

Election Watch X

Produced by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)

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THE TIME FOR TOLERANCE



With the election imminent, it is important that all members of society, not just politicians and political parties, act responsibly and adhere to the principles of political tolerance.

These principles are: democratic political activity, free political campaigning and open public debate.

The Namibian Constitution enshrines the fundamental rights to freedom of expression and association, as well as the freedom from discrimination on the grounds of beliefs and affiliations, which include political leanings.

In order for an election to be considered free and fair, a culture of political tolerance should exist.

Namibia has a Constitution which makes provision for multiparty democratic practices and a diversity of views on a range of issues.

In an atmosphere of political tolerance voting-age citizens can express themselves freely without being or feel-

ing pressured or intimidated into making a political choice.

“ The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within. ”

Mohandas K Gandhi, Indian statesman

At its core, political tolerance suggests that all campaigning politicians and political parties have the same cause at heart, namely the well-being of the citizens and society, but are putting forward different approaches to enhancing this well-being. In accordance with such a culture, political parties, even minor or marginal parties, should be free to conduct their campaigns where and

when they want to without fearing the threat of intimidation from bigger and more established parties.

In such an atmosphere, opposition parties and those with views different from our own are not seen as enemies, but as competitors on the electoral playing field. No one should use language that incites hatred or violence against any other person or group. No one should obstruct other people from attending political gatherings. Party supporters should not disfigure or destroy the campaign materials of other parties.

Political tolerance starts with individual members of society who respect others even though they hold different views from their own. Gandhi once said: “The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within.” Each one of us has to demonstrate that spirit of democracy on November 27 and 28 and in the following days.

ABOUT ELECTION WATCH

Election Watch is a bulletin containing electoral analysis and voter education, which will appear regularly in the run up to the 2009 National Assembly and Presidential Elections. It is produced as a PDF download and as a printed newspaper insert. Election Watch is a project of the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). It is produced with the support of the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI), the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) and The Namibian newspaper. The content of Election Watch is the sole responsibility of the IPPR. Comments and feedback should be sent to the IPPR, PO Box 6566, Windhoek, Namibia.

Tel: (061) 240514; fax: (061) 240516; email: info@ippr.org.na. For more on Election Watch check <http://www.electionwatch.org.na>

ELECTIONS EXPLAINED

According to the Electoral Act, the voting process happens as follows:

Upon receiving the ballot paper, the voter shall enter a polling booth and then secretly record his or her vote on the ballot paper by marking the ballot paper with a cross in the space opposite the name of the political party for which he or she desires to vote. In the case of an election for candidates by marking the ballot paper with a cross in the space opposite the name of the candidate for whom he or she desires to vote.

While still in the polling booth, the voter should fold the ballot paper in such a way that the official mark is visible and the names of the political parties or candidates and the mark signifying his or her vote are not visible. Leave the polling booth and display the ballot paper to the presiding officer or a polling officer in such a way that the official mark can be seen. In the case of a voter voting by way of a tendered vote place the ballot paper in the tendered vote envelope and seal it and then drop the tendered vote envelope in the ballot box for tendered vote envelopes.

In the case of an ordinary ballot paper drop the ballot paper in the ballot box for ordinary ballot papers. A tendered vote is cast when you vote outside the constituency where you are registered.

On polling days:

Every polling station is surrounded by a restricted area where political canvassing is not allowed. This area is the ground surrounding the polling station with a maximum radius of 500 metres from the centre of the polling station. Political activities, besides voting, are prohibited within this area; this includes the wearing of party colours and display of campaign material. (Section 101 of the Electoral Act)

HOW TO VOTE

Polling stations across the country will be opening at 07h00 till 21h00 on Friday, November 27 and Saturday, November 28. Here are the steps from arriving to leaving a polling station:

1. The voter queues outside the entrance to the polling station and waits their turn to be let in individually;
2. When instructed to enter, the voter makes their way to the point where election officials will check whether their voter registration card is valid and whether the voter appears on the voters roll;
3. The voter then goes to the ultra-violet light controller who will check that the voter has not voted before by placing their thumb under an ultra-violet light to see if there are any ink marks.
4. The voter is then referred to the inker, who will apply an ink mark to the thumb of the voter before referring the voter to the next point where the voter receives the Presidential ballot paper



and is shown to the voting booth for the Presidential election;

