary transit camps to the limit because of continuing intimidation in the north.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Bishop Kleopas Dumeni reported in late June that problems of intimidation, torture, and harassment continue.

"We are deeply concerned that former members of the Koevoet counter-insurgency unit are still in the South West Africa Police," he told a visiting international delegation. "These are not properly trained policemen, but people who have been trained to kill and intimidate SWAPO supporters They are still patrolling in the dreaded Casspirs, whose mere presence is a source of fear for the people."

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Alarmed by these developments, the United Nations Secretary General Perez de Cuellar told the Security Council in late June that "the evidence of unacceptable conduct by ex-members of Koevoet is overwhelming." And in the north, trade unions staged a three-day strike demanding the removal of Koevoet from the police, and the dismissal of the commander of the South West Africa Police.

In an early July letter to the UN, the executive committee of the Council of Churches in Namibia called on the United Nations "to remove the hostile environment into which our compatriots are forced to return." They cited three specific areas: the need to remove Koevoet and the Casspirs from the police; the anti-SWAPO propaganda of the government-controlled radio station; and intimidation of farmworkers by pro-South African farmers.

For Namibian church leaders, the core issue throughout this process is guaranteeing every Namibian the right to cast a free, unintimidated ballot for a new independence government. Trying to hold fair elections in a country torn by years of war and military occupation will be no easy task in the best of circumstances. The war has left a legacy of bitterness and hostility that will take years to overcome. Mistakes have surely been made by all sides in this process.

For instance, in mid-June some refugees returning from Angola charged that prisoners of the Namibian liberation movement SWAPO had been tortured and killed. The Roman Catholic Church of Namibia issued a statement condemning torture practiced by all sides. And SWAPO Secretary for Foreign Affairs Theo-Ben Gurirab said that if SWAPO officers had tortured captives during the war, the movement would investigate and punish the perpetrators.

But church leaders fear that the greatest threat to the process comes from the South African authorities who are still in physical control of the territory, and who will be in charge of running the elections. Massive intimidation and police action continue, jeopardizing every Namibian's opportunity to cast a free vote. The Council of Churches in Namibia has also expressed "grave disappointment at the manner in which the

Namibian decolonisation process is being handled" by the United Nations.

In our interview (see page 3), Bishop James Kauluma takes the United States government, in particular, to task for a willingness to condemn SWAPO that is not matched by a similar willingness to condemn repressive practices of the South African government.

Indeed, in early May, testifying before Congress, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen spoke out forcefully against what he characterized as SWAPO violations of the independence plan in April. At the same time, Cohen told Congress that "South Africa has been scrupulously complying with the agreement." This statement came at a time when the churches were specifically disputing charges that SWAPO was solely responsible for the breakdown of the accord in early April (see Dateline: Namibia, June 1989).

And although the churches have continued to appeal publicly for international pressure on South Africa, the U.S. government has refused to speak out. Instead, the Bush administration has followed the example of its predecessor in choosing to "exert pressure through normal diplomatic channels" on the South Africans.

Key Dates

June 26, 1989	Voter registration begins.
Sept. 15, 1989	Voter registration ends.
Nov. 6, 1989	Four-day voting period begins. Election results announced approximately two weeks after polls close. Constitutional assembly convenes within seven days of certification of election results to draft independence constitution; no date set for formation of government or independence.
April 1990	Projected date of Namibian independence.

KOEVOET TERROR CONTINUES

On the night of June 21, Armas Matsi, an unemployed 29-year-old resident of Oneshila, was with a group of twenty people singing SWAPO songs at a *cuca* shop (local pub) when they were approached by three constables of the South West Africa Police. One of the constables walked up to Matsi and began shouting anti-SWAPO slogans. He then accused Matsi of possessing a gun — a charge that Matsi denied. The policemen left.

Later that night, Matsi was awakened at home by a dozen policemen (including the three from the *cuca* shop) who demanded that he turn over his gun.

