

## SOUTH AFRICA NOW

SHOW #211

## Transcript of Namibian News Portion

ANNOUNCER: But first a news summary . . . .

FANA KEKANA: Namibia tops our news again this week. At the close of week 3 of the transition to independence for that country, 300 are dead and scattered fighting along the Northern border continues. South Africa Now has learned that a sizeable number of these SWAPO guerillas who were reported as having died in combat with South African forces, were actually murdered execution-style. Stuart Sender has our television exclusive:

STUART SENDER: You may have seen these bodies on T.V. described as guerillas of the South West African People's Organization, SWAPO, killed in battle as they crossed the border from Angola, into their own country, Namibia. Newscasts throughout the world describe them as military casualties, victims of a tactical blunder ordered by their own leaders. But now, these shocking pictures from the Sunday Telegraph of London offer another account, not yet reported in this country. Namely, that some of these men were shot through the head at point-blank range, probably after they surrendered. Photographer Judah Passow told us what he saw:

VOICE OF JUDAH PASSOW: They had all been shot through the head with small-caliber rounds. The South Africa security forces use weapons up to 20 millimeter cannons, and you know, a 20 millimeter round will cut a body in half, or just shear a limb off a body. There were no wounds corresponding to anything like that in the stack of bodies that we saw in back of the morgue in Oshakati. In fact, all of the dead have been shot clean through the head, at what we could only deduce was point-blank or close range -- effectively executed.

STUART SENDER: Telegraph reporter Simon O'Dwyer-Russell filed this story. The headline quotes a response he received from South African commandos. "They are SWAPO, and they're dead. That's all that matters." O'Dwyer was one of the journalists to talk directly with South African soldiers like these members of the killer units of the notorious Koevoet.

We talked with him on the phone in London:

VOICE OF SIMON O'DWYER RUSSELL: He described it to me as, that, this is a turkey-shoot, and my guys are having a field-day. And I think that possibly sums up Koevoet's view to it. This is an unparalleled opportunity to find SWAPO in the bush. [Those] I think that who were not killed in the initial firefight may well, in view of what we saw of the bodies in Oshakati, may well have been killed after they had surrendered.

STUART SENDER: Many of the SWAPO dead were buried in mass graves. The victim's families have made legal requests to the Namibian Supreme Court to dig the bodies up and investigate how they died. We called the South African administrator in Windhoek, Namibia for a comment:

VOICE OF GERARD ROUX, OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL, WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA: I must point out this is absolutely as far as we're concerned unfounded. We can't find any substantiation for it. If there is any photo material then it will have to be very, very clear evidence, close-up pictures, etcetera, etcetera, for us to give any authenticity to the story.

STUART SENDER: We'll have more on this story in coming weeks. This is Stuart Sender for **South Africa Now**.

JOSEPH DIESCHO: This is Joseph Diescho with Namibia Watch. The South African Administrator General for Namibia unilaterally re-imposed a harsh dusk-to-dawn curfew in the northern third of the country. U.N. peacekeeping troops finally began arriving in that area last week. Their job was to establish assembly points for SWAPO guerillas to be disarmed; then transported across the border to Angola.

U.N. PEACEKEEPER: What is the United Nations here for? Free and fair elections. Am I right or not? For who? For the people of Namibia. And we are doing the best we can.

JOSEPH DIESCHO: But apparently that wasn't good enough to draw SWAPO combatants to the UN assembly points as they have stayed away in droves. So far only 6 guerillas have turned themselves in to the UN checkpoints.

For an explanation, we spoke with Elizabeth Landis, an international lawyer.

ELIZABETH LANDIS: It's been very clear that SWAPO's scared to death to send its soldiers to the assembly points. Although the assembly points are technically UNTAG-controlled, as a matter of fact, they are, in every case surrounded by rings of South African soldiers and armored vehicles, so that SWAPO soldiers are not at all sure that they would get to an assembly point alive.

JOSEPH DIESCHO: South Africa has maintained an aggressive posture, passing out weapons to white farmers whose fears have been heightened.

VOICE OF WHITE NAMIBIAN FARMER: We will be the first target for the SWAPO, no?

JOSEPH DIESCHO: Relations between the South Africans and the UN is tense. here a peacekeeper asks a South African for advice.

UN PEACEKEEPER: Have you any guidance as to how we are supposed to move the SWAPO to the North?

SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY MAN: No! I can't give you any advice. Not any advice! You're not allowed to come into my base.

JOSEPH DIESCHO: Despite hostility from the South Africans, the UN is trying to put on its best face.

COLONEL HANNU PARONEN, UNTAG: Whenever you see this kind of cap, blue cap, you will be happy he's your helper.

JOSEPH DIESCHO: Despite the setbacks, independence fever is still high among the Namibian people, but others are calling on the United Nations to be more aggressive in defending the peace plan.

ELISABETH LANDIS: It must not be cowed by South Africa, it must not fear whether the South Africans will allow the process to go through. Once it has shown it is afraid of the South Africans withdrawing from the

process, it has given the South Africans a weapon which they can wield.

JOSEPH DIESCHO: So at the end of Week 3, there seems to be a Namibian quagmire developing, with the South Africans in charge, and the UN barely holding on. This is Joseph Diescho.