5. The voter marks the ballot paper with an 'X' in the space next to their preferred candidate. After having marked the ballot paper the voter puts the ballot paper into the ballot box clearly marked 'Presidential';
6. The voter then goes to the next point where they are issued a ballot paper for the National Assembly election and enters the voting booth for the National Assembly election;
7. The voter marks the ballot paper with

an 'X' in the space next to their preferred party. After having marked the ballot paper the voter casts the ballot paper into the ballot box clearly marked 'National Assembly';

8. The voter then leaves the polling station in an orderly manner.

All the points in the voting station should be clearly marked and numbered and election officials will be on hand to guide voters through

the different points, if needed, except when the voter enters the voting booth where the voter will be alone to mark the ballot paper in secret and according to their personal choice.

Voters must have their voter registration cards with them when they go to the polling station so that election officials can check whether a voter is eligible to vote. Without a voter registration card a voter will not be issued with ballot papers for the Presidential and National Assembly elections.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT

While checks will be in place to prevent voters from committing fraud during the upcoming elections, all citizens should be on the lookout for people trying to unfairly influence the outcome of the elections.

Vote fraud most often takes the form of a voter, who has already cast their vote, trying to vote again. This can happen when a voter tries to vote again at another polling station. Under Namibia's political system, voters can cast their vote anywhere. This type of vote fraud can also take the form of political parties 'bussing' (transporting) voters around to vote at different polling stations. The main check on multiple voting is the application of an ink mark on the hands of voters, which is difficult to wash off and should be detectable under an ultra-violet light.

Another form of vote manipulation occurs when voters loitering in or around the polling station or officials, try to influence voters while they are entering the voting booth to mark the ballot paper for a certain party. According to electoral rules, no-one is allowed to interfere with a voter when they are casting their vote,



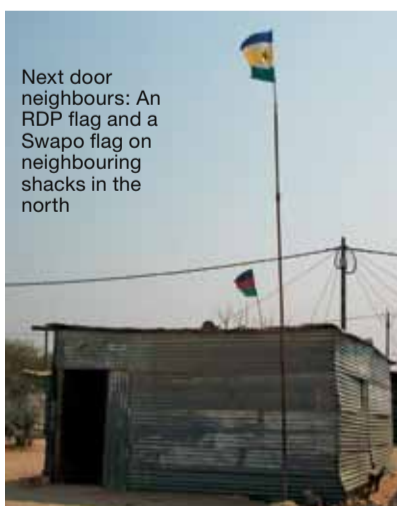
which amounts to intimidation in the polling booth, and election officials, as well as observers and the police, should be on hand to prevent this from happening.

The Electoral Amendment Act 2009 states in Section 84 (3): "Except as provided in this section, no person shall converse or in any other manner interfere with a voter at any time after he or she

has been handed a ballot paper or entered a polling booth in order to vote by voting machine or until he or she leaves the polling booth."

However, as all citizens have a stake in the Presidential and National Assembly elections, every eligible voter is responsible for ensuring that the elections are free and fair. If a voter suspects that vote fraud is being attempted at a polling station they should immediately report it to the polling station presiding officer or the police officers stationed there.

INCREASE THE PEACE



Next door neighbours: An RDP flag and a Swapo flag on neighbouring shacks in the north

The campaign period before major elections is fraught with tension due to the competitive nature of politics in general.

Because politicians and political parties are especially vocal in trying to get their messages and views across to the electorate in the run-up to important elections, such as the National Assembly and Presidential elections this year, the issue of tolerance becomes central to all election processes.

While it probably is not the intention of politicians or political parties to incite people to acts of political intimidation and violence, or to foster a general atmosphere of intolerance, it may take very little during tense election periods to spark such acts.

Namibian elections over the last two decades have never been marked by major acts of political intimidation, much less violence, ahead of and on polling days. This does not mean that such acts have never happened, but rather that they have never

been of a magnitude to destabilise elections.

