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Namibian Timeline

Late Pleistocene (Early and Middle Stone Age)

800 000 years

Artefacts in a site known as 'Gemsbok' in the north of the Orange River near present day Oranjemund is dated to this period.

700 000 to 400 000 years

The bones of an extinct elephant, *Elephas recki*, in the archaeological site 'Namib IV' in the north-western region of the country is dated in this period.

25 000 to 19 000 years

The oldest rock art paintings in the country are dated in this period. Seven slabs of rock engravings known as one of the oldest rock art artefacts on the continent were found in Apollo 11, a rock art painting site in the Huns Mountain range in the south-western part of the country which was named after the launching of the American spacecraft to the moon.

Holocene (Later Stone Age)

6500 years

There is evidence of human settlement in the form of hunting implements and preserved food remains found commonly in rock shelters in southern Namibia in this period. There is also a variety of stone artefacts found and the largest amount of rock art paintings on the continent in the north-western parts of the country.

5000 years

The Namib Desert is yet again occupied by hunter-gatherer communities and evidence of food remains and specialised techniques of food accumulation.

2000 years

There is evidence of a south-westerly migration of pastoralist groups such as the Khoe with the proliferation of pottery, domesticated sheep, goats and cattle. New evidence of two teeth of domestic animals found in the Erongo Mountains in central Namibia in 2012 shifts the evidence of pastoralists communities in the region to 2300 and 2200 years respectively.

850 AD

Earliest evidence of a farming settlement in the form of bone, pottery and iron is found at Kapako, near Rundu in the northern regions of the country.

1486

Diogo Cão, a Portuguese explorer erects a *padrão*, a stone cross, at Cape Cross, north of Swakopmund.

1487

Bartholomew Diaz, a Portuguese explorer on his sail around the southernmost part of Africa, visits the coast of Namibia near Swakopmund.

1488

Diaz erects a *padrão* at Angra Pequena (LÁ¼deritz). He sees some African people near the Fish River with large herds of cattle.

June/July 1533

Portuguese vessel, *Bom Jesus*, shipwrecks in the Sperrgebiet, a prohibited diamond area near Lá¼deritz and is discovered by a geologist in April 2008.

1670s

Dutch explorers from the Cape arrive in Namibia and have the first face-to-face contact with Africans in the area.

1677

Captain Wobma and Dutch sailors reach Kuiseb River from Cape Town with vessel, *Bode*, and are involved in a conflict with a Nama community at Sandwich harbour.

1723

A vessel, *Waerwijk* is sent to Walvis Bay by the Dutch West India Company (DWIC) to catch whales and trade near the coast.

1738

A Commando expedition of Boers, Khoe and San cross the !Garib (Orange) River and attack a Nama leader Gal and raid livestock.

1750

Ovaherero leader Mutjise moves to Okahandja. Tjirwe, Mutjise's son establishes Otjikune near Okahandja.

1761

Hendrik Hop an explorer as part of an expedition funded by the Dutch East India Company based in the Cape reaches the LÁ¶wen and Fish rivers in southern Namibia.

1778-9

Hendrik Jacob Wikar employed by the DEIC absconds from the Cape and surveys the !Garib River and its surroundings. Wikar kept a journal in which he recorded the everyday life and rituals of Khoe communities that he visited. William Paterson, a Scottish soldier, explorer and botanist surveys the !Garib River with Klaas Afrikaner, leader of the Afrikaner family and clan. In December Klaas Afrikaner is at Warmbad. Robert Gordon, soldier and explorer journeys to Namibia from the Cape.

1786

Nautilus, a British vessel surveys parts of the coastline from the !Garib River to Angra PequeÁ±a.

1791-2

Willem van Reenen and Pieter Brand survey southern Namibia as far as Rehoboth and the Auas Mountain.

1793

The Dutch vessel, *Meermin* with Captain Duminy declares sovereignty over Angra PequeÁ±a, Halifax Island and Walvis Bay. Klaas Afrikaner conducts a raid with his commando against the Nama. Dutch from the Cape establish themselves as farmers as far north as Grootfontein.

1795

The British claim sovereignty of all harbour sites up to Namibe in Angola for Britain.

1796-8

Captain Alexander on the vessel *Star*, claims sovereignty for Britain over Walvis Bay and Angra PequeÁ±a. The Dutch farmer, Pieter Pienaar who accompanied the *Meermin* with Captain Duminy is shot by the Afrikaners. The Afrikaners leave South Africa and settle at //Kauxa!nas in southern Namibia.

1798-1811

The authorities in the Cape Colony launch futile pursuits against the Afrikaners in southern Namibia. Ovambanderu migrate eastward into Botswana and Ovaherero migrate southward from Kaoko in south-western Namibia.

1802

Wesleyan missionaries begin to operate in the south of Namibia.

1804

The Orlam family Boois (Fredericks) settle at Bethanie in southern Namibia.

1805

The London Missionary Society begins to operate among the Nama in the south of Namibia when Abraham and Christian Albrecht establish a mission station at Blydervervacht in southern Namibia. The Orlam begin to move into Namibia after crossing the Orange River, settling among the Nama.

1806

October - The Albrecht missionaries settle at Warmbad in southern Namibia and establish a mission station.

1811

The mission station at Warmbad is destroyed by the Afrikaners.

1814

Johann-Heinrich Schmelen establishes a mission station at Bethanie in southern Namibia under the auspices of the London Missionary Society.

1820-1830

Conflicts begin developing between the Orlam and Nama as competition for resources grows. Jonker Afrikaner of the Orlam and Oasib of the Nama conclude an agreement to allow equal access to the region and its resources. But the Jonker group becomes dominant in the area east of Windhoek and north of the Kuiseb River.

1822

Schmelen abandons missionary work in Bethanie. James Archbell follows suit in Grootfontein. In the next two years missionary work is abandoned in Great Namaqualand until the mid-1830s.

1830s

Jonker Afrikaner becomes a sovereign in central and southern Namibia in alliance with the Kai//Khaun (Red Nation) Nama.

1834

The Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMS) takes over the work of the LMS and re-establishes the mission station at Warmbad.

1838

The Orlam Afrikaners settle at Windhoek (/Ai//Gams) with permission from Ovaherero.

1840

The LMS transfers its work to the German based Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS).

1842

Carl Hugo Hahn and Heinrich Kleinschmidt of the RMS arrive in Windhoek on request of the Orlam Afrikaners. Tjamuaha and Maharero of the Ovaherero also settle in Windhoek.

1843

Guano is collected from the Atlantic offshore islands. David Livingstone, explorer and missionary of the LMS attempts to establish a mission station in Caprivi.

The WMS establish a mission station at Leonardville in eastern Namibia with Joseph Tindall as the missionary. Traders James Morris and Sidney Dixon arrive in the country from the Cape.

1844

Hahn and Kleinschmidt leave Windhoek to Okahandja and then move on to Gross Barmen to establish a mission station. They are joined by evangelist Johannes Hendrik Bam. Ovaherero leader Oover ua Muhoko Kahitjene is attacked by //Oaseb of the Kai//khaun Nama because of competition between Nama and Herero for trade networks and resources.

1845

Missionary Hans-Christian Knudsen prints the first school book in Nama (Khoekhoegowab). Leader of the Swartbooi community, Willem Swartbooi settles at Rehoboth, and missionary Kleinschmidt establishes a mission station at Rehoboth. Joseph Tindall of the WMS establishes a mission station at Gobabis in eastern Namibia.

