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## UPDATE ON ~~NAMIBIA~~

The settlement of Namibian independence which was so promising a few months ago is again in question. Dr. Edward May, Director of the Office on World Community, Lutheran World Ministries, has prepared a background information and update report. To help increase your understanding of the situation and to provide sufficient information for you to respond to questions, the update is largely reprinted here.

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RECORDS MANAGEMENT

### INTERPRETING NEWS REPORTS FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA

"As news is reported from Southern Africa, a discerning listener or reader will note the source of the news. Salisbury in Rhodesia and Pretoria in South Africa consistently report only the views of their governments. A free press is rare anyplace in the world. Control of the media is one of the early objectives of a threatened government.

Rhodesia and Namibia are in war situations, and war is full of moral ambiguities. Under the best of circumstances, armies may have undisciplined units or troops. Moreover, in war as in blackouts, floods and earthquakes, marauders, bandits and looters are prevalent.

"Every war is accompanied by propaganda campaigns. The epithets and slogans which are employed are not helpful in discovering valid identity. One person's *Marxist terrorist* is another person's *Christian freedom fighter*:...One person's *Defender of the Christian free world* is another person's *racist fascist oppressor*. Moreover, all sides have access to all kinds of weaponry. Murder by Soviet made guns is not proof of guerilla guilt. When weapons or planes manufactured in the West are used, they are seldom identified that way in reports reaching this country.

"God is color blind. White, "colored", and black casualties are equally deplorable.

"Civilian deaths are especially deplorable whether they occur in refugee camps or mission compounds.

"Finally, the situation in southern Africa is fluid, changing daily. Yesterday's negotiable options become tomorrow's uncompromising demands. What might have been a viable proposal one month becomes unacceptable the next.

### Recent History

"A record of the last 30 years of more than a century of difficult struggle for freedom by the people of Namibia follows. While it emphasizes United Nations relationships, it is important to note that throughout this period, the churches of Namibia have played a leading role.

1949 Representatives of the Namibian people petitioned the United Nations (UN) to place the territory at that time known as South West Africa under the UN Trusteeship Council.

- 1950 The International Court of Justice (ICJ) declared Namibia to be international territory but did not direct that it be placed under UN authority.
- 1965 The Organization of African Unity (OAU) organized in 1963 recognized the South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) as Namibia's liberation movement.
- 1966 The UN General Assembly (UNGA) ended South Africa's mandate in Resolution 2145.
- 1967 The UNGA established the UN Council for Namibia to administer the territory and demanded the withdrawal of South Africa's (SA) police and military force. Independence was projected for June, 1968.
- 1969 The UN Security Council (UNSC) endorsed UNGA Resolution 2145, declared SA presence in Namibia to be illegal and demanded SA withdrawal by October 1969.
- 1971 The ICJ ruled SA's presence in Namibia was illegal and that UN member states were obliged to abstain from dealing with SA over Namibia. The UNSC endorsed the ICJ ruling and declared that SA's refusal to withdraw would create conditions detrimental to the maintenance of peace and security in the area. Britain and France abstained.
- An "Open Letter to the Prime Minister of South Africa" by Bishop Leonard Auala and Rev. Paulus Gowaseb focused international attention on the activity of Namibian churches in the liberation struggle.
- 1972 UNSC judged the situation in Namibia to be prejudicial to the maintenance of peace and security in the region, threatened *effective measures* to bring about compliance with resolutions, and instructed its Secretary General (UNSG) to open discussion with all parties concerned about Namibia. The UNSG and his special emissary went to Namibia for talks, but they proved to be fruitless.
- 1973 The UNGA appointed Sean MacBride the first full-time UN Commissioner for Namibia (UNCN) and recognized SWAPO as the authentic representative of the Namibian people.
- 1974 The UNCN enacted a decree on Namibia's Natural Resources, which was later endorsed by the UNGA. The decree was designed to protect Namibia's vast mineral resources. The UNSC called for SA's withdrawal, release of political prisoners, return of exiles and threatened *appropriate measures* if SA did not comply by May, 1975.
- 1975 SA failed to comply with UNSC resolution of 1974. The United Kingdom (UK), USA and France vetoed a UNSC resolution which called for a mandatory arms embargo against SA.

In a move to manipulate an *internal settlement*, the SAG organized a constitutional conference (familiarily called The Turnhalle Talks (TTT) because of its meeting place). Delegates to the conference were not democratically chosen and dubbed *puppets* or even *stooges* of the SAG by Namibian patriots, church leaders and most of the people. TTT produced a tribally based constitution which would in reality continue white minority rule.

- 1976 In January the UNSC unanimously passed a comprehensive resolution, UNSC Resolution 385, demanding free elections under the supervision and control of the UN for the whole of Namibia as one political entity, the release of political prisoners, the return of exiles and the withdrawal of the SA's troops and administration, threatening action if SA did not comply by 31 August. SA did not comply and again the UK, USA and France vetoed a draft resolution calling for an arms embargo.

The UN Institute for Namibia opened in Lusaka, Zambia to train civil servants for a future independent Namibia. Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, Finnish ambassador to Tanzania, was elected UN Commissioner for Namibia.