However, recent comments by senior political leaders have cast something of a pall over the current campaign period. In addition, hate speech has featured on some forums including websites. Unfortunately this election has featured the carrying of weapons at rallies, damage to party campaign materials and physical attempts to block party activists in some areas. In addition, minor injuries have been sustained and property damaged in several stone-throwing incidents. There have also been calls for ruling party supporters to boycott businesses owned by members of the opposition.

In the light of such incidents, President Hifikepunye Pohamba, Information Minister Joel Kaapanda and the Inspector-General of Police, Sebastian Ndeitunga, among others,

have called on parties to avoid violent, provocative and intolerant behaviour.

President Pohamba in his New Year address for 2009: "All political parties as well as individual citizens must cultivate a culture of peaceful non-provocative election campaigning. Any act of political violence taints the image of our country and discredits our credentials as a peace-loving country founded on the principles of multi-party democracy and the rule of law. We must all of us, political leaders, religious leaders, traditional leaders and community leaders continue to build on the strength of our diversity and political maturity so that Namibia can continue to shine as one of the brightest beacons of democracy and political tolerance, not only on the African continent but also around the world."

NAMIBIA UNDER THE RALLY FOR DEMOCRACY AND PROGRESS

The Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP) has issued an eight-page leaflet outlining its manifesto commitments. The party places a strong emphasis on the government's failure to establish Namibia as a fully-fledged democracy. In his foreword, RDP President Hidipo Hamutenya states that Namibia has only managed to adopt "the form, but not the substantive content of democracy". He says the party's areas of focus, if it comes to power, will be health, job creation, education, housing, infrastructure development, economic development, pruning the bloated government, youth and sports, traditional authorities, the role of faith-based groups in development, and women's empowerment.

The two slogans of the manifesto are 'It's time for change' and 'Together, we can do better'. The document emphasises the following commitments, among others:

Democracy and Political Pluralism: The party will stress accountable government; and emphasise transparency, openness and predictability.

Health: The RDP will focus on the training of health personnel, provision of well-equipped facilities and proper management.

Education and Training: The RDP calls for "visionary action" to turn this sector around, promising to overhaul the whole system; re-introduce pre-primary schools; restructure curricula; and institute a national assessment of teachers' skills. Bursaries will be made available to 65% of all students who obtain university admission.

Social Welfare: The RDP will ensure monthly grants are in line with the cost of living and increase social pensions to not less than N\$750 per month.

Economy and Wealth Creation: The RDP will reform the Investment Act; introduce a Fishing Board to oversee the industry; ensure the entry of Namibians into mainstream tourism; restructure Air Namibia; and reduce current tax rates. In addition, the party will rehabilitate current infrastructure and build new roads, schools etc.

Housing: The party will provide at least 30,000 houses per year.

Energy: The RDP will privatise production in solar, wind and hydro power; speed up rural electrification; facili-



tate investment in off-grid projects. All government buildings would switch to solar power. The party will look at speeding up the Kudu gas, Epupa and Popa falls projects.

Empowerment: The Development Bank of Namibia would focus on assisting SMEs and the awarding of mining concessions would be reviewed to benefit Namibians.

Job creation: The RDP would create jobs by encouraging an entrepreneurial culture; creating incentives for business to expand and take on trainees and interns; revamping and opening up the tendering system; and deregulating the informal sector.

State-owned enterprises: Political appointments at SOEs will be discouraged. CEOs will be appointed on performance-based contracts. SOEs will not pay dividends to government but will instead pay them into an infrastructure development fund.

Industry: The RDP will put money into research and development and prioritise incentives to bring money into productive industries. The party will seek new markets for beef, karakul, small stock and other Namibian products.

Land: The RDP wants urgent and lawful acquisition of land by government for redistribution to needy Namibians, while ensuring the productive use of land and training and support for resettled farmers.

Institutional reform: The party will reduce the size of Cabinet and the number of foreign missions. The practice of jobs for comrades will end.

Constitution: The party will abolish the party list system and replace it with a competitive constituency system.

