



THE **USSR** and **SWAPO**:

SECRET MISSION IN ANGOLA (1977-1990)



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“The friendship between our two countries spans more than five decades. During the Namibian struggle for freedom and the fight against colonialism, the Soviet Union was one of the first countries to assist us in our noble mission. We have never forgotten and never will forget the importance of the assistance that we received and continue to receive.”

*Sam Nujoma,
President of Namibia, 2005*

“We see Namibia as a very promising and friendly state. We have been developing our relations for 20 years since Namibia obtained independence, and we established diplomatic ties.”

*Dmitri Medvedev,
President of Russia, 2010*

By the beginning of the 1970-s, close links were established between the USSR and the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) as the UN-acknowledged representative of the Namibian people. The USSR supported the Namibian patriots who were fighting for national liberation politically, diplomatically, and militarily. In many ways, it is thanks to the Soviet support that SWAPO successfully countered the military power of South Africa for 25 years. In 1987, SWAPO opened its office in Moscow, but close links between the Organization and the USSR had first been established in the 1960-s. The

Soviet Union provided military training to SWAPO cadres on the Soviet territory, and supplied weapons and military equipment to the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), SWAPO's military wing.

A special role in the attainment of SWAPO's goal – the independence of Namibia – was played by Angola. Starting from the late 1970's, Angola hosted SWAPO fighters who were trained with the assistance of Soviet specialists. The lack of success at Cuito-Cuanavale in 1987-88 and the advance of a powerful Cuban force to the Namibian border in south-western Angola made the South-



Trooping the Colour, Namibian refugee camp, Cassinga, Angola

African government agree to negotiations. The negotiations, that ended in New York 22 December 1988, resulted in the signature of a trilateral agreement between South Africa, Angola and Cuba on external aspects of the settlement of the Angolan conflict. This agreement eventually brought peace to the whole south-western Africa. South Africa agreed to withdraw its troops from Namibia, while the Cuban troops left Angola.

The victory of the Angolan and Cuban forces at Cuito-Cuanavale resulted in the liberation of Namibia. On 21 March 1990, SWAPO's leader, Sam Nujoma was elected as the first president of the free Namibian state. The victory in Angola significantly expedited the dismantling of the apartheid regime and the coming to power of the African National Congress (ANC), a party representing the non-white

majority of South Africa's population. In this sense Angola can be called the launching pad for the independence of Namibia and collapse of the infamous system of racial discrimination in South Africa. But this could not have been achievable without the Soviet and Cuban assistance to Angola.

Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first black president, described the Battle of Cuito-Cuanavale as a turning point in his people's struggle against apartheid. The Cuban leader Fidel Castro seconded him, "Next generations must know that the apartheid regime was dismantled at Cuito-Cuanavale and in south-eastern Angola where more than 40 thousand Cuban troops fought shoulder to shoulder with Angolan and Namibian soldiers."

Struggle for Independence. BEGINNING

The story of the struggle of the Namibian people for independence is long and has a checkered past. In 1884, Germany started to colonize inner Namibia (which was then called German South-West Africa) and managed to impose its one-sided protection agreement on the local chiefs. Soon a significant part of

the Union of South Africa as a mandate territory, which in fact meant keeping its status of a colony. In 1946, as a result of the victory of the anti-Nazi coalition headed by the Soviet Union, the USA, and Great Britain, the United Nations Organization was established. The UN rejected South Africa's request to annex



SWAPO PLAN base, early 1980s

the country's territory found itself under the control of Berlin. In 1904, armed uprisings of the African population broke out against the colonizers, and it took two years to suppress them. As a result of German repression about 100 thousand Namibians were killed. In 1914, the Union of South Africa, the historic predecessor of the Republic of South Africa, entered WWI on the side of Great Britain (as its subject territory). The Union's troops invaded South-West Africa and gained control of its territory. In 1920, the League of Nations passed a resolution placing South-West Africa under the control of

South-West Africa. In response, South Africa refused to convert its mandate into United Nations trusteeship. In 1961, the Union of South Africa was transformed into the Republic of South Africa and left the Commonwealth, which was partly explained by the British intolerance for the policy of apartheid proclaimed by the new South African government.