The RMS missionary Heinrich Scheppmann establishes a mission station at Rooibank near Walvis Bay.

1846

Tjamuaha settles at Okahandja after a raid on his cattle by Jonker Afrikaner. Hahn and Johannes Rath print the first school book in Otjiherero.

1847

The community at Bethany in southern Namibia establishes a Code of Law (Ryksboek) followed by mission stations in Windhoek, Warmbad and Rehoboth. The Ryksboek describes the customs and codified law of the community. Governor of the Cape Colony, Harry Smith extends the colonial boundary to the southern bank of the !Garib River.

1846

Johannes Rath of the RMS establishes a mission station at Otjimbingwe in central Namibia. //Oaseb leader of the Kai//khaun Nama supports Jonker Afrikaner in raids against the Ovambanderu.

1850s

By mid 19th century a feudal structure begins to emerge, with slaves producing goods for the monarchs.

By the 1850s European traders are operating as far north as Etosha, introducing firearms in the process.

The smallpox epidemic reaches the southern region of Namibia.

The /Khowese community with their leader Kido Witbooi leave Pella, South Africa and move to southern Namibia.

1850

A mission station is opened at Okahandja in central Namibia by Friedrich Wilhelm Kolbe of the RMS. In August the mission station is sacked by Jonker Afrikaner in his attempt to secure sovereignty of the region which is threatened by the presence of missionaries and Ovaherero traditional leaders. The Nama with leader Paul Goliath settle at Berseba in southern Namibia where a mission station is established by missionary Samuel Hahn of the RMS.

1851

Francis Galton, English anthropologist and explorer and Charles John Andersson, Swedish hunter and explorer travel to Etosha Pan, the copper mines of Tsumeb and Ovamboland in northern Namibia.

Andersson estimates that 8-10 000 head of cattle and small livestock are sent annually from the country to the Cape Colony.

The first Otjiherero hymn book is completed by missionary Kolbe.

1852

Jonker Afrikaner attacks Tjamuaha and Maharero at Otjosemba. His forces also raid missionary Hahn's cattle and also attack the Ovaherero leader Katjikurure.

The King of the Uukwanyama is Mweshipandeka Shaningika.

1853

//Oaseb settles at Hoachanas, which becomes the Kai//khaun headquarters. Franz Heinrich Vollmer of the RMS establishes a mission station at Hoachanas.

Missionaries Kleinschmidt and Vollmer complete a biblical history in Nama (Khoekhoegowab).

1854

Jonker Afrikaner settles at Okahandja and raids into Hereroland and as far as Kaokoveld.

Johann Georg Kr  nlein and Hermann Heinrich Kref  t from mission stations at Berseba and Bethanie translate Luther's catechism into Nama (Khoekhoegowab).

1855

Kleinschmidt and Vollmer complete a Nama-Dutch dictionary.

1856

A copper mine is established by the Walfish Bay Mining Company.

Swedish explorer Charles John Anderson travels through central and northern Namibia, and names the country South West Africa, replacing the name TransGariiep.

1857

Missionary Hahn publishes a Otjherero dictionary. Missionaries Kref  t and Kr  nlein complete a Nama dictionary. Missionaries Hahn, Rath and trader Frederick Joseph Green travel to Ovamboland. Here they are rerouted in a battle with the Ondonga community in northern Namibia. King Nangolo dAmutenya and son die and the King is succeeded by King Shipanga shAmukwiita.

1858

A peace treaty is signed at Hoachanas with 13 Nama traditional leaders and two sons of Herero leader Ua Tjirue Tjamuaha.

1859-60

Portuguese attempt to invade northern region of the country but is defended by Oshiwambo communities. There is a lung sickness outbreak in the country.

1870

A treaty is signed between the Nama and the Herero after a prolonged period of war between the two communities.

1876

Herero leader Maharero signs a treaty with the British to secure protection for his people from their Nama enemies. The British annex the area around Walvis Bay.

1880-1889

Conflicts between the Herero and Nama break out, with German interventions. Hendrik Witbooi emerges as a leader of the Nama after conquering smaller Nama clans and raids on Herero settlements, expropriating their cattle and firearms in the process. Maharero becomes the dominant leader of the Herero, as a response to various factors – intermarriage with other chiefs' children, leadership in war against the Orlam, the German desire to deal with a single leader, and later when Samuel Maharero joins with the Germans in putting down the 1896 rebellion.

1880

Ovaherero-Nama War begins after the battle of Gurumanas in central Namibia. The war is precipitated by competition for grazing, land and trade with the Cape and the drought which forces some Herero to move southward. Several months of fighting ensue which also result in cattle raids.

1882

Peace negotiations ensue between Herero and some Nama with Rhenish missionaries as mediators. However fighting begins again between Ovaherero, Mbanderu and Nama of Hendrik Witbooi until peace is signed in 1892 when the warring factions realise that the Germans pose a greater threat to the consolidation of power in central and southern Namibia.

1883

Adolf Luderitz signs an agreement with Chief Joseph Frederick of Bethanie, giving the German businessman rights to the area around Angra Pequena, which he renames Luderitz.

1884

Germany supports and intends to protect the land bought by L  deritz, and suggests that he acquires the coastal strip from the 26th parallel to the Angolan border.

A battle commences at Onguheva between the Nama and Herero. After the battle peace is signed between the two parties led by Hendrik Witbooi and Maharero.

SWA becomes a German protectorate.

1890s

Witbooi begins attacking German camps and convoys. New German governor Leutwein attacks smaller Nama clans in preparation for an attack on Witbooi's group.

1890

Germany and Britain sign a treaty, the Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty, which provisionally demarcates the northern, southern and eastern borders between Angola, British Bechuanaland and South Africa. The northern high-water line of the !Garib River forms the boundary between German South West Africa and South Africa for example.

Protection treaties are signed between GÁriring and the Bondelswarts and Velschoendragers communities in southern region of the country. Through these protection treaties the Germans attempt to gain a foothold in the country. Maharero dies and his son Samuel Maharero, with the support of the Germans, succeeds him, displacing the true heir to the leadership, Nikodemus Kambahahiza Kavikunua, chief of the eastern Hereros and son of the older brother of Maharero. Samuel Maharero renews the protection treaty with the Germans. He is later recognised as the Supreme Chief of the Ovaherero.

1892

The number of Namas in Namibia amount to between 15,000 to 20,000. Hendrik Witbooi refuses to sign a protection treaty with Kurt von Francois at Hornkranz. Instead he makes peace with the Herero.

1893

Von Francois attacks Hendrik Witbooi and the village of Hornkranz, and massacres women, children and the elderly. Witbooi retaliates and temporarily disrupts the transport route from Swakopmund to Windhoek.

1894

Theodor Leutwein becomes the Governor of the country. He proceeds to negotiate protection treaties with communities, but attacks and subdues those such as the /Khausas Nama in eastern Namibia who refuse to surrender to German protection. After the attack and execution of their leader, a new leader, Eduard Lambert is elected who signs a treaty with Leutwein.

Leutwein mounts a large-scale attack on Hendrik Witbooi in the Naukluft Mountains. When Witbooi is defeated by the Germans he signs a protection treaty.