Not satisfied with Matsi's protest that he had no gun, the policemen bound and blindfolded him, threw him in the back of a pick-up truck, and drove off. In an affidavit submitted to the Human Rights Centre in Ongwediva, Matsi then described how, still blindfolded, he was pushed out of the truck and beaten:

"Then water was poured on my whole body. They put the electrical instrument in my pants close to my genitals and on the ear lobe of my left ear and in the middle of my head. They poured water over me again and switched the instrument on. I felt as if my brain was being pushed from one side of my head to the other and as if I was in a tight container."

The police then switched the electrical connectors to other parts of his body and continued the assault for more than an hour. He was taken to the Oshakati police station, held until noon the following day and released without charge.

Others weren't as fortunate. Two SWAPO supporters in a bar near Ongwediva were shot to death by an off-duty former Koevoet officer. These are only two of the most recent cases of harassment and abuse by so-called former members of Koevoet that have been reported to the Ongwediva-based Human Rights Centre since mid-April.

An Interview with Anglican Bishop James Hamupanda Kauluma

James Hamupanda Kauluma, Bishop of the Diocese of Namibia of the Anglican Church in Namibia, has been an influential voice in that country's freedom struggle. Bishop Kauluma spoke with Dateline: Namibia in mid-July.

Q: Before we turn to other issues, please tell us something about yourself.

A: I live in Windhoek, but my home is here in the north. I'm married and have two of my own children. We are also helping with the education of four other kids and they're all living with us in Windhoek. My wife's name is Sally. She comes from Vermont; we're an international family.

Q: South Africa says it is a Christian government. How has it treated the churches?

A: They claim they have a Christian government, but definitely they don't live it. If they really heard the Word of God and applied it to their system, they would not have this ongoing apartheid system, this discrimination and racism built into all their activities and ways of life. So the church has suffered a lot. For example, the Anglican dean for this area is Philip Shilongo. At different times he has been detained. They even tried to expel him from the country. He has been detained for long periods, but we managed to get him out. He suffered a lot. Many of our members were also detained, or confined to areas far from their homes. And it was not only the Anglicans. It was also the Lutheran pastors and members. And the Catholics have been subjected to all kinds of harassment.

Q: What are the churches doing that brings them into conflict with South Africa?

A: The churches are saying that apartheid is a heresy, a sin. God's people are created to be together and created in the image of God, and they have the dignity that God has given to them. And nobody has the right to set up political institutions without the people's consent. So, basically, the churches have preached that apartheid must go.

Q: Although under the United Nations plan South Africa has been required to repeal some discriminatory laws, the



Bishop Kauluma (left) and Archdeacon Philip Shilongo show Archbishop Desmond Tutu the Anglican church complex in northern Namibia, destroyed during the war.

basic apartheid law in Namibia, AG 8, is still in effect. How does it affect people's lives?

A: These laws makes a Black person a criminal. The apartheid law says a Black person must not go in this store, must not enter in this door, must not go in this train car, must not travel in this bus. A Black man must not live in this house, must not go to this school. It's your whole life you're being discriminated against, and the web of laws is such that you're bound to remain a criminal in the eyes of white society. But, really, the most criminal thing is to rule a Black person without their consent.

Q: South Africa says it was in Namibia to protect people from communism. What do you say to that?

A: In the first place, no one needed their protection. They have not been invited here. That is a pretext for justifying their colonial occupation of the country. Furthermore, this is one of the Christian countries. Our people are not communist. Even those who were compelled by the situation, the colonial situation, to take up arms, those are members of our churches. They are Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists, Anglicans. No way one could describe them as communists.

Q: Let's turn to recent events. What about early April when the UN peace plan known as Resolution 435 went into operation, only to be followed by heavy fighting between South African and SWAPO troops?

A: I think it was a misinterpretation to blame SWAPO. Resolution 435 makes the point that SWAPO fighters in Angola be confined within Angola by UNTAG, but that SWAPO fighters in Namibia be confined to assembly points within Namibia.

That is what happened. SWAPO's guerrillas were here and they were looking for the UN. I think everyone who was involved would tell you that they were not prepared to fight. Definitely, they were here looking for UNTAG to put them in those assembly points. Unfortunately they could not find UNTAG. All they found was the South African army who started the firing.

Q: In Washington, Under Secretary of State for Africa Herman Cohen told us that SWAPO fighters were not entitled to be in Namibia because they were not based there.

