

NAMIBIA

Basters

Activity: 1990-2020

General notes

- The Basters of Namibia are also called Rehobothers or Rehoboth Basters. There are altogether around 55,000 Basters in Namibia, largely concentrated in the region of Rehoboth, Namibia (RehobothBasters.org). In Rehoboth, they make up about 92 percent of the population. According to Minorities at Risk, “Basters are the descendants of French or Dutch men who had liaisons with indigenous Khoi women in the Cape Colony of South Africa in the 18th century.”

Movement start and end dates

- Prior to Namibian independence, the South African government had granted the Basters autonomy; however, this autonomy was taken away when Namibia became independent in 1990. Thus, in Namibia, the Basters have actively lobbied for political autonomy in the form of self-government (MAR; Minahan 2002). Minahan writes, “Baster nationalists have refused to recognize their incorporation into independent Namibia and continue to recognize their autonomous homeland” (Minahan 2002: 290). The Basters declared independence on the same day as Namibian independence but this was not recognized.
- The Basters speak Afrikaans rather than English. Under the policy of equal treatment for all citizens, the Namibian government “dismantle[ed] the local governments that functioned under South African rule” and “declared English to be the only official language, which means the end of the Afrikaans education and administration in Rehoboth” (Minahan 2002). Subsequently, the Namibian government pursued a policy of land confiscation and redistribution. Though they occupy land that is in dispute as they had gained the rights to land by displacing the Nama tribe, the Basters claim a right to their land and aim to protect it from state redistribution laws. These claims have resulted in court cases (Rehoboth Basters 2013). The start date of the movement is coded as 1990 to coincide with Namibia’s independence.
- In 2009, the United People’s Movement (UPM) was launched, a political party based in Rehoboth that has made claims related to land rights and autonomy (The Namibia 2010; UNPO 2015). The party’s president has denied accusations that the movement intends to have a Rehoboth as an independent state (The Namibian 2010). The UPM has remained active. It won a seat in the national Assembly of Namibia Rehoboth in 2014 (UNPO 2015) and also has representation in the Rehoboth Local Authority Council. On this basis, we code the movement as ongoing. [start date: 1990; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- Prior to Namibia’s independence, the Basters threatened they would secede from Namibia if their claim for autonomy is not respected (Minahan 2002: 293; Suzman 2002). Upon independence, the Basters’ leader, Kaptein Hans Diergaardt, declared Rehoboth independent. However, the independence claim appears to have given way to a more moderate autonomy claim soon after. In 1992, the Rehoboth Assembly declared the Basters an indigenous people and demanded all rights to which indigenous peoples are entitled to according to the Namibian constitution. This suggests a moderation of the earlier independence claim. This is the first clear evidence for moderation we have found. In a 2012 UNPO declaration, the demand for autonomy was reaffirmed. In 2009, the United People’s Movement (UPM) was established and has kept pushing for land rights and increased autonomy since (UNPO 2015). Hence, we code an independence claim in 1990-1992

(in accordance with the first of January rule), and an autonomy claim for 1993 onwards. [1990-1992: independence claim; 1993-2020: autonomy claim]

Independence claims

- See above. [start date: 1990; end date: 1992]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The territory the Basters claim consists of the Rehoboth region in Namibia. We code this claim based on the Global Administrative Areas database.

Sovereignty declarations

- Two days before Namibia's formal independence, on March 19, 1990 (we still code this under the header of Namibia since Namibia was effectively independent), Hans Diergaardt unilaterally declared the Rehoboth Gebiet independent under the constitution of 1872. It is a bit ambiguous whether independence or autonomy was declared; we follow Minahan (2002: 293) and code it as an independence declaration. [1990: independence declaration]