Samuel Maharero negotiates the southern border of Hereroland. A dispute occurs between Maharero and the Ovambanderu leaders, Kahimemua Nguvauva and Nikodemus Kavikunua, who do not recognise his chieftainship. Border disputes increase and power is usurped from Nguvauva and Kavikunua.

1895

A punitive expedition is led by Leutwein with the assistance of Hendrik Witbooi and his forces against the /Khausas, !Kharakhoen

1896

Ovambanderu and /Khausas Nama revolt against the Germans in the eastern part of the country, however the alliance is defeated by the Germans. Samuel Maharero sides with the Germans in suppressing the rebellion. Some Mbanderu flee to British Bechuanaland present day Botswana. Nikodemus Kavikunua and Kahimemua Nguvauva leaders of the Ovambanderu are tried and executed in Okahandja, and the cattle of the eastern Herero are taken by the victors.

1897

The rinderpest epidemic breaks out reducing the cattle population in central Namibia. Fort Namutoni is built to monitor the passage of cattle into central and southern Namibia and as a border patrol between the central and northern part of the country. The Orlam Afrikaners rise against the Germans in the south-east region of the country. At first they defeat the Germans but are beaten at a battle near the !Garib River. The leaders are executed by the Germans after being extradited from the Cape Colony.

1898

More punitive expeditions are led against the Bondelswarts and Bethanie Nama after they refuse the regulations on weapons and ammunition established by the Germans.

1899

Copper mines are established at Tsumeb and Guchab in the northern region of the country.

1900

German Lieutenant August Franke visits Oukwanyama and Ondongo Kings, Ueyulu ya Hedimbi and Kambonde kaMpingana in northern Namibia. This is one of the first attempts by the Germans to gain influence in the northern region of the country. The Otavi Minen und Eisenbahngesellschaft is established for mining and the construction of the Otavi railway line.

1902

The German administration establishes a native reserve at Hoachanas in southern Namibia. A state railway line is inaugurated between Swakopmund and Windhoek and the first train runs from Swakopmund to Windhoek.

1903

The boundary between present-day Namibia and Botswana is surveyed and demarcated. Lieutenant Volkmann with Roman Catholic Missionaries Hermandung and Nachtwey attack Chief Himarua and his village in Kavango. Enmity brews between the Nama of Warmbad and German officials about judicial power and the right to carry weaponry. When there is a dispute about a goat between the Bondelswarts Captain Jan Abraham Christian and German Lieutenant Jobst, a clash ensues where Jobst shoots and kills the Captain. Jobst and other officers also die in the clash and war breaks out in this region. Captain von Koppo arrives in Warmbad and his army beat the Nama at Sandfontein. Von Burgsdorff and Nama allies, Hendrik Witbooi, beat Bondelswarts army commanded by Jakob Marenga and Abraham Morris in the Great Karas Mountains in southern Namibia. Jacob Marenga and allies beat Lieutenant B ttlin at Hartbeesmond on the !Garib River. A native reserve for the Herero is established at Otjimbingwe. The envisaged reserves and land disputes are one of the reasons why the Herero wage war against the Germans in the following year. Samuel Maharero takes the decision to wage war with a force of approximately 7000 men.

1904-7 War of Resistance

The German colonial oppression sparks increased resistance from the colonized peoples of Namibia.

1904

12 January

The Herero declare war on the Germans. Samuel Maharero's call to war is answered by Ovaherero Chiefs. Maharero attempted to co-opt Hermanus van Wyk and Hendrik Witbooi in the war effort. Van Wyk refused and turned in his and Witbooi's letter to the Germans. In the letter Maharero wrote: 'All our obedience and patience with the Germans is of little avail, for each day they shoot someone dead for no reason at all. Hence I appeal to you, my Brother, not to hold aloof from the uprising, but to make your voice heard so that all Africa may take up arms against the Germans. Let us die fighting rather than die as a result of maltreatment, imprisonment or some other form of calamity'. Leutwein signs peace with the Bondelswarts in southern Namibia to avoid a war on two fronts. King Nehale of the Ondongo in the northern region attacks the German fort at Namutoni with 500 soldiers. The German patrols are forced to flee to Tsumeb. The German army is divided into four sections to attack Omaruru under Von Estorff, Otjosenjati by Leutwein, Chief Tjetjo Kandjii is attacked in the east by Major von Glasenapp and Lieutenant Gygas attacks Otjimbingwe under Chief Zacharias Zerua. Several battles between Ovaherero and German patrols, and their Baster and Nama allies ensue mainly between Omaruru and Okahandja. Leutwein warns against a policy of annihilation of the Herero even before the proclamation to exterminate the Herero is established by the Lothar von Trotha who later relieves Leutwein in June as General of the German army. Von Trotha plans a final battle at Ohamakari, where different German sections converge on the Ovaherero forces. Although there are heavy losses on both sides, the Ovaherero are later defeated. Ovaherero flee into the Omaheke while some escape into Botswana, many die on their way, for lack of food and water. Ovaherero also flee to Walvis Bay and northern parts of the country.

11 August

A decisive battle is fought at Hamakari, east of Otjozondjupa (Waterberg). Hundreds of Herero men are killed by encircling German troops. Some who managed to escape to the Kalahari desert are later hunted down or die of hunger and thirst. Some are taken as prisoners of war, and forced to become slave labour. In October Hendrik Witbooi declares war on the Germans stating that, 'I have for ten years stood in your law, under you law and behind your law - and not I alone but all the chiefs of Africa. For this reason I fear God the Father. All the souls which have for the last ten years perished for all the nations of Africa and from among all the chiefs, without guilt or cause, and under treaties of peace, accuse me. I will have to answer a great reckoning to God.' The Namas join the battle against the Germans, with the Damaras, other Herero and Nama groups eventually joining in. More than 100 German settlers and soldiers are killed, but their families are spared. Railway and telegraph equipment is destroyed, and farms are razed to the ground. German garrisons remain under siege for six months. Some of Witbooi's soldiers still in the field with the German army are disarmed and deported to the West African colonies of Togo and Cameroon. Witbooi is joined in the war by Jakob Marenga and Johannes Christian, Jan Hendrik, Simon Kooper, Cornelius Fredericks and Manasse !Noreseb. Concentration camps are set up in Windhoek, Okahandja and Karibib to imprison the Herero by command of the German Emperor. In the following year at least 9000 Herero are imprisoned. The Rhenish Missionary also imprisons approximately 12000 Herero. Some of the prisoners work on public works such as the construction of railways, and as servants for settlers. There is a high mortality rate in these concentration camps because of inadequate nutrition, shelter and sanitation, with the most notorious camp established on Shark Island in

LÁ¼deritz. Many Hereros move east after their defeat in 1904, and establish a settlement in Botswana, led by Chief Samuel Maharero.

1905

Hendrik Witbooi is killed at Vaalgras. A month later Samuel Isaak, his deputy, surrenders to the Germans at Berseba. The other Nama leaders, Marenga, Kooper and Fredericks continue the fight against the Germans. The Mixed Marriages Act is passed which criminalises the marriage of settlers with Africans. German settlers married to African women lose their citizenship rights. Land and property of Africans is confiscated by German officials. A formal expropriation order is signed by the German Emperor Wilhelm II in December. Construction on the railway line between LÁ¼deritz and Aus in the southern region of the country begins. By December 1905, about 75% of the Herero have been killed. From a population of 60 to 80 thousand, only 16,000 remain, the majority of them in concentration camps. About 10,000 Nama are also killed in the genocide. The genocidal tactics include the poisoning of water wells in the Namib Desert.