A: Resolution 435 calls for SWAPO to be in assembly points, and I believe those who drew up the documents knew that SWAPO was fighting the war inside the country. That is why it was said

Interview

they should surrender themselves to UNTAG in order to be placed in assembly points.

But I would not be surprised at what Cohen is saying. The American policy has always been to support South Africa. So Cohen was representing the policy of his government, which was completely pro-South African throughout the negotiations until today. We are only grateful to our American friends and the international community who have been really standing up with the Namibian people and applying pressure on South Africa.

Q: What is your assessment of the election process to date?

A: People are registering now, but under difficult situations. And we don't know what tricks the South Africans are trying to play. But people are definitely registering, and we hope that before the election some of the issues causing concern, such as Koevoet, will be resolved in order to create an atmosphere of peace and calmness.

Q: What advice would you give the United Nations' special representative, Martti Ahtisaari?

A: I would tell him, "You must get more UNTAG personnel in this country.

Their numbers are not enough. They cannot go to certain places because of the roads. They should find cars suitable for those areas. They should not be going around just in towns and on better roads, while Koevoet is in other areas with the population. That is the greatest concern to us. We should like to see them go where the people are — not just in places convenient for them.

Q: What role will the churches play in the elections?

A: We are informing the people in every church service about the importance of participation in this election process, and we urge them to go and register. We are explaining that they cannot vote if they have not registered. There are some problems. At our church in Oshitayi, they were supposed to come for six days to register voters. They came for a few days and then said they are going. The people demanded they should make up those days. We hear they are going to restore those days, but we don't know why they did that. There may be other places where they have cut the registration days short.

Q: How did people respond to the returnees?

A: People were just overwhelmed with

joy to see their families and friends coming after so many years.

Q: One problem South Africa has left in Namibia is reconciliation of people on different sides during the war. How can this be resolved?

A: We are saying that now is the time for repentance on the part of those who were misled by South Africa, and now is the time to forgive them. I think SWAPO has said clearly that this needs to be done. The church is very much in the business of reconciliation — calling on both sides to accept each other. And of course there should be repentance.

Q: What should American Christians be doing?

A: Some American Christians have been standing with us for many, many years. I think they must continue in this period before elections while there is still this element of threat to the people, like that of Koevoet. They should bring their influence to bear on their government to pressure South Africa in every way possible to take Koevoet out of circulation.

And if many people are not given the opportunity to register, Americans should use their influence for registration to be extended. Because there are still a lot of people who are not yet returned to the country, and everybody should be given the opportunity to register. South Africa should not be allowed to cut the registration dates prematurely.

Over the long term, they should help Namibians bring up the baby which will be born in November — meaning independence in terms of reconstruction and development of the facilities of the church and the country which have been destroyed by war. We will need every help we can in order to give birth to a healthy nation.

Q: So Namibians are not yet free?

A: No, we are not yet there. Maybe after November we will know who has been elected, and when independence will be declared. But we will continue to have enemies who will want to interfere with our freedom. They should not be given a free hand to do just what they want.

We will need time to give our new government a chance to develop the country, unify our divided people, and reconstruct.



Credit: J. Liebenberg/NCCT

South African Casspir on patrol, April 1989.

NAMIBIANS REJOICE AS EXILES COME HOME

Thousands of Namibian exiles are on their way home, and the churches are playing a key role in reuniting families after nearly 23 years of war. A major airlift is currently underway, organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. An estimated 41,000 exiled Namibians have registered for repatriation, and are due to return to a land many of them have not seen for decades — or at all. They or their relatives fled Namibia to escape South Africa's brutal military occupation. Now, as they return, they are being welcomed into five tented reception centers throughout Namibia, organized by the Council of Churches in Namibia in collaboration with representatives of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Local Congregations Welcome Exiles

In addition, twenty-one subcenters have been offered by Namibia's churches to serve as temporary accommodation for returnees, after their initial stay in one of the five major centers at Dobra, Okahandja, Maira-Bronn, Engela, and Ongwediva. At the subcenters, congregations have organized RRR Committees (Repatriation, Resettlement, Reconstruction), to welcome back the returnees and care for their needs. At eleven locations in Ovambo-land, for example, church properties have been refurbished and prepared to receive returnees without homes. People may stay at these reception centers for as long as a year.