In 1966, the mandate of the Republic of South Africa (as the successor of the Union of South Africa) to administer South-West Africa was rightfully terminated, and South-West Africa was placed under UN trusteeship. In 1971, the



Serra de Leba, Huila province, Angola



PLAN fighters on the Angola-Namibia border (courtesy of John Arthur Liebenberg, South Africa)

International Court of Justice ruled that South Africa's administration was illegal. However, the apartheid government of South Africa refused to accept this ruling and extended its criminal policy of race discrimination to South-West Africa. The occupation of the Namibian territory by South Africa along with the coercive policy of apartheid caused righteous indignation on the part of the local population of the country.

The United Nations Organization in its several resolutions compared the South-African apartheid system with fascism and called on South Africa to stop race discrimination. The government of South Africa disregarded those demands and continued its illegal occupation of Namibia.

First attempts to organize a national protest movement were made by a group of progressive Namibians living in Cape Town: in 1957, the Ovambo People's Congress (OPC) was established. One of its co-founders was Andimba Toivo ya Toivo. In April 1959, the Ovamboland

People's Organization (OPO) was created in Windhoek based on the OPC. Among its co-founders was Sam Nujoma, future president of independent Namibia.

In 1960, at the 15th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization the USSR initiated the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. This event had a decisive influence on the intensification of the struggle of the Namibian people for liberation. 19 April 1960, the OPO was reorganized, and a new liberation movement – the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) – was established with independence of Namibia as its goal. At the constituent conference of SWAPO Sam Nujoma was elected president of the Organization.

In 1962, in the Mungurani refugee camp in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Sam Nujoma announced for the first time SWAPO's intention to launch armed struggle for the liberation of Namibia, rather than confining itself to political



Mastering firearms, SWAPO PLAN training center, Angola

means. An international training center was created in Kongwa (Tanzania) to provide training to freedom fighters from some countries of southern Africa, including Namibia. The first group of Namibians arrived in Kongwa in April 1964. According to different sources, the group comprised between 12 and 15 people. Among them was Tobias Hainyeko who became head of the Kongwa camp and was then promoted to commanding officer of the South-West Africa Liberation Army (SWALA), predecessor of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). Tobias Hainyeko was killed in a skirmish with the SA police in May 1967. Later, the SWAPO training center in Lubango area (Angola) was named after him. The instruction package of SWALA included the basics of guerilla warfare, firearms training and explosives techniques. Different sources claim that in the period of the armed struggle SWAPO lost about 13 thousand PLAN fighters with the total number of casualties including

non-combatants amounting to 20–25 thousand.

In 1974, after the Carnation Revolution in Portugal, when the country's new government declared independence of its former colonies, including Angola, the situation drastically changed for SWAPO. The door was open from Angola directly to Namibia. Loyal to the principles of internationalism, the MPLA government,



PLAN fighter (courtesy of John Arthur Liebenberg, South Africa)

MOVING to Angola

that had come to power in Angola in November 1975, announced support for national liberation movements, including SWAPO (Namibia), the ANC (South Africa), and ZAPU (Zimbabwe), and granted them access to the Angolan territory to set up refugee camps, offices and military training centers. This

were killed during the bombardment. The total number of casualties among Namibians and Angolans exceeded 600. Two hundred people were captured and taken to Namibia by force. In repelling the aggression, SWAPO received significant help from the Cuban troops deployed in Angola – to support SWAPO. The



Soviet military interpreter A. Marchenko (left) with a PLAN fighter, SWAPO 20 Brigade, Andulo, Bié province, Angola

compelling stand of the government of the independent Angola was many times used by South Africa as a pretext for aggression – shelling, air strikes, and even direct military incursions by the SADF.