Media: The RDP will lift the advertising ban on The Namibian.

Labour: The party will establish a national pension scheme and unemployment insurance.

The manifesto contains a number of interesting policy suggestions and proposals but unfortunately they are rather lost among the mostly over-long and vague sections of the manifesto. There are many rather broad statements which in the final analysis do not mean much, such as: 'overhaul the educational system to be consistent with national development needs' or 'facilitate the expansion of the sector to create more job opportunities'. There are commitments which will require extra funds, such as expanding the welfare net, but no attempt to explain where the money will come from. In fact, the RDP is committed to tax cuts. Presumably some money would be saved by cutting Cabinet and the diplomatic service.

The manifesto is attractively produced on paper in the party colours, although the text is a little too dense for easy reading.

Who is the party's leader?

Hidipo Hamutenya who was a minister in the Swapo government from 1990 to 2004. He held the Information, Trade and Foreign Affairs portfolios. He has led the RDP since its formation in 2007.

Does the party have a website?

Yes. At www.rdp.org.na

More about the party?

The RDP was formed in late 2007, mainly by former members of Swapo who left the ruling party after the 2004 extraordinary congress. This will be the first time it has competed at national elections.

- The reviews of the RDP and CoD manifestos in this edition complete the assessment of manifestos in Election Watch. Other parties' manifestos were covered in earlier editions.

VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION MONITOR

Since October 2008 Election Watch has been logging cases of election-related violence and intimidation as reported in the media and by human rights organisations. Incidents had to be reported by two separate sources and/or be confirmed by the police to be entered in the log. Up to November 17 2009, the log had 19 entries. Some entries dealt with several incidents rather than one single incident

November 16 2009 – The Congress of Democrats (CoD) complained that their campaign activities at Aussenkehr had been broken up by Swapo supporters while their campaign materials had been defaced and destroyed in Oshakati.

November 13 2009 – There was a tense stand-off between Swapo and Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP) supporters in the Orwetoveni suburb at Otjiwarongo which was diffused by the police, according to NBC radio.

November 8 2009 – The police confiscated eight pistols, a shotgun, nine knives, four machetes, a hammer, and an axe among other weapons from people going to the RDP rally at Outapi. The police arrested three people during the

clashes at the town.

November 8 2009 – RDP and Swapo supporters threw stones at each other at Outapi after Swapo supporters confronted RDP activists who had arrived at the town to attend a rally.

November 6 2009 – The RDP said its members had been physically attacked and intimidated during recent mobilisation campaigns in Windhoek, Mix Camp, Okahao and Grootfontein.

October 28 2009 – The police confirmed that a group of Swapo supporters blocked RDP mobilisers from campaigning at Onesi village in the Omusati region.

October 27 2009 – About 300 Swapo supporters blocked RDP mobilisers from campaigning in Outapi, Omusati region, according to a report in The Namibian. Swapo activists claimed the RDP members had used provocative language when seeking to recruit supporters.

Sept 26 2009 – Stones were thrown at RDP supporters attending a rally in Oshakati by youths dressed in Swapo t-shirts.

Sept 19 2009 – Speaking at an election rally at Ongwediva, founding President Sam Nujoma urged Swapo supporters to

attack British citizens with hammers in a clear violation of the code of conduct for political parties

Feb 19 2009 – Hardap Governor Katrina Hanse-Himarwa reportedly urged Swapo supporters in the region to "never allow any political party, or any enemy, in any form, or any nature, or any shape and or any colour to invade this territory, which we have declared a Swapo Party territory" at a party rally at Gochas.

Feb 8 2009 – Police had to fire warning shots in Havana, Katutura to prevent clashes between Swapo and RDP supporters.

Feb 7 2009 – Violence broke out between RDP and Swapo supporters at Onyaanya in the Oshikoto region. An RDP supporter laid a charge of attempted murder with the police. The origins of the clash were disputed.

Feb 1 2009 – The All People's Party (APP) claimed one of its members had been assaulted by a Swapo party official who was refusing to register non-Swapo supporters for drought aid in the Kavango region. Swapo denied the accusation.

