

News Release



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INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION REPORTS ON NAMIBIAN ELECTORAL PROCESS

WASHINGTON, DC, JUNE 6, 1989 "Distressing strains in the national fabric" threaten the Namibian election process, according to a report presented yesterday to Martii Ahtisaari, the U.N. Special Representative for Namibia. The report, prepared by an international delegation organized by the Washington-based National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), urged Ahtisaari to "move quickly to assert firm supervision and control of the election process as contemplated by Resolution 435."

Under the terms of U.N. Resolution 435, the November 1 Namibian elections for a Constituent Assembly will be administered by the South African government and overseen by a special United Nations peacekeeping force. The Assembly will draft a constitution for the new state.

The delegation's most serious concerns involved a "atmosphere of intimidation" that could undermine a free and fair electoral process and the "startling lack of communication" about proposed election laws and procedures.

The delegation made a series of recommendations including a decentralized system of registering and counting to make the process more efficient and accountable; equal access to the media by

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competing political parties; enhanced powers for U.N. police monitors and the Commission on Inquiry into Intimidation; and the establishment of an independent election commission to promote confidence in the system.

"We believe that virtually every citizen of Namibia desires that the election take place on schedule and is willing to take steps to ensure free and fair elections," the delegation members concluded. "Resolute leadership is necessary to assure that goal."

The delegation was led by Senator Alasdair Graham of Canada, and included election officials and experts from Barbados, Botswana, Pakistan, the United States, and Zimbabwe. The group has collectively monitored elections in 40 countries. Its report was based on a seven-day fact-finding mission to Namibia, which included visits to six of the territory's regions and meetings with government and U.N. officials responsible for the elections, political party leaders, and representatives of other organizations involved in the implementation of U.N. Resolution 435.

Chaired by former Vice President Walter F. Mondale, NDI conducts nonpartisan democratic development programs overseas. NDI has organized observer delegations to elections in Chile, Haiti, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay and the Philippines and has monitored the election process in El Salvador, Korea, Poland and the Soviet Union.

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