Such a broad-scale aggression took place 4 May 1978 when the SADF conducted an assault on a Namibian refugee camp in Cassinga. Guarded by a small number of SWAPO troops the camp was heavily bombed by the SAAF and then attacked by South-African paratroopers. According to South African sources, about 200 refugees

Cubans stationed at Techamutete sent an armored column to Cassinga comprising T-34 tanks, BRDMs, and BTRs, as well as several trucks of soldiers. The SWAPO cadres captured in Angola were taken to a concentration camp near Mariental where they were held for about six years.

Being in Angola meant being closer to the Namibian border, which significantly facilitated the inflow of young Namibians eager to join SWAPO and its military wing PLAN. On the other hand, it made it easier for PLAN groups to penetrate the Namibian territory. The latter gave rise to the question of providing combat training



SWAPO unit crossing the Angola-Namibia border, 1978

to PLAN fighters in Angola. The leaders of SWAPO turned to the Soviet Union for help. For the first time, the request to provide military training to Namibians on the territory of Angola and with Angola's consent was addressed at a high level in December 1974, when SWAPO president Sam Nujoma, together with Peter Nanyemba, SWAPO defense minister, and Solomon Hawala, commander of PLAN, visited Moscow. In late December 1976, a group of 16 Soviet military experts headed by colonel Yuri Zaputryaev set off for Luanda. Thus the Tobias Hainyeko Military Training Center was established.

The site for the Center was chosen at a distance of about 20 km from Lubango, the main city of Huila province. Initially, the group comprised several military instructors and 4 interpreters, but soon its headcount was increased to 40–50 personnel. In subsequent years, SWAPO units in Angola were helped by hundreds of Soviet officers and warrant officers.

SWAPO Field Academy

The Tobias Hainyeko Training Center was a kind of 'field military academy' for SWAPO PLAN fighters and commanders. All the SWAPO officials were expected to complete their basic military training there. Among those who did that, were the two younger sons of Sam Nujoma, President of SWAPO. One of them had returned to Angola and been sent to the Tobias Hainyeko Training Center immediately after his graduation from the Moscow State University.



The Crew: military interpreter S. Sidorin with PLAN fighters, SWAPO training center, Jamba, Angola, 1980

The instruction package of the Center included tactics and combat training, artillery drill, reconnaissance training, PT, moral fitness, demolitions expertise, and military topography. The Center served as the basis for the creation of SWAPO's military wing and the future Armed Forces of the independent Namibia. However, at the initial stage, its main purpose was to provide training in guerilla warfare. The cadets were taught how to lay ambushes, conduct raids, and commit acts of sabotage against enemy's assets. The training course was three-month long. Having

completed it, SWAPO fighters were sent to the Angolan-Namibian border to then reach the Namibian interior.

In 1979, two new officers arrived in Lubango from the USSR – Colonel I. Zherlitsyn, Training Center superintendent, and Colonel N. Kurushkin, head of the team of Soviet military advisors to SWAPO and personal advisor to Peter Nanyemba, SWAPO defense minister.

In the same year, a long-term



SAAF Impala aircraft shot down by SWAPO AA forces; Soviet military advisor Colonel A. Skurydin with SWAPO PLAN fighters

objective was tasked to the leaders of the Training Center to get down to the creation of regular military units for the future independent Namibia. It was a difficult task because the guerilla warfare training had to be continued in parallel. The instructions package was adjusted accordingly, and the training course was extended from three to six months. The Namibian cadets of the next training cycle formed two brigades, following the organizational structure of a regular army. At the same time, guerilla training was continued..



President of SWAPO Sam Nujoma addressing personnel of a SWAPO brigade in Angola

BEGINNING OF SWAPO'S Regular Armed Forces

The training program of the Center was focused on two key areas – first, guerilla tactics (ambush, raid, sabotage, etc.), and, second, preparation for the establishment of regular army units (based on the Soviet Army model). However, for the training process to be effective and efficient certain difficulties needed to be overcome, including those related to linguistic barriers. Most of the cadets did not speak English, therefore double interpreting was required. Very often Namibian instructors, who instructed troops during self-tuition hours or when Soviet specialists were not available, had to act as interpreters.

