

# South West Africa (Namibia)

South West Africa (SWA) or Namibia has been administered by South Africa since South African forces occupied the territory in 1915 at the request of the Allied Powers in World War I. Prior to the invasion, SWA had been under German rule for more than three decades.

The German presence dated from 1883 when Heinrich Vogelsang, acting on behalf of the merchant Lüderitz, bought some land bordering on the historic bay of Angra Pequena from the Oorlams Nama at Bethanien. It was later renamed Lüderitzbucht. This was followed by the declaration of a German protectorate over the interior in 1884. German SWA, however, did not include Walvis Bay and the Penguin Islands which had been annexed by Britain for the period 1861 to 1878 and incorporated into the Cape Colony in 1884.

German settlers established towns and introduced commercial farming in SWA. Diamonds were discovered along the southern Namib coast in 1908 and railways built to transport the copper and lead deposits mined at Tsumeb. Christian missions had been active in the territory since the early 19th century, notably the London, Rhenish and Finnish missionary societies. They were followed by others, including those of the Catholic and Dutch Reformed churches. Today at least 90 per cent of the 1,2 million inhabitants belong to Christian churches, of which the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Elcin) is the largest.

After World War I, in December 1920, South Africa received a mandate from the League of Nations to administer SWA as 'an integral portion of its territory'. During the South African administration the number of white and coloured South Africans, many of whom had already settled in the territory under German rule, increased. Although the borders of the various indigenous groups' communal lands were demarcated and the areas expanded in some cases, about 60 per cent of the total land area became private property owned by whites. (This also included state land.) A legislative assembly elected by whites came into existence in 1926 and in 1950 the white electorate was given six assembly and four senate seats in the South African parliament. After 1948 South Africa's policy of apartheid and separate development was also introduced to SWA.

At the end of World War II the South African government refused to conclude a trusteeship agreement with the newly-founded United Nations because it was not prepared to grant premature independence to SWA. The tenor of decisions

by the International Court of Justice in 1950, 1955, 1956 and 1966 was that the mandate continued to exist and although the South African government was under no obligation to enter into a trusteeship agreement with the UN, South Africa was not competent to alter the international status of the territory unilaterally. Since 1966 the UN has adopted various resolutions declaring the mandate terminated and requesting member states to refrain from actions that would imply recognition of South Africa's authority over Namibia. A reconstituted International Court of Justice in 1971 ruled in favour of the UN view that South Africa's presence in Namibia was illegal.

The UN also established a UN Council for Namibia as well as a Namibia Institute based in Zambia. Moreover, in 1976 it recognized the SWA People's Organization (Swapo) as 'the sole authentic representative of the Namibian people'. The Ovambo People's Organization was founded in the 1950s by Herman Toivo Ja Toivo and reconstituted as Swapo in 1960. After Ja Toivo's imprisonment in the same year, Nujoma became president of Swapo. An "internal" and "external" Swapo evolved after Nujoma's departure from the country in 1966. Since then Swapo's military wing, also known as the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (Plan), has staged a terror campaign from across the country's northern borders. Although Plan has been subdued by the South African army and the SWA Territorial Force, Swapo continues to be politically active among the population.

In addition to the existing political parties, many other parties came into existence, especially since the early 1970s when the South African government stated that the time had arrived for all South West Africans to decide their own political future. At present there are some 30 political parties in SWA/Namibia, most of them drawing their support from factions within some ethnic group. Even ostensibly non-racial parties like Swapo and the SWA National Union (Swanu) have their main support bases among the Ovambo and the Herero respectively. The Ovambo represent about half of the total population while the rest can be subdivided into at least 10 cultural groups (including the whites), not a single one accounting for more than 10 per cent of the total population. More than 60 per cent of the total population (including almost all the Ovambo, Kavango and East Caprivians) is concentrated in the country's relatively well-watered border strip north of the Etosha Pan (see table). Less than 40 per cent

of the total population, comprising eight population groups, inhabits the rest of this vast, mostly arid country. More than half of the southern population are residents of Windhoek and other towns.