Separatist armed conflict

- Minorities at Risk notes that the Basters have not been violent in their claims for autonomy, hence a NVIOLSD classification. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- The Basters have a history of autonomy. Before World War I, under German colonization, the Germans recognized Baster autonomy (however, fighting broke out in the early 20th century between Basters and Germans; see Kjaeret & Stokke 2003: 585). After World War I, Namibia (then: South-West Africa) was mandated to South Africa. In 1923, the South Africans replaced the Baster magistrate with a white. For the next 50 years, the colored Basters were discriminated against and ruled by a white magistrate until the 1970s, when they gained autonomy as South Africa carved up Namibia into ten 'homelands' (Minahan 2002: 293). Under the Namibian peace plan, the South African authorities had to repeal all discriminatory legislation, which included Baster autonomy. In the ensuing constitutional drafting process (that begun in 1989), the Baster representative (Kaptein Diergaardt) advocated a federal Namibia under which the Basters could keep their autonomous institutions. Diergaardt's bid for a federal Namibia was turned down, and he subsequently left the assembly (Kjaeret & Stokke 2003: 586). The resulting constitution, adopted shortly before Namibia's independence on February 9, 1990, left no room for Apartheid-style homelands (Minahan 2002: 593-4). Already in November 1989 (and thus four months prior to Namibia's formal independence), the South African administrator (Louis Pienaar) had announced the dismantling of the Baster autonomy, and had instructed the Baster Kaptein (Hans Diergaardt) and Baster parliament to step down (Beresford 1989). Despite a Supreme Court ruling issued prior to Namibia's independence, Diergaardt and companions refused to do so, and

occupied the administrative buildings. We code a prior autonomy restriction due to the dismantling of the Basters' autonomy in 1989. [1989: autonomy restriction]

Concessions and restrictions

- Namibia's constitution, adopted less than a month before Namibia's independence, limited the Basters' cultural rights as it declared English the only official language; this meant the end of Afrikaans education and administration in Rehoboth, the Basters' homeland (Minahan 2002: 294). [1990: cultural rights restriction]
- According to Kjaeret & Stokke (2003: 586): "In 1992, the Namibian territory was divided into new administrative regions that replaced the previous homelands (Simon 1996). According to the Delimitation Commission's report, this was crucial for the integration process in Namibia (Republic of Namibia 1991; Töttemeyer 1992). Today, Rehoboth Gebiet is split between two new regions, Khomas and Hardap. Within the Baster discourse, this is not perceived as an administrative reform to enhance national integration and administrative capacity, but as an attempt to oppress the Rehoboth Basters by breaking the Rehoboth Basters' territorial identity (John McNab, personal communication). The black Namibian government's border changes are seen as a politically motivated act to hinder mass mobilisation and political self-determination among the Rehoboth Basters: 'They have a very good reason for cutting Rehoboth in two, because then they divide the people. And then the power is divided' (Kaptein Hans Diergaardt, personal communication)." It is, however, ambiguous whether the splitting of the Rehoboth Gebiet into two entities should be considered a loss of autonomy since the administrative divisions have relatively little power anyway.
- There are other grounds to code a restriction in 1992, however. Beginning in April 1992, the property belonging to previous homelands (including communal land in Rehoboth, the Baster homeland) was transferred to the Namibian state. The Basters brought the issue to the courts; in 1993 a court ruled in their favour. However, in 1995 the government won its appeal against the decision, which was confirmed by the Namibian Supreme Court in 1996 (Kjaeret & Stokke 2003: 586-7; Minority Rights Group International; Suzman 2002). The Basters continued to reclaim their land, but were unsuccessful in their endeavor (see the 2012 UNPO declaration, which reaffirms the Basters' claim on their land). [1992: autonomy restriction]

Regional autonomy

- The Basters' autonomous status was abolished in 1989, thus no regional autonomy under Namibia.

De facto independence

- Until September 1990 (six months after Namibia's independence), Hans Diergaardt and companions occupied the local administrative buildings (Minahan 2002: 393), but no evidence was found that they exerted de facto control over some territory. Hence we do not code de facto independence.

Major territorial changes

- In 1990, the Basters became part of Namibia. [1990: host change (new)]

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Basters
<i>Scenario</i>	1:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Baster
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	56501000

Power access

- We adopt EPR codes. [1990-2020: powerless]

Group size

- We adopt EPR codes. [0.023]

Regional concentration

- According to MAR, the Basters have a regional base, and more than 75% of the Basters are located there. This matches with information from Minahan (2002: 290), according to whom approx. 60% of the Basters are located in Rehoboth Gebied, where they make up more than 90% of the local population. [regionally concentrated]

Kin

- EPR does not code kin. MAR, on the other hand, codes “close kindred across a border”, referring to the Coloureds in South Africa and Zimbabwe. The Basters are descendants of Afrikaners and Khoi women, and could thus also be described as “Coloureds.” We considered this too ambiguous, however. [no kin]