1906

Isaak Witbooi and Cornelius Fredericks surrender to the Germans. Marenga is imprisoned in May after a battle in the Cape Colony. Cornelius Stuurman of the Bondelswarts surrenders also. In December Johannes Christian signs peace with Germans at Heirachabis, which is known as the 'Christmas Peace', and the Bondelswarts are allowed to live in Warmbad.

1907

The war is declared over on 31 March, but several battles still take place in southern Namibia. Approximately 200 battles are fought in southern Namibia from the beginning of the war. The Nama employ guerrilla warfare and take over German supplies, while the German army attacks the various groups led by specific leaders in a concerted effort to end the war. A Labour Code is introduced to confirm the dispossession of Africans' land and cattle. The law is also made applicable to the Nama communities who fought in the war. There is widespread famine and drought in the northern regions of the country. Karakul sheep are imported from Uzbekistan to increase commercial farming productivity in southern Namibia.

1908

A German expedition led by Friedrich von Erckert attacks Simon Kooper and his community in present day Botswana. Kooper escapes while Von Erckert is killed at Seatsub. August Franke obtained declarations of obedience from Ondongo, Oukwanyama, Uukwambi, Uukwaluudhi and Ongandjera Kings. Diamonds are discovered by railway worker Zacharias Lewala near LÁ¼deritz in southern Namibia. A diamond mine is opened at LÁ¼deritz and these areas are declared prohibited zones. In the following years the diamond industry forms two-thirds of the country's income. Profits are made by DKGSWA, Deutsche Diamanten Gesellschaft and a consortium of German banks. Construction of a railway line by Deutsche Kolonial Eisenbahn Bau und Betriebs Gesellschaft commences from Seeheim to Karasburg. The railway line in compliance with the Cape gauge standard is opened between LÁ¼deritz and Keetmanshoop via Seeheim.

1909

Germans led by Captain Kurt Streitwolf established direct rule in Caprivi at Schuckmannsburg, which becomes the administrative capital in modern day Zambia. The missionaries estimate that there are 3000 Mbukushu in the region, while Streitwolf counts 300 Kxoe, 1500 Yey, 2500 Fwe and 5000 Subiya. Municipal self-government is introduced to the settlers which is followed up by a Landesrat (Territorial Council), a body that rules over policy and administrative issues headed by the colonial governor. Regional and Local Councils are set up as well.

1910

There is widespread famine and drought, 'ondjala yawekomba', in the northern regions of the country which results in large scale starvation and high mortality rates.

9000 Owambo migrants left to work in the Police Zone, central and southern regions of the country, annually until 1914. Most of the workers laboured in the mines at Tsumeb and LÁ¼deritz, and also on settler farms. Native reserves and game parks are established in the Police Zone.

1911

Mandume ya Ndemufayo becomes King of the Oukwanyama and centralises the power of the kingdom. 11 Administrative districts (Bezirke) were set up and the Landesrat voted that inhabitants of the Police Zone would not work in the mines making their labour available to settler farmers.

1914

Outbreak of the First World War and the German fort of Schuckmannsburg in Caprivi is occupied by the South African Police.

The South African Parliament makes a decision to invade the country which is then known as South West Africa (SWA) on 9 September. Between September and December the South African forces invaded SWA. Some Germans enter South Africa at the end of November and destroy the Steinkopf to Port Nolloth railway line.

1915 South African Occupation

South African forces invade Namibia and occupy the country as part of the Allied effort against Germany in WWI. A force of 8,000 troops takes control of the capital, Windhoek, on 12 May 1915. The Germans surrender to the South African military on 9 July 1915 at Khorab, near Tsumeb in the north of the country. South African Sir Howard Gorges runs the country under martial law. South Africa administers SWA through military rule until January 1921. In August Mandume Ya Ndemufayo, the last king of the Kwanyama of Ovamboland, is attacked by the Portuguese. Ondjiva in southern Angola is burned down and abandoned and Mandume retreats south beyond the South West African border.

1917

5 February 1917

With the new colonisers keen to establish control over Namibia, Mandume is killed in a joint Portuguese-South African attack for resisting South African sovereignty. Mandume's head is severed and brought to Windhoek to be put on display. More than 100 of Mandume's people are killed in the attack. A period of martial law is instituted by the South African administration. The administration relaxes the ban on livestock, and communities attempt to recover resource losses such as land and livestock.

1918

19 January 1918

The Blue Book on Namibia is published by the South African administration. The book accuses the Germans of having abrogated the rights of indigenous Namibians, and presents the South Africans as committed to human rights. The influenza epidemic severely affects the central and southern parts of the country, resulting in high mortality rates. The epidemic hits the northern region in the following year. Peace is established in the country after an armistice ending WWI on 11 November.

1919

Allied powers hold the Peace Conference in Paris and under the Treaty of Versailles the League of Nations is formed to prevent global conflicts on 7 May 1919. The league also determines the fate of the German colonies, and South Africa officially becomes a mandatory power over SWA on 28 June 1919, under the treaty. South Africa is mandated to administer SWA from 1 January 1921. SWA is established as a 'C' mandate under the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, and administered as part of South Africa. At the end of the year South African law in the Cape is instituted in the country instead of German law.

1920

17 December 1920

Jan Smuts and Louis Botha of South Africa sign an agreement to administer South-West Africa under the terms of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The agreement specifies: 'The Mandate shall promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being, and the social progress of the inhabitants of the Territory
 "the Mandatory shall see that the slave trade is prohibited, and that no forced labour is permitted except for essential public works and services, and then only for adequate remuneration.' The Native Labour Commission, also known as the Native Reserve Commission, is set up to curtail the mobility of black people and maintain labour with the implementation of laws such as The Vagrancy Proclamation 25 of 1920 and the Masters and Servants Proclamation 34 of 1920. The movement and labour of people is inextricably linked to the expropriation of large tracts of land and allocation of land to Africans which is generally poor and overpopulated. The Commission also establishes racial segregation, and attempts to destabilise traditional leadership with a programme of ethnic reorganisation. San communities are particularly affected by vagrancy laws and the San are often imprisoned or forced to work on farms and even executed. South Africa hopes to settle the question of poor whites in SA by relocation and land allocation in SWA. White settlers from South Africa and Angola are heavily subsidised and infrastructure such as dams and waterholes are developed to encourage white settlement in the country. A drought and economic recession hit the country.

1921

1 January 1921

South African-imposed martial law comes to an end, and SA officially takes over administration of SWA. Despite the terms of the mandate, Smuts and Botha in fact administer the country as the fifth province of South Africa, applying the laws of SA to SWA. With 1,138 farms in the possession of white farmers at the time of the transfer, the number of these begin to climb as more land is transferred to white farmers. The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), originally founded by Marcus Garvey (1887-1940), sets up its first branch in the Namibia, in Luderitz, before establishing branches in Windhoek, Usakos, Karibib, Okahandja and other urban centres. From the start, UNIA makes clear its stance against South African rule.