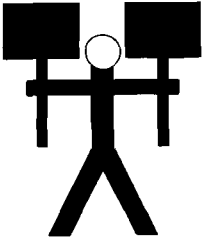
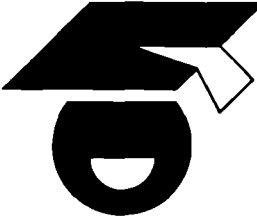
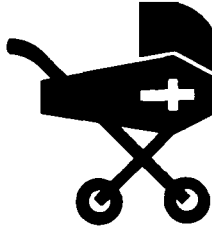
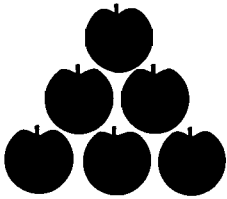

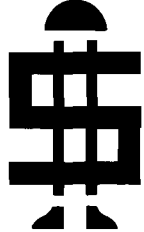
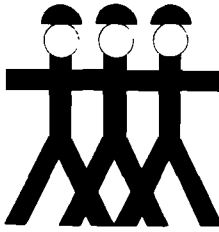
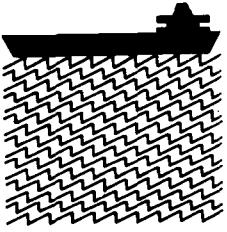
It is therefore clear that any party aspiring to govern the country, needs a trans-ethnic constituency, although parties which are able to gain substantial support among the numerous Ovambo people obviously enjoy an advantage. The Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), led by Kuaima Riruako and Dirk Mudge, is the country's largest political alliance. It comprises some 12 largely ethnically-based political organizations and has predominated in SWA/Namibia's first experiment with multi-ethnic self-government from 1979 until 1983. During this period various apartheid measures were abolished and some government services such as railways and police were transferred to the SWA/Namibian government. A territorial army (SWATF) was established in 1980. However, the DTA administration was subordinate to the South African-appointed Administrators-General, who replaced the previous chief executive officers (administrators) in September 1977, and were also given wider powers. As a result of differences between the DTA and the South African government, the DTA withdrew from the SWA/Namibian government in January 1983.

A multi-party conference (MPC) commenced in November 1983 and culminated in the establishment of the present

Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU) on 17 June 1985. Once again the DTA was the largest political grouping in the government, but the difference this time was that the MCP had secured the co-operation of the National Party (whites) and four other parties (see table). Whereas the previous legislature was elected (December 1978), the members of the present National Assembly are nominated pending elections under United Nations supervision, in terms of UN Security Council resolution 435 (1978). The TGNU is also working on a draft constitution for an independent Namibia.

The history of resolution 435 began when, in January 1976, the Security Council adopted resolution 385 on "independence for Namibia", which was partially unacceptable to South Africa. However, the South African government accepted the Declaration of Intent, issued by the DTA in August 1976, which aimed at independence for a democratic SWA/Namibia by the end of 1978 at the latest. In order to ensure an internationally recognized independence and to break the years of deadlock between the UN and Swapo on the one hand, and South Africa and the internal SWA/Namibian parties on the other, five Security Council member states commenced negotiations with both groups in April 1977. These intermediaries, "Contact Group" or "Western Five" as they became known, were the governments of Canada, France, Federal Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States.

**NAMIBIA** at a glance

 <p><b>Politics</b> Multi-party transitional government</p>	 <p><b>Literacy</b> 35 % (1970)</p>	 <p><b>Life expectancy</b> 60 years (1982)</p>	 <p><b>Calorie supply</b> Not available</p>
 <p><b>Economy</b> State and private enterprise</p>	 <p><b>National income per person</b> \$1 800 (1982)</p>	 <p><b>Labour force in industry</b> 11 % (1986)</p>	 <p><b>Exports</b> Minerals 82 % Sea-fish 10 % Agriculture 8 %</p>