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East Caprivians

Activity: 1990-2020

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- In 1989, when Namibia was still part of South Africa, the United Democratic Party (UDP) was formed to advocate Caprivi secession (see East Caprivians under South Africa). The movement remained active when Namibia seceded from the Republic of South Africa in 1990. We code the movement from 1990 (the year of Namibia's independence), though noting prior nonviolent activity. In 2006, the UDP was banned and leaders were granted amnesty in Botswana. However, the UDP continues to remain active in advocating secession (Caprivi Freedom; Keesing's; Lexis Nexis; Marshall & Gurr 2003; MAR). [start date: 1989; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- Separatist activity started with the formation of the United Democratic Party (UDP) in 1989, while Namibia was still part of South Africa. The UDP advocated Caprivi secession (UDP 2005). Massó Guijarro (2013) also describes the establishment of an independent East Caprivian state as the primary goal of the movement. The Caprivi Liberation Army (CLA), which emerged in the mid-1990s and virtually disappeared in the early 2000s, is also described as a "secessionist movement" (Forrest 2004: 176). The UDP was banned in 2006, but exiled members continue to advocate secession (Caprivi Freedom). [1990-2020: independence claim]

Independence claims

- See above. [start date: 1989; end date: ongoing]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the UDP consists of the Caprivi Strip, a thin strip of land stretching from eastern Namibia into Zambia (MAR; Roth 2015: 282). The Caprivi Strip covers Mukwe, Kongola, Linyandi, Sibinda, Katima Muliro Rural, Kabe. We code this claim using GIS data on administrative units from the Global Administrative Areas database.

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- The Caprivi Liberation Army (CLA) was formed in 1998. Upon its appearance the military targeted suspected rebel camps for destruction and massacred suspected rebels. People fled to Botswana to avoid persecution. The CLA staged an attack on August 2, 1999 when the rebels attacked a military base at Mpacha airport and the police station and radio center in Katima Mulilo, the regional capital. Five police officers and three soldiers were killed while dozens more were injured. The separatists lost five and had eight captured. This qualitative account suggests that the 25 deaths threshold was not met in 1999; despite a MAR rebellion score of 3 (“local rebellion”), we do not code LVIOLSD therefore. After the attack, a state of emergency was declared and there was heavy repression in the area. Hundreds of suspected rebels or sympathizers were arrested, tortured, forcibly relocated, and even executed. The leaders of the CLA fled to Botswana and then to Denmark. The state of emergency was soon lifted, but there was still a heavy military presence in the area and reports of arrests, torture, and execution after the lift.
 - o It should be noted that, According to Minahan (2016: 249), the Lozis of Caprivi fought a separatist war from 1994 to 1999; however, we found no other evidence that there was separatist violence in 1994-1997.
- There has been no separatist violence since the 1999 attacks, and thus all other years are coded as NVIOLSD. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- In the pre-colonial period, Caprivi was part of Buluzi (Barotseland), a Lozi kingdom (Minahan 2002: 1116f; UDP 2005). In 1889, the British South Africa Company established a protectorate in Barotseland. In 1890, the Lozi kingdom was partitioned when the Caprivi strip, named after German Chancellor Leo von Caprivi, was annexed to German South West Africa in 1890 in order to give the Germans access to Germany’s other colony Tanganyika on Africa’s east coast. The Germans installed indirect rule over the region and in exchange for payment of taxes, most areas ruled by the traditional leaders were respected (Massó Guijarro 2013).
- German rule did not last very long. In 1915, South Africa invaded South West Africa and annexed it and five years later, a League of Nations mandate officially placed South West Africa under South African mandate (Minorities at Risk). However, its remoteness, difficulties of communication and transport as well as the high risk of malaria let the Caprivians retain a relatively high degree of autonomy compared to the rest of the annexed territory (Massó Guijarro 2013).
- In 1971, the ‘tribal governments’ of the Mafwe and Masubia were recognized by South African Government Declaration R261 in 1971. The other groups in the territory remained under the leadership of the Mafwe (Massó Guijarro 2013: 341). The establishment of East Caprivi as a self-governing homeland (Bantustan) predominantly served the purpose of making South Africa a republic in which only white people featured as citizens.
- With Namibia’s independence in 1990, Caprivi lost its status as a Bantustan. Minahan (2002: 1119) suggests that this meant that the Caprivis thereby lost “considerable self-government”. This is a borderline case as it can be questioned whether losing self-government in the context of South Africa’s racist Apartheid system can be considered an autonomy restriction. The dissolution of Bantustans was initiated in 1989 (see Basters). [1989: autonomy restriction]

Concessions and restrictions

- In the aftermath of the 1999 rebellion, 132 East Caprivians were detained for their support for a secessionist rebellion. According to Amnesty International, at least 70 among them “may be prisoners of conscience, arrested solely based on their actual or perceived non-violent support for the political opposition in the region, their ethnic identity or their membership of certain organization” (Melber 2009). This is not a restriction as defined in the codebook.

