

played in UN peacekeeping history. A disproportionate share of the responsibility for ensuring that the elections were free and fair rested on their shoulders. CIVPOL's job was to reduce to a minimum the level of violence and intimidation by partisan groups in Namibia.

To this end, CIVPOL monitored SWAPOL to see that it carried out its law and order responsibilities in a professional and non-partisan manner. This entailed observing SWAPOL in every aspect of their duties, from accompanying them on patrols to observing their investigations. It was especially important to monitor SWAPOL at political rallies and during the voter registration and election processes. To ensure a vote that was free from intimidation at election time, 1,023 UNTAG police monitors were assigned to electoral duties, meaning that a CIVPOL representative was present at every polling station.

CIVPOL was severely handicapped in its task, however. Originally, UNTAG made provision for only 500 police to monitor the activities of 6,000 AG-controlled SWAPOL. The level of intimidation and violence by SWAPOL being what it was, the number of civilian police assigned to UNTAG was doubled by the end of August 1989 and tripled in the run-up to the election.

CIVPOL was headed by a police commissioner who consulted with the SR's office on all police-related matters. He was responsible for the organization, deployment, and operations of CIVPOL.

Namibia was divided into two CIVPOL districts, each with their own regional coordinator. With the expansion of the force, the number of districts was likewise expanded to seven. Forty-nine CIVPOL stations were established throughout Namibia, but the north, where the level of tension and intimidation was highest, was the main area of concentration.

Like previous civilian police operations, CIVPOL was unarmed. Its personnel had no power of arrest, nor were they allowed to investigate crimes or complaints. All they could do was observe and report.

The most difficult problem for CIVPOL was the continued presence of Koevoet, the ruthless para-military unit set up by South Africa to root out SWAPO elements in Namibia. Though this organization was ostensibly disbanded prior to 1 April 1989, many of its members — 1,200 to 1,500 — were absorbed into SWAPOL. They continued to roam the country and intimidate SWAPO supporters, especially in the north. It was only in September and October, after the numbers of CIVPOL were increased, and, following countless entreaties from the SR and the UN Secretary-General, that Koevoet was purged from the ranks of SWAPOL, and CIVPOL was able to contain the situation.

Though CIVPOL was never entirely able to eradicate violence and intimidation during the transition period, a measure of its success is that 97% of registered voters felt confident enough to vote during the 7-11 November election period, and did so in a relatively violence-free atmosphere.

THE ELECTORAL DIVISION

The main task of the electoral division was to supervise both the voter registration and electoral process. It assisted the SR in his negotiations with the AG over the promulgation of the electoral laws and the manner in which they were implemented.

Those persons wishing to register to vote had to present photo identification or documents issued by UNHCR. Approximately 175 registration points were established, thirty-six permanent, thirty-five temporary, and more than 100 mobile. Ninety-nine per cent of those eligible, registered to vote.

An UNTAG election official was present at each registration point. The registration law stipulated that the UNTAG official would have final say on whether an application for registration should be rejected. A central voters register was compiled and supervised by an UNTAG computer expert, who made the list available to all parties on a weekly basis.

The election, though administered by the AG, was conducted under the constant scrutiny of UNTAG. Three hundred and fifty-eight polls were established, supervised by more than 1,700 mostly civilian UNTAG personnel and CIVPOL. For election purposes, the territory was divided into twenty-three electoral areas each with an UNTAG district supervisor. After the electoral law was promulgated, on 6 October, UNTAG helped to train election personnel and participated in a voter education campaign.

Following the vote on 13 November, ballots were counted at the twenty-three election centres and at Windhoek, all under the unwavering supervision of UNTAG.

OFFICE OF THE UNHCR

An integral, if functionally distinct part of the UNTAG operation was the UNHCR-run programme for the return to Namibia of exiles and refugees in time to vote. This undertaking was financed separately from UNTAG and administered entirely by UNHCR, but fell under the overall political structure of UNTAG.

UNHCR set up three land and three air entry points and five reception centres, mostly in north and central Namibia, to handle the refugees and exiles coming chiefly from Angola and Zambia. More than 40,000 people were