**BWS**

**Breaking the Wall of Silence**

“BWS is a movement of concerned P.O. Box 40587

Namibians who endeavor by Peaceful Ausspannplatz

Means to find a lasting solution for the Windhoek, Namibia

Problem of human rights violations committed Tel: 00264 61 263649

And to work towards a truly democratic culture Email: survivor.july89@yahoo.com

In Namibia [www.bws.iway.na](http://www.bws.iway.na)

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The Universal Period Review

Pre-Session

16th December 2015

Geneva

The UPR Team

I am writing this statement on behalf of the torture survivors and families of the enforced disappearances. Unfortunately I am not able as much I tried to be presenting this statement as a torture survivor and coordinator of the organization, Breaking the Wall of Silence (BWS); in the hope and trust that the statement be read by your team and distributed to the Diplomats present at this important Pre-session, before the review of our country Namibia.

Background of BWS:

Breaking the Wall of Silence was established by the survivors and families of the disappeared persons to find a peaceful lasting solution for the SWAPO ex-detainee issue. The objectives of BWS is;

* To pursue, find a peaceful and lasting solution to the SWAPO ex-detainee issue
* To know the fate and whereabouts of the persons who disappeared while in SWAPO detention in exile
* To work together with other groups and individuals in civil society to help create a culture of democracy, tolerance, openness, truthfulness, respect for human rights and dignity in Namibia
* To advocate and employ peaceful means to achieve true reconciliation in Namibia.
* To canvass support for the destitute ex-SWAPO detainees and orphans of missing persons
* To fight for the clearance of the names of SWAPO ex-detainees who were falsely labeled as enemy agents/spies
* Find effective remedy and reparations for the survivors and victims of these atrocities
* Find strategic and relevant partners to provide with required support
* Share with Namibians the danger of political intolerance and work with partners on approaches of peace building and nurturing democracy

In order to realize its aims and objectives the BWS developed the following programs;

* Advocacy and Lobbying
* Documentation
* Awareness raising
* Networking

The BWS submitted its report and concern to the UPR in 2010 and 2015 respectively, highlighting the human rights concerns in Namibia for the consideration of the UPR with specific focus on the human rights violations committed by the liberation movement, SWAPO while in exile during the liberation movement. Thousands of Namibians were accused of being enemy agents and were torture and forced to make false confessions by SWAPO, and were put in the dungeons in Angola, Lubango; Tanzania and Zambia respectively. Estimated number of 2000 Namibians disappeared while in SWAPO detention and their fate and whereabouts are not know till date. A number of 153 including women and children were released as a result of the UN Namibia Peace Plan and repatriated to Namibia on 04th July 1989.

Since their homecoming the survivors are consistent in efforts to seek a platform for dialogue and accountability and are met with silence from SWAPO, now the ruling party. A detailed information can be obtained from the UPR submission 2010 that reflect on the efforts made by survivors since 1989 till date.

Many of the diplomatic missions that participated in the UPR process in 2011 have praised SWAPO and the Namibian government for their human rights record, uphold of rule of law and reconciliation. I want to bring to your attention today once again that Namibia has never gone through a reconciliation process or had a dialogue as a nation to deal with its painful past. SWAPO, who is the ruling party of the day since after independence have made no effort to create a space for dialogue.

 The survivors of the SWAPO dungeons and families of the disappeared persons urged the diplomatic missions, to enquire, investigate the Namibian government about the atrocities committed by SWAPO during the liberation struggle and enforced disappearances.

We further urged the diplomatic missions to encourage and assist the Namibian government to look into human rights violations that took place during 1960-1989 during the liberation struggle in exile.

The Namibian government has violated its national and international obligations, which is not only a serious violation but denying the survivors and the disappeared their right to dignity, delay justice and therefore do not protect their rights in general. The continuous silence is an emotional torture and may lead to renewed conflict if not handle with the necessary care this case deserve.

It is important that the diplomatic mission look into the issues and recommendations of the previous UPR process for guidance and follow up:

**Issues to be addressed:**

1. **The Namibian Government should investigate the fate and whereabouts of the missing/disappeared while under the care of SWAPO in exile.**
2. **The Namibian Government should take responsibility and effect remedy to the plight of the SWAPO ex-detainees**
3. **The Namibian Government should create a platform for national dialogue on establishing the truth about the past human rights violations**
4. **The Namibian Government should be obliged to implement the international instruments it has signed and acceded to, for example the ICCPR, CAT etc.**

**Recommendations:**

1. **BWS urges the UN Human Rights Committee under the UPR mechanism to assist the Namibian Government to address the plight of the SWAPO ex-detainees and families of the disappeared persons**
2. **The Government of Namibia, led by SWAPO Party, has breached its national and international obligations in many respects. Since the liberation movement has become the ruling party, the political power remains with SWAPO till date, which make the political environment not conducive and left the survivors and families of the disappeared more vulnerable in all respects.**

**We rely on your understanding and support on this case, and trust that the SWAPO ex-detainee issue become part of the UPR session in January 2016.**

**Thank you.**



**Pauline Dempers**

**National Coordinator**

**BWS**