- 1977 The Five Western members (5WM) of the UNSC (USA, UK, FRG, France and Canada) initiated a process of negotiation among several Namibian groups, of which the SAG and SWAPO were chief, in order to implement the provisions of UNSC-R385.

The UNGA adopted a Nationhood Program calling for the UN and its specialized agencies to coordinate a program of assistance for an independent Namibia.

SAG appointed Martinus Steyn as Administrator General (AG), similar to a commissioner of colonial days of Namibia.

SAG disbanded TTT and withdrew TTT constitution. TTT leaders organized a political party, "The Democratic Turnhalle Alliance" (DTA).

On 4 November, UNSC unanimously ordered a mandatory arms embargo against SA because of its repressive racial policies occasioned by mass bannings and detentions of government critics.

- 1978 Some DTA units employed private police to protect leaders and to harass SWAPO. Riots, violence and murder followed. Steyn invested himself with extraordinary powers to detain indefinitely any person or group of persons without legal recourse (Proclamation AG-26).

24 April - 3 May. Special Session of UNGA on Question of Namibia.

24 April. Mass arrests made under AG-26. Thirteen SWAPO leaders detained.

25 April. SAG accepted proposal of 5WM to implement many provisions of UNSC-R385. Proposal called for UN peace-keeping force, a civilian

corps to supervise and control elections called UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG), release of political prisoners, return of exiles, reduction--not complete withdrawal--of SA military.

3 May. SWAPO called its executive committee to meet with 5WM to seek agreement on proposal.

4 May. SA Army invaded Angola, attacked refugee camps at Kassinga; massacred over 700 women, children and men; destroyed hospital, schools, storage facilities.

6 May. UNSC condemned SA raid, implied economic sanctions if SA did not withdraw from Angola immediately. SA complied.

12 July. SWAPO accepted proposal of 5WM.

13 July. AG Steyn issued proclamation empowering him to expel *undesirable residents*.

14 July. The Rev. Edward Morrow, Vicar General of Anglican Church, Laureen, his wife, and Lydia, their daughter, and the Rev. Heinz Hunke, Roman Catholic priest, were expelled.

27 July. UNSC passed two resolutions. UNSC Res. 431 instructed the Secretary General to submit recommendations for implementing the proposal of 5WM to which both SAG and SWAPO had agreed. UNSC Res. 432 expressed the judgement that Walvis Bay should be an integral part of an independent Namibia.

29 August. The Secretary General submitted his recommendations. South Africa objected to the date of elections and the size of the UN peacekeeping force and UNTAG.

20 September. B. J. Vorster submitted his resignation as Prime Minister of South Africa, announced that the SA Cabinet rejected the recommendations of the UNSG, and would implement its own plan for an *internal settlement* by sponsoring its own elections and bring Namibia to independence by 31 December 1978.

29 September. UNSC Res. 435 adopted, accepting the Secretary General's recommendations and calling for a meeting to assess progress on 23 October, threatening sanctions if SA did not comply.

15-17 October. Foreign ministers of 5WM visited new Prime Minister of SA, Pieter Botha, in an attempt to persuade SA to call off its unilateral elections and accept UNSG recommendations. SA, for all practical purposes, refused. SA agreed simply to attempt to persuade the winners of the internal elections to invite the UN to implement its plan in 1979.

23 October - 10 November. UNSC met often, with Africans pressing for the SC to judge that SA's continued presence in Namibia constitutes a threat to international peace and security and therefore,

Article 42. Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such an action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations.

### The Need for Action

Liturgical action has been advocated for years and continues to be essential, particularly intercession for those who suffer and those who oppress, for those in decision-making positions in the international community, for leaders in the church and in the liberation movements, and for all who seek justice and peace in the world.

Many persons from the Lutheran community have applied to the United Nations to serve in a transitional assistance group (UNTAG) supervising the electoral process. Whether any of them will be able to serve depends on South Africa's withdrawal from the territory so that international supervision and control of elections will be possible. Only then will the UN be able to put together UNTAG. These applicants have demonstrated great patience but understandably are disappointed that South Africa frustrated the plans of the UN, plans which once appeared so close to implementation.

Political and economic action is required at this time. For many years the United States government has refused to believe that its people will support economic sanctions against South Africa in the interest of majority rule and independence in Namibia. The U.S. government still hesitates to take such action and needs to hear the will of the people. Canadians also must express their will regarding such economic sanctions. Those who have followed the Namibian situation closely are convinced that the majority of those who have learned about the repression and injustice which exists in that land want to see change brought about without further violence and recognize economic sanctions as the only strategy left toward that end. There will be dissenting voices as well. Both have a right and a responsibility to be heard.

Congregations and individuals are encouraged to express their views on this matter immediately to the following government personnel:

#### United States

President Jimmy Carter  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Honorable Cyrus Vance  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

#### Canada

Pierre Elliot Trudeau  
Prime Minister  
House of Commons  
OTTAWA, Ontario

Honorable Don Jamieson  
Minister of External Affairs  
House of Commons  
OTTAWA, Ontario

United States

The Honorable Andrew Young  
U.S. Ambassador to the United  
Nations  
799 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017

Representatives in Congress

United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 21515

Canada

The Honorable William H. Barton  
Canadian Ambassador to the United  
Nations  
866 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017

Member of Parliament  
House of Commons  
OTTAWA, Ontario