1922

The Native Reserves Commission, established to make recommendations on setting up native reserves, as practised in South Africa, sets aside less than 10 percent of the land for the indigenous inhabitants of Namibia – 5-million of 57-million hectares for 90 percent of the population. The commission also establishes pass laws for African men. Proclamation 33 of 1922 establishes a curfew for African men in urban areas. Reserve dwellers are expected to pay taxes such as grazing fees and dog taxes. The Bondelswart community, increasingly forced to labour on the railways and for farmers, break out in rebellion. Other grievances include land expropriation, non-recognition of their traditional leadership, regulations on cattle breeding and the dog tax system. On 29 May South Africa's air force launches a bombing campaign against the community in Guruchas, killing more than 100 men, women and children, and wounding a further 500. Their leader, Abraham Morris, is also killed.

1923

The proclamation of reserves sets aside even less than that recommended by the Native Reserves Commission – about 2-million hectares. Blacks are moved out of the central and southern regions and forced to settle in arid regions that could not sustain farming and pastoral activity. A pan-Herero association, called Otjiserandu (red band), is formed after a call for the renewal of Herero traditions and culture, and many Hereros return from Botswana. The body of Chief Samuel Maharero is brought back from Botswana and buried in a family grave in Okahandja on 26 August 1923. The ceremony is attended by a large number of people, including representatives of the South African administration. The date was to become a day of commemoration, in which Damara and Nama people also began to take part. The Rehoboth community maintain land allocated to them during the German period. However as part of the reserves policy the South African administration seeks to remove squatters, mainly black pastoralists, from the Rehoboth district. The administration attempts to institute the 'Baster Agreement' to control land, livestock and administration. When the Rehoboth community resists the administration intimidates the community with aircraft, confiscates firearms and arrests resistors.

1924

The South African administrator notes that several unions are at work in the Luderitz area, among them the Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Cape-based International and Commercial Workers' Union. The Police Zone's northern border, also known as the Red Line, is demarcated as a veterinary border

1925

Two contract recruiting agencies are formed: the Southern Recruiting Organisation, to find workers for diamond mines, and the Northern Labour Organisation, to recruit workers for the Tsumeb copper mines. The two organisations combine in 1943 to form the South West Africa Native Labour Association (SWANLA).

25 April

The South African administration cracks down on the Rehoboth community, arresting many for resisting incorporation into the new regime.

1928

Countrywide drought and depression set in. The administration systematically coerces men from the northern regions to take up contractual work in the Police Zone. Ovamboland is declared a reserve and taxes are imposed on dwellers.

1932

Ipumbu, the Ukuambi chief, is banished to a remote part of the country after the Ukuambo are bombed for refusing to recognise the authority of the administration.

1933

Drought ends as rainfall increases. The farming sector and karakul farming reap the benefits, especially on white-owned land. In the reserves, economic gains are restricted by grazing fees and inadequate resources. The administration attempts to influence communities by deposing and

appointing traditional leaders in the northern and southern regions. There are also increasing restrictions on mobility of persons, especially women in urban areas.

1935

After protests about the lack of educational facilities for the Herero, the SA regime establishes a school in Aminus Reserve, with a capacity for 100 pupils. Until 1940 it would be one of only two schools established by the regime.

1939

The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association recruits many workers from the northern regions who travel through Botswana to work mostly in the mines in South Africa.

1943

The Southern Recruiting Organisation and the Northern Labour Organisation combine to form the South West Africa Native Labour Association (SWANLA).

1945-46 - SA attempt to Incorporate Namibia

At the end of WWII, the League of Nations is dissolved, to be replaced by the United Nations Organisation. The government refuses to recognise the jurisdiction of the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations which has replaced the League of Nations. The South African regime uses the opportunity to bring Namibia into the Union of South Africa. From December 1945 to April 1946 SA leaders, including Jan Smuts, 'consult' with Namibian leaders, trying to persuade them to accept South African rule.

The South Africans present figures to the UN to sway the body, saying the whites are in favour of incorporation, as are 208,850 blacks. It said 33,520 blacks were opposed to the move and 56,870 had not been consulted. Several traditional leaders oppose the procedure and results of the referendum. Hosea Kutako of the Herero Chief's Council challenges results in the central regions while traditional leaders in some reserves in the southern parts of the country also question the figures.

Frederick Maharero in Botswana requests Anglican Reverend Michael Scott to collect information for a petition to the UN from traditional leaders in Namibia. On 26 August one of the first petitions is sent to the UN from Hosea Kutako, Festus Kandjou and David Witbooi on behalf of their communities against the annexation of the country to South Africa and to demand that the country is placed under the Trusteeship Council of the UN.

14 December 1946

In a vote, the UN General Assembly rejects the South African attempt to incorporate SWA, with 37 against, none for, and 9 abstentions. Anti-colonial resistance mounts in the south of the country, seeing the breakaway of churches from the Rhenish Mission to form an Independent church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME). The breakaway movement opposes the handing over of the Rhenish missions to the South African Dutch Reformed Church (NGK). Church leaders in the southern regions, such as Markus Witbooi and Petrus Jod, also call for educational opportunities often circumscribed by mission education.

1947

The African Methodist Episcopal church launches a branch in Namibia. It soon draws thousands of adherents, many with links to the political movements.

1948

The National Party comes to power in South Africa on a ticket to enforce apartheid. The party rules until 1994, instituting its policy not only in SA but in SWA as well.

Nama leaders of the AME church ask authorities for permission to build independent schools, but are refused. They nevertheless establish a string of schools in southern Namibia. The year also marks the passing of the first black matriculant in the country.

1949

The South African government refuses to send required annual reports on the administration of SWA to the United Nations.

1952

With the ANC's Defiance Campaign under way in South Africa, Namibian students form the South West African Student Body to represent Namibian students in SA.

1955

The Oruano church is established, drawing many away from the Lutheran church and many Herero members from AME. The formation of the church comes as a rejection of Lutheran Church leader Dr HH Vedder, who is appointed to the Senate in SA, where he delivers speeches in support of apartheid. Inequalities in the ranks of the Lutheran Church also raise discontent among black church members.

The Church is also established to create an independent authority from the European Rhenish Mission, and to develop opportunities for higher education.

1956

The Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-Kavango church is founded.

1957

The Evangelical Lutheran church is founded.

1958

The Ovamboland People's Congress (OPC) is launched by a group of Namibians in the Cape, led by Andimba Toivo ya Toivo, Peter Mueshihange, Solomon Mifima, Andreas Shipanga, Jackson Kashikuka, Jacob Kuhangua and Maxton Joseph Mutongolume. Formed to improve the conditions of its members, the organisation has close links to the African National Congress of South Africa.