- Per the 1992 Regional Council Act, regional governors were indirectly elected by regional councillors. Yet, from 2005 onwards, regional governors were appointed by the central government (Amupanda et. 2020; All Africa 2007). While this increased central control somewhat, competencies of regional governors are limited (Simon 1996: 7). Therefore, we do not code a restriction
- In 2006, the Namibian government banned the United Democratic Party (UDP) of the East Caprivi Strip for its secessionist objectives (MAR; Melber 2009). While an instance of nonviolent repression, this is not a restriction as defined in the codebook.
- In 2013, the Caprivi Region was renamed as the Zambezi Region.

Regional autonomy

NA

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

- [1990: host state change (new)]

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	East Caprivians
<i>Scenario</i>	1:n
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Basubias; Mafwe
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	56502000; 56507000

Power access

- EPR does not code the East Caprivians as a single group, arguing that there are different ethnic groups within the region with different political relevance. According to MAR, the East Caprivians consist of three groups, all of which are sub-groups of the Lozis: the Mafwe, the Subiya (or Basubias or Masubias), and the Mayeye (also see Minahan 2002: 1116). EPR codes two of these groups, the Mafwe and the Subiya. It does not code the Mayeye, which appear to be a very small group (we could not find much information on them). This would suggest something coming close to an 1:n scenario (ie., the East Caprivians would be associated with both the Mafwe and the Subiya (Basubias/Masubias) in EPR.
- EPR suggests that the Basubias were represented in the national executive while the Mafwe were excluded. From 1990 to 2020, Basubias is coded as junior partner, and Mafwe is coded as powerless. This suggests that the Lozis/East Caprivians can be considered included in government, even if just by one of their sub-groups. [1990-2020: junior partner]

Group size

- The group size is ambiguous.
 - o According to MAR V, the East Caprivians make up 4% of Namibia's population. The CIA World Factbook suggests the same figure.

- EPR, by contrast, would suggest a group size of at least 6%, as both the Mafwe and the Basubias are coded with 3%.
- Minahan (2002: 1115), finally, suggests that there were about 100,000 Lozis/Caprivians in Namibia in 2002, suggesting a group size estimate of 5.13% if combined with the WB population estimate of Namibia for 2002 (1.95 mio). We rely on Minahan's estimate as it seems middle of the road. [0.0513]

Regional concentration

- According to Minahan (2002: 1115), the East Caprivians make up 78% of their homeland, and close to 80% of the East Caprivians in Namibia live there. MAR and EPR also suggest regional concentration. [regionally concentrated]

Kin

- The East Caprivians are related to the Lozis in Zambia (MAR; Minahan 2002). [kin in adjacent country]