It was also necessary to always bear in mind that the SADF considered the Center as an important target, and continuously attempted airstrikes against

it. At the same time, it was very unlikely that the South Africans might launch an airborne operation, because, in addition to FAPLA, there were Cuban troops deployed in Lubango area. In the early summer of 1979, a decision was made based on the analysis of the then existing situation and the intelligence obtained by the Cuban and Angolan forces to redeploy the PLAN brigades to avoid possible SAAF airstrikes. It proved to be a wise decision – from time to time South African aircraft completed unsuccessful attacks against the old training camp.

In 1979, in Ondangwa, northern Namibia, SWAPO AA forces shot down their first SAAF Impala aircraft. A fragment of the Impala's body was delivered to the Tobias Hainyeko Training Center along with the small-bore rifle left by the ejected



PLAN fighters in a bunker



PLAN maintenance platoon, Lubango, Angola

pilot. To celebrate their first air victory, SWAPO fighters organized a feast with demonstration of the aircraft wreckage and Namibian folk singing and dancing.

The breadth of objectives set to the Soviet instructors of the Tobias Hainyeko Training Center continued to grow. By the middle of the 1980s, the Center was providing training to personnel of four infantry companies, one reconnaissance company, and one engineer company. The Center also trained troops for a battery of 82-mm mortars, a battery of recoilless guns, a battery of 76-mm and 57-mm antitank guns, a battery of “Grad-P”

light portable rocket systems, a battery of ZU-23-2 and ZGU-1 anti-aircraft guns, and a battery of SA-7 GRAIL anti-aircraft missile launchers. Other military specialties included marksmanship, signals, battlefield medicine, and logistical support.

Virtually all the PLAN cadres, from ordinary fighters to top-ranking commanders, completed training in Angola, at the Tobias Hainyeko Training Center. Apart from the Soviet specialists, there were 295 Namibian instructors who trained them in military disciplines such as tactics, operational



reconnaissance, demolitions, moral fitness, weapons practice, wireline and radio communications, etc.

Every troop was required to undergo individual soldiering and unit training. The individual training would normally take about four months, while the unit training would take two months. The four months were spent on infantry weapons practice, demolitions, land navigation, first aid, hand-to-hand combat, and general PT. Artillery, anti-aircraft, sabotage, and communications units performed live mortar or recoilless gun firing exercises, fired “GRAD-P” or anti-aircraft missiles, etc.

SWAPO PLAN always preferred to infiltrate its combat teams into Namibia from Angola by land. However, by the end of 1985, the SADF cut virtually all the ground paths, and it became necessary to include river crossing techniques in the instruction package so that the fighters could cut across the Cunene river with improvised means. For this purpose, an artificial water reservoir was built in the

same year. This work took more than two months, and more than 500 personnel were enlisted to do it. The new facility had several “swimming pools” where Soviet PT instructors taught the troops how to swim. It also enabled practicing mine planting on bridges, piers, and boats, both below and above water. After the six months of individual and unit training, comprehensive tactical exercises with live firing were held at a proving ground and in the area surrounding the Training Center.



From left to right: Soviet military advisor K. Satenov, military interpreter I. Ignatovich, 20 Brigade executive officer Sacha, SWAPO PLAN 20 Brigade, Andulo, Bié province, Angola, 1987



Soviet military advisor A. Alekseenko and military interpreter I. Ignatovich with SWAPO fighters on a route security duty, Serra de Leba area, 1986

Improving COMBAT SKILLS

In the early 1980s, the Soviet Union began delivering heavy equipment to Angola (T-34 tanks, BRDM-2 and BTR-60 APC's) for SWAPO's regular army (PLAN). PLAN's motorized infantry

were deployed along the Namibian border immediately after the break-in period and designation of crews. The perimeter of the training center, most of which was in a gum-tree forest, was protected by



Soviet military advisor Colonel K. Satenov and military interpreter lieutenant I. Ignatovich giving instructions to PLAN fighters, SWAPO 20 Brigade, Andulo, Bié province, 1987

units required special training, and a center was established for this in Jamba. The center was intended to provide training to crews of tanks and APC's, as well as antitank and AA guns. Alas, of about a dozen tanks (T-34's and newer T-50/55's) no more than 5 to 6 were serviceable at any one time, and even those serviceable had never been used in combat – the intention of SWAPO leaders was to use them to demonstrate the military power of PLAN and maybe triumphantly parade into Windhoek someday. All the BRDM and BTR APC's

several ZGU AA guns and dug-in tanks. Tank commanders, drivers, and gunners, as well as BRDM crews, underwent abbreviated training.