For months, Namibia's Christians have been readying church and social service facilities to serve as repatriation centers, providing the refugees with temporary shelter and aid as they begin to repair the terrible disruptions of the long war, reuniting families and arranging to return to their homes. Together with United Nations representatives and church relief personnel, Namibian church leaders toured possible resettlement sites, drawing up lists of necessary repairs or new construction, adequate toilet and sanitary facilities, and lists of full-time or part-time workers to help with the returnees when the time came.

And at last the time did come. But resettlement got off to a shaky start because of the delay in implementation of the independence plan, and the great concern among returnees about the security situation in Namibia, especially in the north.

Repatriation began on Monday, June 12, with the arrival at Windhoek airport of 150 Namibians from Zambia. The first returnees were met by jubilant crowds of SWAPO supporters, waving the red, green and blue SWAPO flag. It was a time of powerful emotion. One Council of Churches in Namibia worker could say only one thing over and over again at work the next day: "I saw my sister again!"

Returnees Fear Koevoet

Fear over the activities of Koevoet troops began to hinder resettlement almost immediately. Far more people than anticipated came to the relative safety of the capital, Windhoek. Thus, the Dobra reception center near Windhoek — with 500 tents on the fields of a Roman Catholic mission school — which was designed to hold 2,000 people for up to seven days, was nearly full by the end of the first week because people were reluctant to leave. Organizers had originally expected that returnees would be eager to go back to their homes, not remaining in the centers for longer than a week. But Father Franz Huebben, director of the Dobra center, said that by the end of the first week only 74 people had left. Others were afraid to go home, he said, having heard "the message that some of the returnees were beaten up in the north by Koevoet, close to the Ongwediva reception center."

Daily life at the five primary reception centers is filled with unexpected crises, and an effort to maintain some sort of stabilizing routine. At Dobra, every returnee is given three blankets, cooked meals, mattresses, and clothing. Relatives are contacted through a network of parish priests and Sister Irmgard Poroto, a Benedictine nun who is a vice-president of the Council of Churches in Namibia.

While children at the Dobra resettlement

center play on the mission's slides, hundreds of people arrive each day from Windhoek, shading their eyes against the Namibian sun, looking for long-lost sons, daughters and other relatives. Many have been happily reunited with their loved ones, but others, less fortunate, wait anxiously to see if members of their families survived the destruction and brutality of war.

Curfews Are Lifted

By mid-July, almost 20,000 Namibians had been repatriated. The flow out of reception centers to peoples' homes was becoming freer, though fears about security persisted. Still, for the first time in decades, with the curfew lifted, Namibians were able to move about in the evening without fear of immediate arrest. On June 24, a large SWAPO rally in Oshakati in the north gave a big boost to the repatriation program, for many of the returnees from the nearby Ongwediva reception center attended, made contact with relatives and friends, and got news of the situation at home. During the days following the rally, departures from the Ongwediva and Engela centers increased dramatically, though by the first week in July, the centers near Windhoek, at Dobra and Okahandja, were still overcrowded.

Life will not be easy for the returning refugees, even if they get home safely. Many who lived as small farmers in the countryside will find homes and herds destroyed, fields uncared for. To help returnees during the first months of rebuilding and replanting, the UNHCR and the UN's World Food Programme have pledged themselves to provide food at local parish centers.

But food is only the most immediate of many needs. The provision of health care, pastoral and psychological counseling, care for orphaned children, the disabled, the elderly, and otherwise handicapped people, as well as schooling for the young, and jobs for the thousands of returnees in a land already plagued with unemployment, will pose huge challenges for the fragile new nation. Our Namibian sisters and brother will need their friends. We dare not fail them.

Dynamic Voice for Namibia's Women: An Interview with Dr. Teotolina Tueunune

Teotolina Tueunune, emerging Namibian leader and Secretary of the SWAPO Women's Council, is a specialist in maternal and child health care at the Oshakage State Hospital in northern Namibia. Dr. Tueunune spoke with Dateline: Namibia in early July.