Nov 22 2008 – Swapo supporters tried

to prevent APP members from holding a meeting in Greenwell Matongo, Katutura.

Nov 22 2008 – Several hundred Swapo supporters prevented the RDP from holding a rally at Outapi in the Omusati region.

Nov 15 2008 – A group of Swapo supporters prevented the APP from holding a rally in Hakahana, Katutura.

Oct 29 2008 – A teargas canister was thrown into the yard of the RDP candidate for the Tobias Hainyeko by-election, Erasmus Hendjala, in Okuryangava, Katutura. No arrests were made.

Oct 25 2008 – A house belonging to the Secretary of the RDP's Women's League, Agnes Limbo, burnt down in Katima Mulilo. The police are investigating a possible case of arson. Two of Limbo's relatives died in the blaze. It is not clear if the fire was connected to Limbo's political affiliation.

Oct 18 2008 – The police had to use teargas to disperse a crowd of about 150 Swapo supporters intending to stop an RDP rally in Katutura. At least six people were arrested and several pistols were confiscated.

YOUNG VOTERS ENGAGE THROUGH FACEBOOK



With just days left before voters go to the polls in the National Assembly and Presidential election, cyberspace continues to play a major role in the campaigning and information dissemination.

Organisations like the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) are posting their elections research on social networks such as Facebook. Their group on Facebook, called Election Watch Namibia, allows people from all over the world to express their views and post comments on the elections.

"The IPPR believes that social networking is an important tool for voter education, raising the level of debate, and for citizen monitoring of elections," said Graham Hopwood, IPPR Director.

Hopwood said the IPPR decided to establish the Facebook group for the elections as part of its Election Watch project which is aimed at providing the public with voter education and electoral analysis ahead of the 2009 polling. "The Facebook group is a way to reach young Namibians and give them information about the elections as well as involve them in debates about policy and the electoral process," said Hopwood.

Hopwood said that the IPPR had so far been impressed with the high level of debate coming from all parts of the political spectrum on the Election Watch Namibia page. "The members who contribute to the page show a high level of tolerance for each others' views even when they strongly disagree with another member. It could be used as an example to older politicians of how to accept another person's right to hold differing views," he told Namibian Sun.

He said the website is made even more accessible as Namibians do not need a computer to access the Internet any more, but are now using their mobile phones. "This makes the potential readership for such groups quite large. The potential audience will be even greater by the time of the next elections. As such the Election Watch Namibia page on Facebook is a pioneering attempt to engage young people in the democratic process," said Hopwood.

* Adapted from an article by Emsie Erastus in the Namibian Sun

Check the election results live on <http://www.electionwatch.org.na> or on the Election Watch Namibia Facebook page from November 29 onwards

NAMIBIA UNDER THE CONGRESS OF DEMOCRATS

The Congress of The Democrats (CoD) 2009 party manifesto declares that now is the time for change, by outlining reasons why it should be elected to power.

The manifesto opens with a letter by CoD president Ben Ulenga, which catalogues the scale of problems facing Namibia – lack of jobs, poverty, education, corruption and crime. And he stresses, "There is not time to lose. Now is the time for change"

Ulenga expresses his party's commitment to change the social and economic situation in the country by focusing on expanding and diversifying the economy; replacing what he describes as a "rotten" education system and building new schools and universities; changing the current healthcare system and strengthening parliament's control over cabinet.

The manifesto is anchored on the following policy areas: youth; skills development and employment; housing; poverty and welfare; corruption and poor governance; and women

Youth – On the youth, the manifesto notes that Namibia is a country with a relatively young population that should be tomorrow's leaders. "CoD believes that our collective future rests in doing it right by investing sufficient resources into the 70 percent of our population who are 35 years and younger," reads the manifesto.

The party acknowledges that the forthcoming election would represent the coming of age for the youth born at independence, which would accord them a first opportunity to vote.

Further, the document states that government must remove legal, political, social or cultural obstacles in order to allow the country to benefit from the energy, drive and exuberance of the country's youth.