Training of artillery crews was a much more difficult task. The gunners were expected to master gun aiming with the use of special tables, but virtually none of them had even basic knowledge of mathematics. Thus the only technique available to them was direct lying fire. Live firing exercises were conducted in the Namib Desert and some other places.



Live firing at the Tobias Hainyeko Training Center. Left to right: S. Nujoma, President of SWAPO, Colonel G. Kireev, small arms specialist, Colonel B. Perebillo, chief of the group of Soviet military advisors to SWAPO, 1985



Live firing of field and AA artillery. Left to right: chief of the group of Soviet military advisors to SWAPO Colonel Vladimir Shaida and military interpreter lieutenant Igor Ignatovich, the Namib Desert, 1986

'The COMBATANT'

In 1980, the year of the 20th anniversary of SWAPO, the publication of 'The Combatant' brochure began. This photocopied brochure, which comprised 20 to 30 pages, was in English and designed for PLAN personnel. It played an important role in the political indoctrination of SWAPO fighters, helped to rally them around their leaders, and eventually contributed to the achievement of Namibia's independence. Regular articles of 'The Combatant' included tactical situation reports, Namibian news, international support for SWAPO, etc. Soviet military interpreters helped to do proofreading, while advisors used those brochures to prepare summaries about the situation in Namibia.

From the very beginning, 'The Combatant' was intended to unite SWAPO fighters and promote the organization's true goal – i.e. the attainment of full independence of Namibia – thus refuting the allegations of the South African authorities who tried to convince the international community that the only

purpose of SWAPO was conducting terrorist attacks.

'The Combatant' proved to be very efficient in countering South African propaganda aimed at Namibian patriots and their supporters. South African mass media used their full power to tarnish the image of SWAPO both in Namibia and internationally, including the UN. In Angola, they were particularly effective. Thus, many PLAN commanders listened to the South African radio and communicated the news to the Soviet military. It is from them that the Soviet advisors came to know about the capturing of the Soviet intelligence officer Alexey Kozlov by the SA counterintelligence service in the end of 1981. The fact that the Soviet Union was supportive of Namibia fighting against South Africa "by other means" on its own territory was regarded very positively by SWAPO leaders.

Soviet advisors to SWAPO, acting under orders from Moscow, tried to use PLAN cadres to get detailed information on the arrest of Alexey Kozlov, but



SWAPO PLAN brigade field day, Tobias Hainyeko Training Center, Angola



President of SWAPO Sam Nujoma reviewing SWAPO troops, Angola, 1987

to no avail. At the same time, PLAN commanders were regularly tasked on behalf of the Soviet leadership to capture white SADF members, preferably officers. It was necessary, because from time to time the SADF and SADF-backed UNITA captured Soviet citizens in Angola, and equally important prisoners were required for swapping. (The best known cases are Kamil Mollaev and Ivan Chernetsky, pilots of a shot-down Angolan Airforce An-26 aircraft who were prisoners of UNITA for two years; and warrant officer Nikolai

Pestretsov, an FAPLA brigade technician who was captured by the SADF during Operation Protea and spent two years in South Africa as a PoW). All of them were eventually exchanged and returned to the Soviet Union as a result of secret negotiations between the KGB and Foreign Ministry of the USSR and representatives of UNITA and the Government of South Africa. One of the South Africans, who returned home in exchange was Johan van der Mescht captured by SWAPO fighters in Namibia in 1978.