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In July 1978 the Security Council passed resolution 431, thereby accepting the Western Five's settlement proposal which had already been publicly approved by the South African government on 25 April 1978. In addition, the Council, in resolution 432, raised the issue of Walvis Bay which elicited a strong response from South Africa that the enclave would remain South African territory. Resolution 435, passed on 29 September 1978, approved of the UN Secretary-General's report containing proposals for the *implementation* of the Five's settlement proposal. This report by Dr Kurt Waldheim, and especially the second one of February 1979, contained technicalities which deviated from the original "final, definitive and non-negotiable" settlement proposal. Consequently, South Africa and the UN continued to disagree on the implementation of resolution 435 until August 1983 when Dr Waldheim's successor, Mr Perez de Cuellar, came to an "understanding" with the South African government during a visit to South Africa.

Meanwhile, especially since the early 1980s, the border war had shifted into southern Angola where Plan (Swapo) enjoyed the protection of the MPLA government in Luanda and its Cuban troops. The South African army supported Unita, an Angolan liberation movement, in its war against the Luanda regime. Because of the increase in Cuban troops (allegedly more than 40 000 at present), the SWA/Namibian internal parties began to perceive the Cuban presence and their support for Plan as a serious threat. This view corresponded with that of the Reagan administration which, after it had come to power in 1981, took the initiative within the Western Contact Group. Consequently, the "linkage issue" arose.

### Distribution of SWA/Namibian population Groups (1981)

Group	Bantu-speakers '000	%	Others '000	%
<b>Preponderant north of Etosha Pan</b>				
Ovambo	506	49		
Kavango	95	9		
Caprivians	39	4		
	<b>640</b>	<b>62</b>		
<b>Preponderant south of Etosha Pan</b>				
Herero	76	7		
Damara			76	7
Whites			76	7
Nama			49	5
Coloureds			42	4
Bushmen			29	3
Rehoboth Basters			25	2
Tswana			7	0,6
Unspecified			12	1
	<b>716</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>30</b>

This implies that the SWA/Namibian and Angolan issues are linked and that South Africa and the transitional government in SWA/Namibia refuse to co-operate in the implementation of resolution 435 unless the Cuban troops are withdrawn from Angola. (PE)

### Transitional government in SWA/Namibia

**Administrator-General:** Louis Pienaar (since 1985). Predecessors: Willie van Niekerk (1983-85), Danie Hough (1980-83), Gerrit Viljoen (1979-80) and Marthinus Steyn (1977-79).

#### Cabinet

Minister and party	Minister
Dawid Bezuidenhout (LP)	Transport
Hans Diergaardt (RFDP)	Local authorities and civic affairs
Moses Katjuonga (Swanu)	Manpower, health and welfare
Fanuel Kozonguizi (DTA-Nudo)	Justice, post and telecom, information
Andrew Matjila (DTA-NDP)	Education and central personnel
Dirk Mudge (DTA-RP)	Finance and governmental affairs
Andries Shipanja (Swapo-D)	Mining, commerce, tourism
Eben van Zyl (NP)	Agriculture, water affairs, fisheries
Jan de Wet (as from February 1987)	

There are also 8 deputy ministers representing the same parties and responsible for the same portfolios as the ministers.

#### National Assembly Party

Party	Members	Main support
Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA)	22	
Bushman Alliance		Bushmen
Caprivi Alliance		Caprivians
Caprivi African National Union (Canu)		Caprivians
Christian Democratic Union (CDU)		Coloureds
Kavango Alliance		Kavango
Namibia Democratic Turnhalle Party (NDTP)		Nama
National Democratic Party (NDP)		Ovambo
National Unity Democratic Organization (Nudo)		Herero
Rehoboth Baster Association (RBA)		Basters
Republican Party (RP)		Whites
Seoposengwe Party (SP)		Tswana
SWA People's Democratic United Front (Swaduf)		Damara
Labour Party (LP)	8	Coloureds
National Party (Swanp)	8	Whites
Rehoboth Free Democratic Party (RFDP)	8	Basters
Swapo Democrats	8	Ovambo
SWA National Union (Swanu)	8	Herero
	<b>62</b>	

