

Chronology of History of Namibia

San hunters and gatherers lived in Namibia as early as 2,000 years ago and are assumed to have been the earliest inhabitants of the region. Nama herders entered the region in 500 A.D. Later, inhabitants included the Damara or Berg Dama. The Bantu-speaking Ovambo and Herero migrated from the north into the region about the 14th century.

The inhospitable Namib Desert was a formidable barrier to European exploration until the end of the 18th century, when a succession of travelers, traders, hunters and missionaries explored the area.

15th century. Diogo Cam and Bartolomeu Dias, Portuguese navigators, landed on the coast in the early 15th century. Portuguese and Dutch expeditions explored the coastal regions.

18th century. English missionaries arrived and German missionaries followed them in the 1840s.

1878. The United Kingdom annexed Walvis Bay on behalf of the Cape Colony.

1883. Incorporation of Walvis Bay into the Cape of Good Hope. A Bremen, Germany, trading firm - F.A.E. Lüderitz - annexed a section of land at Angra Pequena (now Lüderitz).

1885. The United Kingdom recognizes the hinterland up to 20° east longitude as a German sphere of influence.

1890. Caprivi Strip becomes a part of Namibia.

1893. German attack on Hendrik Witbooi at Hornkrans.

1894. Leutwein's arrival in Swakopmund. **1895.** Treaty determining the southern frontier of Hereroland.

1896. Khaua and Mbanderu revolt; execution of Nikodemus and Kahimeme.

1896-1897. Rinderpest epidemic.

1897-1898. Swartbooi revolt.

1898. Leutwein appointed Governor.

1904-1908. Herero and Nama war. Battle of the Waterberg.

1905. Arrival of Governor Lindequist.

1906. Expropriation of dissident tribes. Prime grazing land passed to white control. Meeting of the first Governor's Council.

1907. Regular copper export begins. End of state of emergency. Native regulations. First import of karakul sheep.

1908. Opening of the Otavi-Grootfontain railway. Discovery of the diamond fields in Lüderitz Bay. Transfer of finance and accounting administration to South West Africa. Opening of the Lüderitz-Keetmanshoop railway. Diamond area declared a prohibited zone.

1909. Self-government order for Namibia. Agricultural exhibition.

1910. Departure and dismissal of Governor Schuckman. First meeting of the Territorial Council. Governor Seitz assumes office.

1911. Order concerning the employment of Ovambo.

1912. Compulsory school attendance throughout Namibia. Relaxation of ban on native cattle ownership.

1913. Setting up of Südwestafrikanische Landwirtschaftsbank for land purchase and improvement credits.

1914. Mobilization in Namibia. Resolution of the South African parliament on campaign against Namibia.

1915. German administration ended during World War I, followed by South African occupation in 1915.

1920. South Africa undertakes administration of South West Africa under the terms of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations and a mandate agreement by the League Council. The mandate agreement gave South Africa full power of administration and legislation over the territory.

1946. The newly formed United Nations inherits its supervisory authority for the territory.

1950. South Africa refuses to give up the territory to the UN.

1966. The UN General Assembly revoked South Africa's mandate. Apartheid laws imposed. SWAPO (the South West Africa People's Organization) begins guerilla attacks in Namibia, infiltrating the territory from bases in Zambia.

1968. Renamed Namibia.

1971. The International Court of Justice upheld UN authority over Namibia, determining that the South African presence in Namibia is illegal and that South Africa therefore is obliged to withdraw its administration from Namibia immediately.

1973. UN recognizes SWAPO.

1975. After Angola becomes independent, SWAPO established bases in the southern part of the country. South Africa held a constitutional conference (the Turnhalle Conference) and delayed deciding Namibia's status. Responding to threats from the world community, the government promised Namibian independence by the end of **1978**.

1977. Western members of the UN Secretary Council (Canada, France, Federal Republic of Germany, United Kingdom, and the United States; also known as Western Contact Group) launched a joint diplomatic effort to bring an internationally accepted transition to independence for Namibia.

1978. The UN Security Council Resolution 435 (known as the UN Plan) is set up to settle the Namibian problem. This plan worked out lengthy consultations with South Africa and the front-line states (Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe), SWAPO, UN officials, and the Western Contact group. It calls for the holding of elections in Namibia under UN supervision and control, the cessation of all hostile acts by all parties, and restrictions on the activities of South African and Namibian military, paramilitary, and police.

1978. In defiance to the UN proposal, South Africa unilaterally held elections in Namibia which were boycotted by SWAPO and a few other political parties.

1982. The Constitutional Principles, agreed upon by the front-line states, SWAPO, and the Western Contact Group, create the framework for Namibia's democratic constitution.

1988. On December 13, Cuba, South Africa, and the People's Republic of Angola agreed to a total Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola. A bilateral agreement between Cuba and the People's Republic of Angola was signed in New York on December 22. On the same day, a tripartite agreement was signed, in which the parties agreed to withdraw South African troops from Namibia.

1989. The implementation of Resolution 435 officially began on April 1, 1989. Elections were held in November 1989 and were certified as free and fair by the special representative, with SWAPO taking 57% of the vote, just short of the two-thirds majority necessary to have a free hand in drafting the constitution. The 11-month transition period went relatively smoothly (some fighting in the north). Amnesty was granted to political prisoners, and about 42,000 refugees returned.

1990. By February, the Constitution Assembly had drafted and adopted a constitution. March 21, Independence Day, was constituted.

1994. The coastal enclave Walvis Bay and 12 offshore islands were transferred back to Namibia from South Africa.