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QUESTION OF NAMIBIA

SECURITY COUNCIL  
Thirty-third year

Letter dated 8 December 1978 from the Permanent Representative of  
Angola to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to send you the attached statement on the situation in Namibia with the request that it be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 27, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Elisio de FIGUEIREDO  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Representative to the United Nations

ANNEX

Statement on the situation in Namibia

1. Despite the seeming hiatus, we are at a critical point in the history of southern Africa. The most organized campaign for the achievement of independence by the people of Namibia has been under way for some time now, within the United Nations system, as well as in multilateral negotiations. So far, despite this activity, we are prepared to accept only the reality of the situation, which is that South Africa still rules Namibia, that the Namibians are denied the right to genuine independence, that their sole representative, the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), is still facing the military might of South Africa in its struggle to liberate the Namibian homeland, and that the People's Republic of Angola has often been attacked and continues to be faced with the constant danger of attack by the racist minority régime that rules in Pretoria.

2. In our capacity as one of the front-line States, and because of our revolutionary ideology which is committed to the total liberation of southern Africa, we are one of the rearguards of the Namibian liberation movement. And it is this revolutionary commitment that places us in the line of attack by South Africa's racist troops.

3. True to the revolutionary principles on which the People's Republic of Angola was founded, true to the lessons we have learnt from our colonial past, aware of the danger we all face unless we remain vigilant, aware of the threat of annihilation that lurks ahead unless we deal with it today, we feel bound by our own moral, social and political conscience to extend our commitment and our support to SWAPO in its fight against imperialism and colonialism, not the least virulent of which is settler colonialism. We know that we will not be totally free until every nation in Africa, and indeed in the entire third world, is free of the fetters of colonialism. It is in this spirit that we have been expressing our solidarity with SWAPO, the national liberation movement of Namibia. In this we have been further guided by the principles and the resolutions of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and the movement of non-aligned countries. Decolonization is a sacred task of these organizations, and we feel privileged to be playing a part.

4. On Monday, 4 December 1978, the Security Council held a meeting on the situation in Namibia, at which we condemned the sham elections presently being held in Namibia. The international community is aware of the illegality not only of the election itself, but also of the methods adopted by the racist South African Government and its favoured puppets in the Territory.

5. The full extent of the irregularities is only now beginning to be known, although others, such as the forced registration of voters and the illegal registration of non-Namibians are no secret.

6. The South African racists have employed countless tactics to terrorize the Namibian people and to rig the elections. The black population of Namibia is forced to carry homeland identity cards in addition to tribal tax receipts. DTA membership cards were issued from April to June 1978, just before the registration of voters

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started. Blacks were intimidated into carrying these DTA cards as well as their identity cards and tribal tax receipts at all times. Racist troops have been stopping blacks and asking for their "papers", including "the Turnhalle card". It was made known that blacks without the DTA card would not receive medical treatment. DTA teams stood outside hospitals and issued cards to those arriving for treatment. This intimidation is not new. For example, even during the 1975 elections, puppet chiefs told their people that they would lose their ploughing rights and shop licences if they did not vote. And the labour bureaus did not give labour contracts to people who did not have their identity cards marked after voting. This time again people say that they registered to avoid a repetition of the earlier difficulties.

7. It was also announced, over the radio, that the registration was in accordance with the Western proposals. Thus, many people registered in the belief that this would enable them to vote in the United Nations-supervised elections. Many speeches broadcast by puppet ministers used threats. DTA organizers told a group of women at a religious meeting that those who had not registered would be told to leave the country. Troops of the racist junta have been greeting people with the DTA sign, and army vehicles drive around with DTA stickers under the windshield. On many occasions, old age pensioners had to register before they received payment, while many employees have done so under threat of dismissal. Vast numbers of non-Namibians have been registered illegally.

8. Recent news despatches from Namibia quote the so-called Administrator General of Namibia as saying that so far almost 62 per cent of the registered people have voted. There is no doubt as to which party is being favoured by the rigging. We know how the DTA has been assured success. We also know why the DTA is being brought to power.

9. South Africa has never had any intentions of relinquishing its hold over Namibia. Why should it give up a lucrative imperialist monopoly? However, since the racist junta in Pretoria cannot continue to overtly govern Namibia as its fifth province, it conceived the idea of installing a group of puppets which would allow South Africa to retain the colonial privileges it has employed all these decades. At the same time, Pretoria has undertaken every manoeuvre to suppress the sole authentic representative of the Namibian people, SWAPO, and thwart its activists. Its most recent action has been the mass arrest of the SWAPO leadership in Namibia.

10. The racist minority régime in Pretoria has attempted to give the impression of negotiation while stalling for time. Its latest move is also as devious as its past tactics have been. Pretoria has informed the United Nations merely that it will give a final reply by the end of the present month. It has not categorically stated that it will comply with Security Council resolution 435 (1978) but only that it will "co-operate" with it. It has refused to give a firm date for the emplacement of a United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), it has still left unanswered those points that it had previously refused to clarify, such as the military component of UNTAG and the modalities of a ceasefire. Finally, it has also

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not given a firm commitment to implement resolution 435 (1978) by the puppet group that will be returned in these sham elections. All it has done is state that it will retain authority in Namibia, and has made vague references to consultations "with the parties concerned".

11. The scenario we feel is unfolding before us is one of time-honoured imperialist tactics: Pretoria, instead of issuing commands from Pretoria, will issue them through the DTA. It may make demands that no genuine nationalist can possibly accept and that the international community should not either. The situation brought about by this Hobson's choice could then be used as the occasion to declare that since "negotiations" have failed, and/or that since the DTA, the elected group, does not accept this or that point, therefore, Pretoria has no choice but to let DTA go ahead and act as the constituent assembly and the government. In fact, Judge Steyn is reported to have declared that the 50-man constituent assembly will meet before the end of the month. We on our part are prepared for any eventuality that might occur in attempts to destabilize the area.

12. It is against this background, against the known unreliability of the South African junta, and against the covert machinations of foreign imperialist interests that the international community needs to ponder its next step. While the front-line States have a mandate to aid the liberation struggle in southern Africa, the United Nations has a broader mandate and a heavier responsibility. And it is in the very nature of things that those who started the quest for overseas empires, those who arrogated to themselves the leadership of the world, those who have seen fit to derive economic advantages from their unequal relationships with the third world, are the ones on whom lies the heaviest responsibility to successfully decolonize Namibia.

13. The racist minority régime in Pretoria knows that with a progressive government in Windhoek, the South African system of apartheid, racism, racial discrimination and its imperialist links are all in danger. What it perhaps refuses to acknowledge is that true freedom for the people of Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa is the irreversible wave of the future. It is only a question of time.

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