1959

24 September 1959

The United Nations receives a petition from Andimba Toivo ya Toivo, informing the body of the oppressive conditions blacks are being subjected to. He writes to the Pope, and to Queen Elizabeth II, saying:

'We wish to inform Your Majesty's Government that the Government of South Africa has failed to comply with the provisions embodied in the mandate agreement and also to carry out the international obligations entrusted to her by the League of Nations and Your Majesty's Government. We the people of Ovamboland and the rest of our fellow men in the territory of South West Africa' hereby appeal to Your Majesty's Government of Great Britain in whose behalf our mandated territory is being administered by the South African Government to revoke the mandate forthwith and to place it under the United Nations Trusteeship System.' But Toivo's letter is returned and he is told to forward it through the Queen's representative, the Governor-General of South Africa. Toivo is then deported from Cape Town and sent to Namibia. Namibian students returning from SA form the South West Africa Progressive Association (SWAPA), with Uatja W Kauketu as president. The organisation appeals to the youth and intelligentsia, and some members establish the first black newspaper, the *South West News*. The South West Africa Union (SWANU) is formed on 27 September by members of the Herero Chief's Council. The executive members are Zedekia Ngavirue, Clement Kapuuu, Erwin Tjirimuje, John Garvey Muundjua and Rev Bartholomew Karuaera. Ovamboland People's Organisation (OPO), an offshoot from the OPC, is established in Windhoek by Samuel Daniel Shafiishuna Nujoma, Louis Nelengani, Lucas Nepela and Jacob Kuhangua. These organisations seek to improve the living conditions and wages of contract labourers but also broaden their aims to the right of self-determination and independence from South Africa. Chief Kutako continues his campaign against South African rule at the UN by organising petitions and compiling information to support the cause. He leads the Chief's Council and draws other chiefs into the body, including Nama Chief Samuel Witbooi and leaders of the Damara, Herero and Ovambo communities. Other leading activists of the period include Mburumba Kerina and Zedekia Ngavirue, members of SWASB, Jariretundu Kozonguizi, a member of the defunct SWASB and the Herero Chief's Council, also a student at Fort Hare University in SA, is particularly active in forging links between various nationalist activists. He travels with ya Toivo to Namibia and begins to mobilise support for a national congress that would unite congresses from Namaland, Damaraland and Ovamboland. The Good Offices Committee, under the chairmanship of Sir Charles Arden Clarke, former Governor of Ghana, suggests that Namibia be divided into southern and northern sectors, with the fertile and mineral-rich south to be incorporated into South Africa.

1958-59: Forced Removals

A group of 400 Damaras are removed from the fertile Aukiegas farming area to the barren Okombahe reserve, with thousands of their cattle dying in the process. The Nama community at Hoachanas are threatened with removal, but they refuse to move to the desolate land allocated to them in Tses. After a campaign of resistance they are forced to move to Tses in 1959. But appeals to the UN force the South African authority to halt its removals. People from Windhoek are forced to move to the new township of Katatura ('We have no dwelling place'). While the Old Location, from which they were being ejected, had poor facilities, the people had been living there for generations, and some had freehold rights. The new township is 5km from Windhoek, thus travel would become an expenses, and the people were to be divided according to ethnic group. Coloureds are moved to a separate area, Khomasdal, with better housing than that provided for the other groups. The move results in protests in which 11 are eventually killed, and leads to the beginning of the war of liberation. The

various movements – OPO, SWANU, the Herero Chief’s Council, among others – join to oppose the removals.

4 December

Hundreds of women march to the municipal administration buildings in protest, and the next day many people gather to boycott municipal services.

10 December

After picketing protesters are arrested, a large crowd gathers to protest against the arrests. Police reinforcements arrive and fire on the crowd, killing 11 people and wounding more than 50. Two more people die the next day. Anna Kakurukaze Mungunda sets fire to the car of the Old Location’s white superintendent, and is shot dead. The UN Committee on SWA raises the issue of the shootings at the UN, and the body calls on the South African regime to ‘stop the deplorable use of force’. In response, the regime orders the leaders of OPO and SWANU out of Windhoek, and arrests 14 people on charges of public violence. The homes of political leaders are raided, and many go into exile in Dar es Salaam, among them Sam Nujoma.

1959

19 April

The OPO establishes itself in Windhoek, with Sam Nujoma as president. The organisation initially focuses on the conditions of contract workers on farms and mines.

Kozonguizi is sent to New York to continue and support the work of Rev Michael Scott at the United Nations.

August

The South West Africa National Union (SWANU) is launched, with most leadership positions taken by SWAPA activists. A meeting to broaden the leadership is held in September, and Kozonguizi is elected as president in his absence. The union is conceived as a broad-based umbrella organisation to forge a single national body. But tensions develop between SWANU and the Chiefs Council. The Herero Chief’s Council establishes a constitutional committee, chaired by Ngavirue, to discuss the formation of a national political organisation. They intend to ‘graft the modern machinery of a mass political organisation upon the traditional system of authority’, but SWAPA activists urge the creation of a modern movement with ‘new symbols, transcending traditional loyalties’.

1960

Tensions within the Herero community boil over when a decision is made to find a successor to Chief Kutako, who is 90 years old. Clemens Kapuuo, the choice of the Chief, is elected despite the reservations of some SWANU members. The dispute leads to the withdrawal of some members of the Chief’s Council from SWANU. Kutako calls for Kozonguizi to resign and for all Hereros to withdraw from SWANU. Kerina urges Nujoma to transform the Ovamboland People’s Organisation into a SWA National Congress to represent national interests. From New York, he corresponds with Kapuuo, Nujoma and Ja Toiva arguing for a national body. There is much confusion regarding the relation between the OPO and SWANU, considered by some as rivals.

April

Chief Kutako withdraws support for SWANU.

June

OPO relaunches itself as the South West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO), with Nujoma as president, and begins to broaden its membership and appeal.

September

Chief Kutako, Chief Samuel Witbooi and SWAPO jointly petition the UN against South African rule. The UN General Assembly considers the case of Namibia, and Liberia and Ethiopia announce that they have instituted proceedings against SA at the International Court of Justice. Ultimately they fail to show that SA is violating the terms of the mandate.

1962

May

A UN mission arrives in SWA, stoking hopes of independence, with many Namibians believing that independence will be achieved by 1963. The mission is undertaken to secure the withdrawal of South African military personnel, the repeal of discriminatory laws, the freeing of political prisoners and the holding of elections under the supervision of the UN. But the SA regime insists on releasing a joint statement. When the head of the mission falls ill, the statement is released without his approval. Doubt is cast on the UN’s ability to move the situation forward.

June

Kozonguizi and Nujoma sign an agreement at a conference in Accra, Ghana, committing their two organisations, SWANU and SWAPO respectively, to co-operate. The two organisations continue to be rivals, although SWANU appeals to a more elite and educated class, and mainly to Hereros, while SWAPO increasingly draws supporters from groups across the country, including Hereros after it establishes better relations with the Herero Chief's Council. The first group of SWAPO fighters undergo military training.

1963

May

The Organisation of African Unity is established, and gives recognition to both SWANU and SWAPO.

October

SWANU and SWAPO leaders form a united front, the SWA National Liberation Front (SWANLIF). The front includes other groups, such as the Volks-Organisasie van Suidwes-Afrika, the Association of Rehoboth and the SWA United National Independence Organisation, but the Herero Chief's Council does not join. The front eventually proves to be largely unsuccessful. The Caprivi African National Union (CANU) is established as an independence movement for the Caprivi Strip.

1964

November

CANU and SWAPO merge, with CANU leaders drawn into the SWAPO leadership. The CANU leaders are, however, dissatisfied with the terms of the merger, seeing themselves as autonomous while in effect they are absorbed into SWAPO. These tensions continue until 1980 when Muyongo is expelled. The Herero Chief's Council forms its own political party, the National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO), with Chiefs Hosea Kutako, Clemens Kapuu and Mburumba Kerina as leaders.

1965

May

SWANU holds a conference in Sweden and elects an External Council, with Jariretundu Kozonguizi as president. But before a planned trip to SWA he comes into conflict with other leaders and resigns from both SWANU and the External Council.

August

SWAPO sets up its first military base, in Omgulumbashe in Ovamboland.

1966

March

Nujoma and Lucas Phamba fly to SWA to test the regime's contention that exiled leaders are free to return to the country. But on landing they are detained and the next day forced to fly to Zambia.

