

A sensitive nerve

Indeed Mr Shipanga's 'New Year's Message' touched a sensitive nerve in me, especially with the untruths and political dishonesty that 'message' displayed.

In his article (27/01/89) Mr Shipanga implies that because Father Wolfe had said that "reconciliation of the Namibian people as a whole is needed before we can become one Namibia one Nation", then anybody who uses the word 'reconciliation' on television must go unchecked. Mr Shipanga, reconciliation is not merely an event - it is a process in which not only what we say, but also what we do, will determine the essence of our determination.

So do not think that people will believe your sincerity because you use the words 'peace' and 'reconciliation', even more so when your frame of reference is artificial: (that your TGNU protected the rights of Namibians during the past three-and-a-half years).

I maintain, Mr Shipanga, that your Cabinet sided with the South African government in trying to stop due legal process, and I add that all this was done at the expense of the taxpayers. Please say this is not true, and tell the Namibian people what position did you take, and what you as Cabinet did in the interest of due legal process in the late Wapota and Shifidi cases.

I also maintain that national campaigns and international diplomatic and economic pressure forced the government in South Africa to yield in favour of Namibia's independence.

a) National campaigns:

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a) National campaigns:

- When the churches marched on the side of the poor (Corpus Christi) gangs from some government circles could not stop them. When Kameeta gave that emotional address at St Andrews in Khomasdal, the people were moved to action, and more Koevoet was armed and deployed on the streets of Katutura

- When Swapo held a public rally after five years of silence, fifteen thousand people came. Apartheid shivered in Namibia and police and army tactics were adjusted as evident in the circumstances surrounding the death of Shifidi.

- When concerned namibians assisted workers to bind together in defence of their rights, their lives, - an action which culminated in the organised workers movement second to none in the history of Namibia - your Cabinet moved in with bills to serve that noble initiative a death blow, and thanks to, yes, national and international pressure, the South African Administrator General in Namibia refused to sign that bill into

law, and it was thus stillborn, remember? Remember the ILO experience when your cabinet was trying to lobby against the Namibian workers for fear of 'political manipulation'? All your actions did not succeed because the workers were always a step ahead of your cabinet.

Mr Shipanga, if this is not 'national campaigns', what is?

(b) International campaigns:

Well, in the interest of space I shall not dwell, because after all it is obvious:

- that it is because of international diplomatic and economic pressure on the government in South Africa that your TGNU was not recognised by a single country as such.

- that the South African Rand has and continues to plunge, to the extent that (as you correctly point out) South Africa had to recognise that it cannot continue to enforce her preferences through intermediaries of her unilateral choice; and that the cost of retaining control has come to, and in fact has long exceeded, the benefit.

It is in this context interesting to note what South African Minister of Finance, Barend du Plessis, said in a recent interview in *Leadership* (a South African journal).

Mr du Plessis was asked a question on sanctions and he said: (paraphrased) the question of sanctions is rather delicate to discuss because, if you say they are not working, you are inviting more; and if you say they are working, you are inviting more.

This I think is indicative of international diplomatic and economic pressure on South Africa. Suffice it to quickly add that national and international campaigns are necessarily complementary.

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Now I don't know Mr Shipanga, what your Cabinet has been discussing with the South African Government in camera. But I do know that Namibians, home and abroad, have been calling for political and economic pressure on South Africa, and I know that such pressure has come about.

Finally I am surprised that Mr Shipanga only now sees it fit to invite me to join hands with other Namibians to build the sort of country of which we can all be proud, while he knows that it was my commitment all along.

Mr Shipanga knows that when he and his cabinet were campaigning for 'alternative' models for Namibia's independence because 'UNSC Resolution 435 was dead' I was among those who were calling for the immediate implementation of 435.

Mr Shipanga knows that during his cabinet's marriage to South Africa for the past three and a half years, when our people were maimed by his Koevoet, I was among those who mobilised resources to defend these victims. He knows that I was one of those who mobilised resources to defend the victims of arbitrary detentions.

Now Mr Shipanga pretends that myself and my colleagues in Swapo were all along fast asleep and must wake up to the tune of his 'New Year's Message' of reconciliation, when we were the people who were all along telling him that his marriage with South Africa will one day be over, and what would he do then?

Yes, Mr Shipanga, it is this kind of political dishonesty that sparked a sensitive nerve in my head. There's nothing "tendentious" about my statement and if you want to address yourself to Swapo, please do it without hiding behind my article.

VEZERA KANDETU
KATUTURA