SWAPO supporters before elections, Namibia (courtesy of John Arthur Liebenberg, South Africa)

Central MILITARY HOSPITAL of SWAPO

In the late 1970s, on the outskirts of the Angolan city of Lubango a new medical facility – The Central Military Hospital of SWAPO – started receiving casualties. The Hospital was created with the assistance of Soviet specialists

all the necessary medical instruments, medicines, and bandaging materials, and had a diesel generator for uninterrupted power supply.

A team of Soviet army doctors worked in the Central Hospital of SWAPO since



SWAPO PLAN20 Brigade, Andulo, Bié province, Angola, 1987

and medical personnel. Because of the permanent threat of a South African attack, the Hospital was designed as a semi-buried shelter – its units were distributed along ravine slopes, with numerous spurs accommodating wards, doctors' consulting rooms, staff lounges and living rooms, storages, and bunkers. The Hospital was thoroughly camouflaged, well-guarded, and had a sophisticated communication system. There were also classrooms where medical orderlies and nurses were trained. The Hospital had advanced medical equipment, was regularly supplied with

its opening in 1979. The team comprised consultants in multiple disciplines – physicians, surgeons, radiologists, anesthesiologists, emergency physicians, dentists, gynecologists, etc. To overcome the linguistic barrier, the team always had an interpreter at their disposal. Soviet medical specialists were available in the Hospital on a daily basis for scheduled operations, examination, and consultations. In emergency situations they arrived at any time of day or night. Civilian doctors from the Lubango-based Agostinho Neto Hospital would also come to help as needed.



Medical check-up at a Namibian refugee camp, Angola

Soviet army doctors from the Central Hospital performed primary medical check-ups of SWAPO fighters – each of them had a medical record. From time to time, Soviet doctors visited Namibian refugee camps in Angola to provide first aid or other healthcare services to their inhabitants. Patients of the

Central Hospital were PLAN fighters and commanders wounded in combat situations on enemy-controlled territories or on the territory of Angola, in contact the SADF or UNITA. Soviet advisors to SWAPO and their family members were also treated by the Soviet medics from the Central Hospital.



Right from a PLAN underground classroom, Jamba Training Center, Angola, 1987

PARTICIPATION OF SWAPO in Operations against UNITA

Since the early 1980s, PLAN units, on request of the government of the People's Republic of Angola, helped the Angolan Army (FAPLA) and People's Defense Organization (ODP) to fight UNITA. PLAN conducted operations in

UNITA. Besides, they provided assistance to the local population, including food supply and medical aid. PLAN fighters escorted convoys with foodstuffs, weapons, and munitions coming from Huambo. They enabled uninterrupted



Soviet military advisors helping to plan an operation against UNITA, SWAPO PLAN20 Brigade, Andulo, Bié province, Angola, 1987

the very heart of Angola, on the UNITA-controlled territory surrounding the cities of Andulo and Nharea in the north of Bié province, one of the footholds of Jonas Savimbi. At the beginning of 1980, SWAPO's 20 Brigade was deployed in this area to counter UNITA.

The Brigade guarded and defended local communities, infrastructure, and the airfield that could receive single-engine airplanes and helicopters, which were used for supply and evacuation purposes. Units of the Brigade carried out reconnaissance, planned and conducted operations against

operation of the power plant and water pipeline.

Since 1983, teams of Soviet military specialists and interpreters from PLAN's 1 and 2 Brigades, which were deployed in Lubango, stayed in Andulo on a permanent basis. It was with their help and under their guidance that a layered defense system was put in place with shelters and dug-outs, trenches were dug and linked together. For coordination purposes, continuous communication was maintained with the group of Soviet military advisors to the FAPLA in Huambo and the group of military



SWAPO fighters in a village reconquered from the SADF

advisors to SWAPO in Lubango, as well as with the Cubans, local authorities and self-defense forces. Soviet military experts worked in PLAN20 Brigade until November 1987.

After the withdrawal of SWAPO forces from Andulo, the city was taken over by UNITA, and Jonas Savimbi's HQ was established there. In December 1998, after the violation of the Lusaka Accord by UNITA, large-scale combat operations began. In September 1999, the government forces managed to reconquer the city, and one of UNITA's biggest bases in Angola ceased to exist.