May

SWAPO fighters are arrested by the South African army.

18 July

The International Court of Justice hands down its verdict on the case brought against SA by Ethiopia and Liberia, ruling against the right of the two countries to bring the case to the court. With a stalemate among the judges, the Australian Judge-President of the court, Sir Percy Spender, rules in favour of SA.

26 August

Launch of the Armed Struggle

Swapo's military wing begins its first guerrilla operation when it engages with South African forces in Omgulumbashe.

6 September

SA Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd is assassinated.

28 September

The houses of two South African officials – situated on the Namibia-Angola border – are burned down by SWAPO fighters.

27 October

The UN terminates SA's mandate over Namibia and resolves to bring the country under the administration of the UN.

1967

April

Hitjevi Veii, acting president of SWANU, is arrested at a meeting to resist forced removals. He is tried and in May sentenced to five years on Robben Island.

18 May

SWAPO military commander Tobias Hianyeko, returning from a mission in the Caprivi region, is killed by South African forces. He is replaced by his deputy, Leonard Phillemon, who many among younger SWAPO members suspect is a spy for SA.

June

SA introduces the Terrorism Act, which covers acts retrospectively from 1962.

June

Treason Trial

SWAPO leaders and fighters – among them Andimba Toiva Ja Toiva (regional secretary for Ovamboland), John Ya Otto (acting secretary general), Nathanile Mahuilili (acting president) and Jason Mutumbulua (secretary for external relations) – go on trial charged under the Terrorism Act. Arrested after the launch of the military struggle, they are severely tortured, and the regime tries to turn Ja Toiva and Mutumbulua into state witnesses, but it fails. However, it does succeed in turning SWAPO vice president Louis Nelengani into a state witness – he succumbs after being severely tortured. The defence argues that South Africa has no jurisdiction over SWA, and cannot apply its Terrorism Act to Namibians. But many of the leaders, including Ja Toiva, announce that they have taken part in the struggle against SA as they do not recognise the regime. Twenty of the detainees are sentenced to life imprisonment: while nine are given 20-year sentences, those remaining receive lesser sentences. Most of them, including Ja Toiva, serve their sentences on Robben Island.

1968

Military commander Leonard Phillemon is detained by SWAPO after a number of military missions go wrong. He is suspected of being a spy for the South Africans, and is replaced by Dimo Amambo as military commander.

1971

June – The ICJ delivers its verdict, announcing that the South African presence in SWA is illegal, and that the administration is obliged to withdraw from the country.

1971/2

13,000 workers go on strike.

24 April 1974

The National Party of South West Africa (NPSWA) wins all 18 seats to the Legislative National Assembly.

1975

Swapo establishes bases in Angola after the country gains independence from Portugal.

September 1975

The Turnhalle Conference is held, a meeting between the South African government, representatives of the whites-only legislative assembly, and leaders of the 10 homelands. SWAPO is excluded from the gathering.

1977

The South African government announces a plan for Namibian independence, but under white minority rule. SWAPO drafts its own constitution requiring a unitary state and elected parliament through universal suffrage.

March 1977

The draft constitution agreed at the Turnhalle Conference recommends a pre-independence interim government and 11 administrative districts based on 10 ethnic homelands, with the rest occupied by white settlers. Supposed independence is set for 31 December 1978. The report is rejected by the UN and SWAPO.

September 1977

South Africa ends Namibia's right to participate in the South African parliament and appoints an Administrator-General to the territory.

1978

The UN passes Security Council Resolution 435 for settling the Namibian problem.

April 1978

The UN Contact Group for Namibia announces its proposal for a UN mediated election and the supervised withdrawal of South African troops from the territory. SWAPO and the South Africa government make assurances to follow the plan. However, South Africa fails to follow up on any of the proposals. The United Nations formalises its proposal in Resolution 435 in September 1978. The *settlement proposal*, as it became known, is worked out after lengthy consultations with South Africa, the frontline states, 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.

4-8 December 1978

The South African-organised election in Namibia is boycotted by supporters of SWAPO. SWAPO protestors and leading activists are arrested. In the election, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) gains 82.18% of the vote and 41 out of 50 seats in the Constituent Legislative Assembly. Action Front for the Retention of Turnhalle Principles (ACTUR) gains 11.87% and six seats. The remaining three parties, Namibia Christian Democratic Party (NCDP), Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP), and Rehoboth Liberation Front (RLF) each gain one seat. SWAPO, South West Africa People's Organization-Democrats (SWAPO-D, representing Ovamboland), and Namibia National Front (NNF) are excluded from partaking in the election. The DTA is a coalition of conservative parties, each based on ethnic groups (and representing the homelands). Dirk Frederik Mudge becomes the Chairman of the Ministerial Council (effectively the executive leader of the territory).

1981

The United States proposes a 'linkage' between the withdrawal of troops from Namibia to the similar withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. The proposal is rejected by the United Nations.

January 1981

A Ceasefire Conference is held in Geneva, Switzerland, between members of SWAPO, the South African government, the DTA and other minority Namibian political groups. The United Nations Contact Group and representatives of neighboring African states are present as observers. No agreement is reached.

1982

The Ovamboland representatives within the DTA withdraw their support for the administration.

July 1982

The South African government and SWAPO agree on constitutional guidelines for a post-independence constitution, to be ratified by a two-thirds majority of the Constituent Assembly.

1983

January 1983

Dirk Frederik Mudge resigns as Chairman of the Ministerial Council, and the council is dissolved. Administration returns to South Africa after the Constituent Assembly is dismissed by the Administrator-General Willie van Niekerk.

November 1983

A Multi-Party Conference (MPC) to prepare for independence is held involving the DTA, SWAPO-D, SWANU, South West Africa National Party (SWANP), Rehoboth Liberation Front (RLF), and the Damara Council. SWAPO boycotts the conference.

December 1983

France resigns from the United Nations Contact Group over the US's continued demand for 'linkage' to Cuban troop withdrawal in Angola.

1984

February 1984

A Ceasefire agreement is signed in Lusaka, Zambia between the South African government and SWAPO. The meeting is mediated by the US, which continues to push for 'linkage'.

March 1984

Several SWAPO activists (among them Herman Animba Toivo ja Toivo) are released from prison by South Africa in an attempt to get SWAPO to participate in the Multi-Party Conference (MPC) on independence.

May 1984

Another cease-fire conference is held in Lusaka, this time chaired by President Kenneth Kuunda. SWAPO refuses to attend unless UN Resolution 435 (proposed in September 1978) is implemented.

14 August 1984

Herman Animba Toivo ja Toivo is appointed as Secretary-General of SWAPO by its Central Committee.

October 1984

The Multi-Party Conference (MPC) announces that all parties must make representations by the end of 1984, or be considered non-participants in the independence negotiations.

November 1984

President José Eduardo dos Santos of Angola agrees to a withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.

1985

April 1985

Following the agreed withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, South Africa announces that all of its troops have been removed from Namibia (the Namibian defence force remains, however). This proves to be a very temporary withdrawal of South African forces.

June 1985

South Africa imposes a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU) on Namibia with an appointed National Assembly.

1 July 1985

Louis Pienaar becomes South Africa's Administrator-General for Namibia.

1988**January 1988**

Angola and Cuba agree to the US's demands that the withdrawal of Cuban troops is linked to the withdrawal of South African forces from Namibia and that UN Resolution 435 be implemented.