Q: What has been the role of Namibia's women in the struggle for freedom?

A: Women, as such, have borne the brunt of the war. Because we still have a migrant labor system in Namibia, men were often far away in the south, leaving the women and children here in what South Africa calls the "operational area."

Q: What is the attitude of Namibian women toward the SWAPO guerrillas who are fighting to end South African rule in Namibia?

A: Support is strong among the majority of women. The guerrillas were their own sons and daughters, their own mothers and fathers. Even when it wasn't somebody from your own family, it was somebody from the community who was fighting the war for you, to try and liberate you from South Africa, so naturally you fed and sheltered them despite the consequences.

Q: What sort of consequences?

A: Often very severe consequences, since the South African army specifically targeted women for retribution. If

you were discovered helping them, you got beaten and detained without trial for months or even years. In some cases people have disappeared up to this day. Rapes by South African soldiers have also been common. The cases of rape were gruesome; there were some really terrible incidents. I treated one victim aged only 12 or 13, and also an old woman of about 80.

Q: Was it possible to identify the assailants?

A: Identification of the assailants was usually difficult because it was mostly gang rape. They came at night when it was dark. And, because of the South African-imposed dusk-to-dawn curfew, women would have to wait until the next day to report it to the police and get medical treatment, so most of the cases never went to court.

Q: How were such cases handled when they did come to court?

A: The judges just turned a blind eye. In the case of the 80-year-old woman, the rapist was found and convicted and given a six-month suspended sentence.

Q: Can you say something more about the curfew?

A: It had a terrible impact on women. I know of many cases where women died at home in childbirth because they went into labor at night and had complications but couldn't come to the hospital

June 24 provided a stunning example of the changes that have slowly taken hold in war-scarred Namibia since the United Nations independence plan began last April. Over 10,000 people gathered under a blazing sun at Oshakati for a rally by the Southwest Africa People's Organization, as SWAPO launched its campaign for the November elections. It was the first public meeting in the north called by the overwhelmingly popular freedom movement since the late 1970s.

The crowd, wearing the red, blue, and green of SWAPO, waving SWAPO flags, and giving the clenched fist salute, roared its approval and chanted familiar slogans as SWAPO leaders urged people to support the party in the upcoming vote. It was an extraordinary occasion for a people accustomed to speaking only in whispers, and behind closed doors in twos and threes.

For the thousands of women in the audience there was another reason for special excitement, because one dynamic young speaker, Dr. Teotolina Tueunune, was a Black Namibian woman like themselves. For women, after generations of suffering the triple oppression of South African colonialism, the racism of apartheid, and sexism, the emergence of Dr. Tueunune as a leader in Namibia's liberation movement is itself a powerful sign of another kind of freedom in a new and free Namibia.

One of only a handful of Black doctors to win medical qualification despite South Africa's inferior "bantu" education system, Dr. Tueunune has had opportunities that are denied to the overwhelming majority of Namibian women. But, like hundreds of thousands of her sisters in the north, she too has endured long years of terror and intimidation under South African military occupation. And, as a physician, she has seen the effects of the relentless and brutal colonial war on the lives of the Namibian people as a whole.



Women and children at the Ongwediva resettlement center.

Credit: Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

because they would be shot for breaking the curfew.

Q: Has your outspokenness as a critic of South African rule caused you difficulties on the job?

A: I'm one of the few doctors at Oshakage State Hospital with post-graduate training. When I came back about five years ago I was actually demoted, and I have been passed up consistently for promotion. There were times that I thought about leaving, but I always thought I should stick it out.

Q: Are there special reasons, apart from those of all committed Namibians, for you as a doctor to stick it out, as you put it?

A: For me, and for other Namibian doctors, our decision to remain came from concern over the treatment of Black patients by South African doctors. Until 1987, Oshakage State Hospital was actually run by the South African Defense Force; the majority of doctors were actually soldiers. And despite medical ethics and the Hippocratic oath, well, apartheid is apartheid.

Q: Would you talk a bit about your work with the SWAPO Women's Council? I understand that you have been a member of SWAPO since 1973.