It calls for opportunities and funds to be made available to release the potential of young people in order to participate not only in politics but in other areas human endeavour such as music, arts, literature and sports, academia, science, entrepreneurship.

Skills development and employment – The party says the high unemployment rate in Namibia can be attributed to the Swapo government's "appalling record" in education delivery. To get the country back to work, CoD plans to redress two decades of damage in the area of education delivery and skills. The party promises to remove all "hidden costs" in education and also provide free education up to basic degree level. Other plans are: to roll out libraries to all schools and ensure each learner has textbooks on their desk; ensure that teachers are properly trained and that all schools are provided with software and computers; establish more technical, vocational and technology (ICT)



centres to train youth for skills demanded by the knowledge economy of the 21st century.

Housing – The opposition pledges to develop a "clear" housing policy aimed at guiding the delivery of housing to the homeless in the country. The party promises to provide sufficient funds for the development of well-housed sustainable communities.

Welfare – The CoD expresses concern that Namibia is ranked the most unequal country in the world. The document blames this on what it claims, "the outcome of this government's wrong-headed policies of the last two decades is a country where more and more wealth is owned by increasingly smaller elite."

On health, the manifesto bemoans the broken health delivery system and has called for a major overhaul. The party charges that Namibians succumb to minor communicable diseases as a sign of a broken health system.

CoD promises to reverse the decline in health standards and systems; embark on major investment programmes in health services and personnel; prioritise the issuance of national documents to all Namibians; and reach 100 per cent coverage for old age pensions. The manifesto is quick to say it would not promise a specific figure but the pension would be adjusted for inflation. Other promises include supporting the Basic Income Grant (BIG).

Land reform – CoD promises to accelerate the exercise by putting in place the following measures: Speeding up the acquisition of farming land for redistribution to farmers, peasants and farm workers; modernising agricultural production in the communal areas; achieving fairness, social justice and equity and correcting historical injustice.

Others are: Intensifying training and equipping new farmers for improved productivity and optimal land use; providing unimpeded access to veterinary extension and financial support services; removing the 'Red-line' from Oshivelo to northern borders; introducing irrigation schemes in the Kunene and Kavango.

Corruption and Governance – The manifesto alleges that Swapo has created a bloated bureaucracy which has, for the most part, failed to deliver basic services to the people, adding governance and accountability have all but collapsed at

local authorities.

The party further alleges that State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) have become havens of mismanagement and self-enrichment; government's procurement process and awarding of licences is riddled with corruption, kickbacks and abuse of privileged information.

CoD plans for a government which views public service as an honour to serve the people; it promises to strengthen the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Other measures include the passing of a Freedom of Information Act to enable citizens to access the process of decision-making by government and other public bodies in the interest of transparency and fairness.

The CoD's manifesto is unclear on how exactly the principles in the document would be achieved, especially any cost implications. The manifesto does not cover the economy in any detail, saying only the "CoD government ...will act swiftly to expand and diversify the economy to create employment."

Who is the party leader?

The party has been led by Ben Ulenga since 1999. He is an ex-combatant and was imprisoned on Robben Island before becoming a union leader. After independence he served government as a deputy minister and as a High Commissioner.

Does the party have a website?

No.

More about the party

The CoD was formed in 1999. It won seven seats in the 1999 elections and five in the 2004 elections. Since 2004 the CoD has been the official opposition party.

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WHAT IS THE IPPR?

The Institute for Public Policy Research was established in 2001 as a not-for-profit organisation with a mission to deliver, independent, analytical, critical yet constructive research on social, political and economic issues which affect development Namibia. The IPPR was established in the belief that development is best promoted through free and critical debate informed by quality research. The IPPR is independent of government, political parties, business, trade unions and other interest groups and is governed by a board of seven trustees. Anyone can receive the IPPR's research free of charge by contacting the organisation at 14 Nachtigal Street, Windhoek; PO Box 6566, Windhoek; tel: (061) 240514; fax (061) 240516; email: info@ippr.org.na. All IPPR research is available at <http://www.ippr.org.na>. Material related to Election Watch is available at <http://www.electionwatch.org.na>