March 1988

South Africa rejects the proposed withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola as insufficient, but agrees to a Tripartite Conference with Angolan and Cuban representatives, to be mediated by the US.

May 1988

Tripartite negotiations begin in London. South Africa agrees to implement UN Resolution 435 if a timetable for Cuban withdrawal from Angola is agreed.

July 1988

The London Conference produces a 14-part list of essential principles for peace between Angola and South Africa and independence for Namibia.

1 November 1988

Implementation date for UN Resolution 435. South Africa, effectively defeated by Angolan-based SWAPO fighters, agrees to grant Namibia independence in 1990. A formal treaty is signed on 22 December. Cuban troops are to be withdrawn from Angola by July 1991.

1989**February 1989**

Members of the UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) begin to arrive in Namibia to oversee the transition to independence.

March 1989

UNTAG is dissolved and the responsibility for maintaining the transition to independence is taken over by a Joint Commission involving Martti Ahtisaari, Special Representative for the UN Secretary-General, and Louis Pienaar is now South Africa's Administrator-General for Namibia.

April 1989

Forces of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN, the armed wing of SWAPO) move into southern Namibia as South African and South West African Territorial Force (SWATF) soldiers are confined to barracks as part of the implementation of UN Resolution 435. Martti Ahtisaari, the Special Representative for the United Nations Secretary-General, fears that UN forces, numbering around 4,650, will not be sufficient to maintain control in the region. Ahtisaari allows a limited mobilisation of South African troops and in an ensuing conflict 300 PLAN soldiers are killed. SWAPO then claims that PLAN troops were merely massing to surrender to UNTAG.

9 April 1989

Sam Nujoma, the president of SWAPO, orders PLAN forces to withdraw to Angola in agreement with the Joint Commission's plan for independence.

May 1989

A cease-fire is declared by the Joint Commission.

June 1989

Exiles and refugees are given amnesty by the Joint Commission which also repeals a significant amount of discriminatory legislation. Among the refugees and exiles returning to Namibia are Sam Nujoma and Herman Animba Toivo ja Toivo.

7-11 November 1989

UN-supervised elections are held for the Constituent Assembly. SWAPO gains 57.33% of the vote and 41 seats out of 72 in the Assembly. The DTA gains 28.55% and 21 seats, the United Democratic Front (UDF) four seats, and the Action Christian National (ACN) 3 seats. Three more parties, the National Patriotic Front (NPF), Federal Convention of Namibia (FCN), and the Namibia National Front (NNF) each take one seat.

1990

February 1990

The Constituent Assembly adopts a new constitution, which provides for the election of an executive president (maximum two terms) and a National Assembly. The new National Assembly elects Sam Nujoma as the first president.

21 March 1990

Namibia gains independence from South Africa. Sam Nujoma, leader of SWAPO, is the country's first president.

19-20 May 1990

Angola and Namibia form a joint commission for border security.

1991**November 1991**

The DTA is recast as a single party with Dirk Frederik Mudge as Chairman.

1993

A second chamber for the legislature is established, the National Council, formed by two representatives from each regional council.

1994

South Africa holds its first democratic election, with victory going to the ANC. Nelson Mandela becomes president of South Africa. The South African enclave of Walvis Bay is handed over to Namibia.

7-8 December 1994

Sam Nujoma wins 78.3% of the presidential election for SWAPO against Mishake Muyongo's 23.7% for the DTA. Nujoma begins his second term in office officially on 21 March 1995. SWAPO takes 53 of the 72 seats in the National Assembly, the DTA is the official opposition with 15 seats.

1998

Thousands of people are reported to be fleeing the Caprivi Strip for sanctuary in Botswana. They claim persecution by Namibian government forces.

August 1998

Troops from Namibia (and Angola and Zimbabwe) are sent to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to fight in the civil war (in support of President Laurent-Désiré Kabila).

15 October 1998

The Legislature approves constitutional change which allows Sam Nujoma to stand for a third term in office. Ben Ulenga leaves Swapo and forms the Congress of Democrats. Once the Namibian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and a leading member of SWAPO, Ulenga forms the new party in protest against Sam Nujoma's decision to seek a third term in office.

1999**April 1999**

A Mutual defence agreement is signed between Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe and the Kabila's DRC.

2 August 1999

A one-month State of Emergency is declared in the Caprivi Strip after a rebellion by the Caprivi Liberation Army.

30 November - 1 December 1999

Sam Nujoma wins 76.8% of the presidential election for SWAPO against Ben Ulenga with 10.5% for the Congress of Democrats (COD), Katuutire Kaura with 9.8% for the DTA, and Justus Garoëb with 2.9% for the United Democratic Front (UDF). Nujoma begins his third term as president. SWAPO takes 55 of the 72 seats in the National Assembly, the DTA and the United Democratic Front (UDF) both take 7 seats.

December 1999

Botswana wins a World Court case over the ownership of the island of Sedudu in the Chobe River – known by Namibians as Kasikili Island.

2001

Discovery of a diamond-rich area offshore entices international mining companies to Namibia.

March 2001

Troops are dispatched to the Caprivi Strip after the resurgence of violence triggered by the Caprivi Liberation Army.

August 2001

125 rebels from the Caprivi Liberation Army are accused of a massacre at Katimo Muliro in August and held for trial.

September 2001

After the rebellion in the Caprivi Strip, the Namibian government censors all reporting of military activity in the country.

Early November 2001

President Sam Nujoma announces that he will not stand for a fourth term in office. He backs Hifikepunye Pohamba as his successor.

2000

August 2002

Prime Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab and President Sam Nujoma announce a plan for land reform, which, they insist, must be accepted by white farmers.

2003

November 2003

Black farm workers call off a planned mass invasion of 15 white-owned farms after agreement is reached with a white farmers' organisation. The Prime Minister announces that farm invasions are illegal.

2004

May 2004

A new road bridge across the Zambezi is completed to promote trade between Zambia and Namibia.

15-16 November 2004

SWAPO's Hifikepunye Pohamba wins 76.4% of the vote in the presidential election against Ben Ulenga with 7.3% for the Congress of Democrats (COD) and Katuutire Kaura with 5.1% for the DTA. Pohamba replaces Nujoma as president. SWAPO takes 55 of the 72 seats in the National Assembly, the United Democratic Front (UDF) takes five seats and the DTA four seats.

2005

September 2005

The expropriation of white-owned farms begins in Namibia.

November 2005

Two mass graves are unearthed next to a former South African military base. It is suspected that they are the result of atrocities by South African forces during the Apartheid era.

2007

July 2007

In growing unrest against SWAPO rule, rights groups ask the International Criminal Court to investigate ex-President Sam Nujoma's role in the death of thousands of Namibians during the struggle for independence.

August 2007

Ten rebels are tried for treason after leading a secessionist attempt in the Caprivi Strip.

2009

27-28 November 2009

Hifikepunye Pohamba wins 76.4% of the presidential election vote against Hidipo Hamutenya with 11.1% for the Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP) and Katuutire Kaura with 3.0% for the DTA. Pohamba begins his second term in office. SWAPO takes 54 of the 72 seats in the National Assembly. The Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP) becomes the main opposition with 8 seats.

2011

February 2011

After a lengthy court battle brought by opposition groups, the Namibian High Court announces that no irregularities took place in the November 2009 elections.

July 2011

The Namibian government announces the discovery of significant offshore oil reserves.