#### Constitutional Council

Chairman: Judge V G Hiemstra  
Members: DTA 6; other parties 2 each; total 16

**Major extra-parliamentary parties**

Party	Leader	Main support
Christian Democratic Action	Peter Kalangula	Ovambo
Damara Council	Justus Garoeb	Damara
SWA People's Organization		
External wing	Sam Nujoma	Ovambo
Internal wing	Hendrik Witbooi	Nama, Ovambo

**Facts and figures**

**Land:** Area 823 144 km<sup>2</sup> excluding Walvis Bay enclave (1 124 km<sup>2</sup>) with a 1 489 km coastline on the Atlantic Ocean; long straight borders with the Caprivi Strip jutting out some 300 km to the Zambezi River in the north-east. Four distinct natural regions: the 80 to 120 km wide belt of Namib Desert reaching along the entire coastline (15% of total area); semi-arid mountainous area, varying in altitude from 1 000 to 2 000 m and stretching parallel with the Namib from north to south, constitutes the central western edge of the vast southern African plateau; the lower-lying eastern areas, which are extensions of the semi-arid Kalahari Basin covering the greater part of neighbouring Botswana; and the bush-covered, stoneless plains to the north of the great Etosha Pan, including the relatively high rainfall areas of Kavango and Caprivi. Rainfall in the interior decreases from north to south. The highest mountain is the Brandberg (2 579 m) in Damaraland. Windhoek, at 1 500m above sea level is situated on the highest part of the central plateau between the Aucas Mountains and the Khomas Highlands. The only perennial rivers are to be found on the country's borders: the Orange in the south and the Kunene, Okavango, Chobe (Linyati) and Zambezi in the north. The country is well endowed with minerals such as diamonds, semi-precious stones, uranium, copper, lead, silver, tin and zinc. The semi-arid pastures are capable of sustaining hardy breeds of sheep like Karakul. Cattle-ranching predominates in the areas north of Windhoek. The cold Benguela current along the coast provides the basis for a sea fishing industry centred at Walvis Bay.

**Major towns:** Windhoek, the capital and largest town, has approximately 100 000 inhabitants; Tsumeb in the north, Keetmanshoop in the south and Swakopmund at the coast are the other main centres; picturesque but remote Lüderitz is the country's only port; the main outlet to the sea is through the South African port of Walvis Bay (population approx 20 000).

**People:** Total population 1 032 000 (1981 census); 1 150 000 (1985 estimate); average growth rate 3% pa; density 1.4 persons per km<sup>2</sup>; 26% urbanized; more than 60% of population concentrated north and north-east of Etosha Pan. See table.