SWAPO troops firing "Grad-P" light portable rocket systems in the Namib Desert, Angola

RUSSIAN-NAMIBIAN Relations

It would be fair to say that the relations between Russia and Namibia were established in 1960, when the United Nations General Assembly supported the initiative of the USSR and adopted the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries

Africa was to gradually withdraw troops from Namibia. Free elections were to be held under supervision.

14 September 1989, Sam Nujoma returned to Namibia. 6 November, elections to the Namibian Parliament were held, and SWAPO won 57% of



Dmitry Medvedev meeting Sam Nujoma, the first President of the independent Namibia, 5 February 2010 (courtesy of the Press Office of the President of Russia)

and Peoples. The Declaration gave a powerful impetus to the struggle of the Namibian people for self-determination and liberation – in the same year the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) was created. It was headed by Sam Nujoma who subsequently became the first President of independent Namibia.

In the end of 1988 SWAPO and South Africa agreed to cease fire and elaborated a plan of granting independence to Namibia based on UN Resolution 435 of 1978. According to the plan, all combat operations were to be stopped, and South

the votes and 41 seats of 72. 21 March 1990, on the very first day of Namibia's independence, Sam Nujoma was sworn in as the country's first President.

21 March 1990, on the Independence Declaration Day, diplomatic relations between our countries were established. Since then, Russia and Namibia have been engaged in a very active political dialogue. In 1998, Sam Nujoma paid an official visit to Russia. During that visit, a joint declaration on the principles of relations between the Russian Federation and Namibia was signed, as well as a number of other agreements. In March



Dmitry Medvedev with Sam Nujoma, the first President of the independent Namibia, 25 June 2010 (courtesy of the Press Office of the President of Russia)



After the signature of agreements between Russia and Namibia: Hifikepunye Pohamba and Dmitry Medvedev, 2010



Head of the delegation of the Republic of Namibia presents a gift for the museum – the Namibia coat of arms – to V. Sagachko, Chairman of the Russian Angola Veterans Union. 2016

2007, Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation made an official visit to Windhoek. In the course of his negotiations with President of Namibia H. Pohamba and Prime-Minister N. Angula, special attention was paid to the trade between the two countries.

In 2009, President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev paid an official visit to Namibia by invitation of Hifikepunye Pohamba. During the visit, both parties confirmed their commitment to the development of the bilateral relation, and signed an agreement on the promotion and protection of investments.

In February 2010, the first President of Namibia Sam Nujoma visited Moscow and attended the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Peoples' Friendship University, from which many Namibians had graduated. In the course of his meeting with Dmitry Medvedev, President of Russia, he discussed bilateral cooperation in the mining industry, including the production of uranium, and in the field of

education.

The main result of the official visit of President H. Pohamba to the Russian Federation in May 2010 was the confirmation by Russia of its intention to develop long-lasting comprehensive cooperation with Namibia according to the action plan, which had been agreed upon during the high-level negotiations in June 2009. During the visit H. Pohamba also had a meeting with Vladimir Putin, Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation.

The contractual and legal framework of the relations between Russia and Namibia is continuously being improved. The Russian party has completed the internal procedures related to the ratification of the Agreement on Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investments as of 2009. In the academic year 2011–2012, Russia granted Namibia 25 state scholarships for the country's students. Today, about 200 Namibian citizens study in Russian universities. In total,



Namibian Military delegation members who have visited the residence and the museum of the Angola Veterans Union in Moscow in 2016 were awarded medals "For Rendering International Assistance to Angola"

approximately 2 thousand Namibians have graduated from Russia's higher-learning institutions. In December 2011, Russia provided the Department of Chemistry of the University of Namibia with free technical aid to the total amount of 1,65 million US dollars by way of supply

of chemicals and other materials, and provision and installation of training and laboratory equipment. In 2009 and 2011, Russia, at the behest of the Namibian Government, sent humanitarian supplies to Namibia to help its citizens who had been affected by natural disasters.



Members of the Namibian Military delegation and activists of the Angola Veterans Union paying visit to the Museum of the Union. Moscow, 2016.



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