A: My association with the SWAPO Women's Council began only this year. It was not formed until 1978-79, and by that time it was too dangerous to organize openly. You could do the work underground, but you really couldn't join the Women's Council as such. So, really, the organization has only existed in the north since early this year.

Q: What does the Women's Council see as its role in the transition toward independence?

A: The most immediate task for the council is to get out the vote for SWAPO in November. Women have actually been working on this already, 25 hours a day, 8 days a week. We are training our members to reach out not just to women but to everybody, including old people, the sick, and people in very remote areas who don't understand very well what is happening. In this particular case, I guess it's good that most women are unemployed, because you can usually find them at home and mobilize them to reach the others.

Being unemployed also lets them es-

cape the intimidation of government employees by the South African Administrator General. In March, the Administrator General sent out a notice warning government workers not to engage in political activities even after working hours. When they were challenged, they said they meant during office hours only. But they are harassing SWAPO supporters anyway.

Q: What about women who work outside the home? What can they do to help?

A: Most of the women who do work in the public sector are primary school teachers working a half day. They're going out afternoons telling people about the elections, and of course they also play their part in the union — the Namibian National Teachers' Union.

Q: What about the resettlement of returning exiles to Namibia? Is the Women's Council involved in that?

A: Yes. That is the other major responsibility. The council has been given the task of looking after the returnees, uniting them with their families, caring for the many children who are coming back without their parents.

Q: Tell us about those children, and what arrangements are being made for them.

A: As many as 5,000 children will need foster care. Many of them are orphaned, and some are the children of parents who are still completing training in college courses overseas. We are organizing women to accept them in their own homes for as long as is needed.

Q: How does the Women's Council envision its role after independence?

A: After independence the council will turn its attention to practical problems facing Namibian women. One major issue is child care. Women are not physically free to leave the house, since there are no facilities for their children at all. Another related issue is lack of education, particularly in scientific and technical skills so that women can be qualified for jobs in every field. A third issue is discrimination against women already in the workforce. They get the most poorly paid jobs. Even our own people are happy to employ women at the same job as men for a much lower salary.

Q: What can American women do to support their sisters in Namibia?

A: The most important thing is to assist us to get our liberation from South Africa. After independence, we hope that our sisters will support training programs and education for women.



Outpatient waiting area at a hospital in northern Namibia.



SWAPO supporters flock to a rally in Katutura township to mark the start of the UN transition to Namibia's independence.

Credit: J. Liebenberg/NCTT

What You Can Do

Now is the time to write letters to your political leaders.

Set up a letter-writing opportunity in your congregation, perhaps during a coffee hour or an evening meeting. Let U.S. government and United Nations officials know that you have not forgotten Namibia. Tell them of your concern that the peace plan may be endangered and the returning exiles threatened. Make clear that you and others will be monitoring the UN's progress in Namibia. Do not forget that few people know or care about Namibia. Your voice can make a difference!

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Namibian Christians need to know they are in our prayers. Letters of support may be addressed to:

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Audio-Visual Resources

"South Africa Now": Weekly television program provides up-to-date news on Namibia as well as news, background reports, and cultural events from all of southern Africa. Check your local TV listings for availability, or write The Africa Fund for information on airing "South Africa Now" in your community. Beginning in August, "South Africa Now" will be available to PBS television stations nationally. Write your local PBS television station and encourage them to carry "South Africa Now."

"Namibia: No Easy Road to Freedom." 57-min. videotape on Namibia produced by independent film maker. May be used in 20-min. segments. Study guide included. Tape comes with special issue of Dateline:Namibia dealing with tripartite agreement and list of challenges facing the churches. (Rental Code No. AV-6830)

"Broken for You: The Body of Christ in Southern Africa." 25-min. video collage of sermons and speeches by Desmond Tutu, T. Simon Farisani, Zephania Kameeta and Wolfram Kistner. Brief study guide offering general background information and profiles of speakers included with each videotape. Produced by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. (Rental Code No. AV-1200)

(Order both videos from ELCA Distribution Service, 426 S. Fifth St., Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440; 800/328-4648. Be sure to include code numbers listed above.)