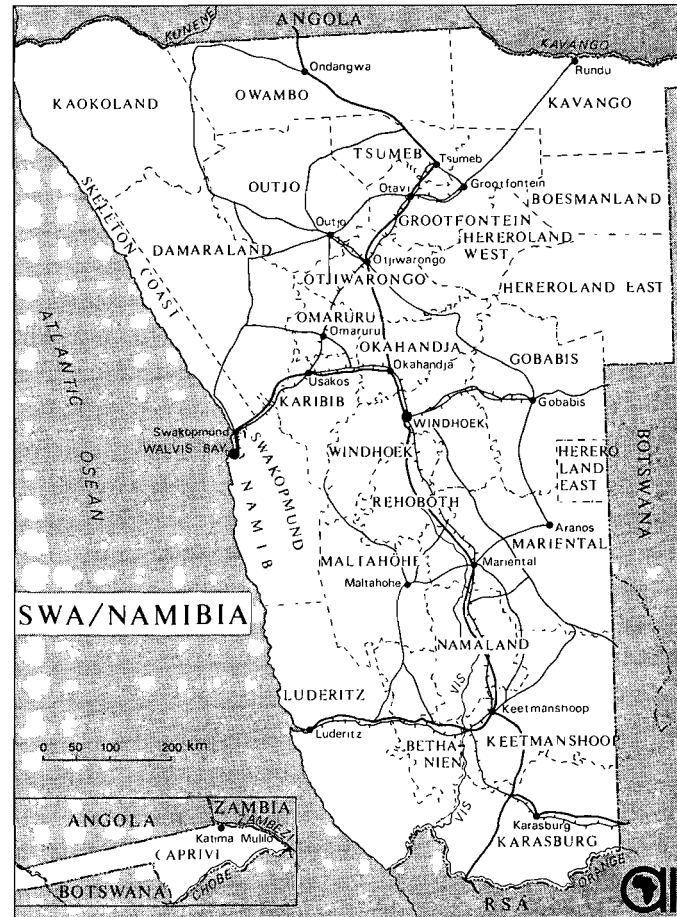
**Languages and ethnic groups:** Afrikaans and English (official); Afrikaans is the home language of about 70% whites and most of the coloureds and Rehoboth Basters; German is also widely spoken, while English is the mother tongue of about 10% whites; Namas and Bushmen are Khoisan peoples whose languages show similarities but differ entirely from the Bantu languages; Damara are negroid but speak the languages of either the Nama or Herero. Bantu languages include Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama (the written languages of the Ovambo), Herero, the Kwangari and Mbukushu tongues of the Kavango, as well as Silozi which is widely-spoken in east Caprivi where the people are related to the Lozi of Zambia.

**Religion:** About 90% of the population are Christians belonging to several churches (see introductory text). Tribal religions are still to be found in the northern areas.

**Education (1985):** Total number of pupils 336 000 or 28% of total population, 80% of pupils in 6 to 18 years age group attending school; teacher/pupil ratio 1:32; there is an Academy for Tertiary Education in Windhoek and several teacher-training colleges.

**Health:** One doctor per 4 166 people; one nursing person per 339 people; one hospital bed per 130 people (1980); infant mortality rate more than 100 per 1 000 live births (1982).

**Government:** The country has self-government with executive authority vested in the South African-appointed Administrator-General, assisted by a cabinet of 16 members (eight ministers and eight deputy ministers) appointed from six political organizations; chairmanship of cabinet rotates every



three months; National Assembly has 62 nominated members (see table). Supreme court functions independently from the South African court but there is a right of appeal to the Appellate Division of the South African Supreme Court. The SWA police was established in April 1981; SWA territorial force, established in August 1980, accounts for more than 60% of the military manpower employed in the country; balance provided by South African Defence Force.

**Economy:** Currency 1 rand = 100 cent; GNP US \$ 1920 million (1983); GNP per capita US \$ 1 760 (1983); real per capita growth rate 1.8% (1973-82); structure of GDP: agriculture 6%, mining 36%, manufacturing 10%, services 48% (1985); 75% of the population earns a living from agriculture.

**Major exports (1983):** Agricultural (mainly cattle, meat and karakul pelts) 8%; sea fish (mainly pilchard and anchovy) 10%; minerals (mainly uranium, diamonds and copper) 82%. Uranium ore has become the most important export in recent years.

**Infrastructure:** Total generating capacity amounts to more than 400 MW, mainly thermal power stations at Windhoek and the Ruacana-Calueque hydro-electric scheme in the Kunene River which has a generating capacity of about 250 MW and also supplies water to Ovamboland; power also supplied by South Africa through Escom grid; water is supplied from some 12 major storage dams throughout the country; railway network 2 340 km; 4 318 km of paved roads; international airport at Windhoek.

**Information media:** SWA Broadcasting Corporation broadcasts radio programmes in 11 languages and television programmes in three languages (Afrikaans, English and German). Swapo's *Voice of Namibia* broadcasts from neighbouring countries in English and some of the vernaculars; one Afrikaans, one English and one German daily newspaper are published in Windhoek; information is available from the official SWA Information Service (P O Box 2160, Windhoek), Namibia Foundation (P O Box 2123, Windhoek) and the First National Development Corporation (Private Bag 13252, Windhoek). (PE)