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Indigenous Peoples

Activity: 1993-2020

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- The indigenous peoples of Namibia include the San (also called Bushmen), the Nama, the Ovahimba (also called Himba), the Ovazemba (also called Zemba), the Ovatjimba, the Ovatwa, and their sub-groups (IWGIA 2021). Several indigenous groups have mobilized for better land rights protection in post-independence Namibia. The indigenous groups make up about 8% of Namibia's population, but the various tribes are small in number and we therefore combine them under a single header.
- Perhaps the most visible mobilization involves the Hai||om San, a sub-group of the San. There are between 27,000 and 36,000 San in Namibia. Despite scepticism over group rights, the post-independence Namibian government gave most San groups a limited degree of recognition and land rights after 1990. An important exception are the Hai||om San, who remained the only San group without access to communal lands as of 2020. As of 2020, there were ca. 9,000 Hai||om San in Namibia according to MRGI and 10-15,000 according to Hitchcock (2015).
- According to several sources, Hai||om groups have petitioned for land rights on the area of the Etosha National Park, from which they had been forcibly removed several decades ago (Hitchcock 2015; MRGI). Maletsky (1997) suggests that the movement started in 1993. The Hai||om engaged in demonstrations in both Etosha and Windhoek. In 1997, 73 were arrested at a protest in Etosha National Park, which brought international attention to the conflict (Hitchcock 2015).
- The Hai||om San's mobilization for land rights is ongoing. In 2015, the community launched a legal claim to access the park and control operations within it, as well as to receive a share of its revenue. Nearly 2,500 members of the community had registered their support for the applicants and their claim (MRGI). The legal claim was denied (Legal Resources Center 2021).
- Another indigenous group that has mobilized for better land rights protection is the Himba. The Himba are Herero-speaking semi-nomadic pastoralists living in north-western Namibia and south-western Angola in an area they refer to as Kaokoland. Their population is estimated at 25,000 people, though no reliable figures exist (Lee 2012; MRGI). The Himba have a long-standing dispute with the Namibian government over plans to build a hydro-electric dam which would flood parts of their ancestral lands. This dispute began in ca. 1995 and is ongoing (Harring 2001; MRGI). The Himba are victims of land grabs by other groups and in connection to mining project and therefore demand better protection of their land. In 2012, all 36 traditional Himba leaders appealed directly to the UN and the international community to intervene. Among other things, Himba leaders demanded that Kaokoland is legally recognized by the state as their territory (Lee 2012).
- Other indigenous groups including the Zemba and other San sub-groups such as the Nyae Nyae have also mobilized for better land rights protection (IWGIA 2021; UNDP 2012).
- We code the start date in 1993, the first year we could find evidence for mobilization for better land rights protection, and peg the movement as ongoing. [start date: 1993; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- The movement's claims involve better protection of land rights (see above). [1993-2020: autonomy claim]

Independence claims

NA

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- This movement includes claims by several indigenous groups. In some cases, their claims are clearly defined; for example, the Hai||om San claim the Etosha National Park and an area called Mangetti West (MRGI). In most other cases, though, we could not find clear evidence on the exact territories that are claimed and therefore code based on the respective groups' settlement areas. We draw on GeoEPR, which includes digital maps for three of the largest indigenous groups (Nama, Himba, and San).

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- No evidence for violence above the threshold. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- The San suffered strong discrimination and were dispossessed from their land, especially during colonization. The Hai||om San were forcibly removed from Etosha National Park in 1953-1954. In 1970 a largely waterless San 'homeland' was delineated in north-east Namibia from what was left of traditional San territory; the Hai||om did not receive a reserve (Hitchcock 2015; MRGI).
- Other indigenous groups including the Himba, Nama, Zemba, etc. similarly suffered from violations of their land rights (MRGI).
- The Constitution of Namibia prohibits discrimination on the grounds of ethnic or tribal affiliation but does not specifically recognise the rights of Indigenous Peoples (IWGIA 2021).

Concessions and restrictions

- In 1996, Namibia introduced legislation giving communities the power to create their own Conservancies. Conservancies provide land ownership and a degree of self-government. Indigenous groups had to apply individually to receive a Conservancy. Each conservancy is ultimately governed by its own constitution. As of ca. 2020, 86 conservancies had been established which cover around 20% of Namibia's total area and in which ca. 280,000 live. The first four Conservancies were established in 1998 (Conservation Namibia n.d.; Cultural Survival 2010; NACSO n.d.; (UNDP 2012). A list and map of all Conservancies can be found on the NACSO website. Due to the large number of Conservancies, we code a single concession in 1996. [1996: autonomy concession]
 - o Related: Namibia introduced the Traditional Authorities Act in 1997. Traditional leaders are entrusted with the allocation of communal land and the formulation of the traditional group's customary laws (EPR; Wikipedia).

- In 2007 the Namibian government began purchasing commercial farms for purposes of resettlement of Hai||om (Hitchcock 2015). However, no communal land rights were granted (MRGI). We do not code a concession.

Regional autonomy

- The Conservacies and traditional leadership provide many indigenous groups a degree of self-rule, but the level of self-rule is insufficient for us to code regional autonomy. This follows EPR. [no autonomy]

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

NA

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Indigenous Peoples
<i>Scenario</i>	1:n
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Himba; Nama; San
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	56512000; 56510000; 56508000

- The indigenous peoples of Namibia include the San (also called Bushmen), the Nama, the Ovahimba (also called Himba), the Ovazemba (also called Zemba), the Ovatjimba, the Ovatwa, and their sub-groups (IWGIA 2021). EPR codes some of these groups but not all.

Power access

- EPR codes the Nama as included in the government, which is one of Namibia's largest groups. We follow EPR but note that the remaining two indigenous groups covered by EPR – the Himba and the San – notably lack representation in the national cabinet. [junior partner]

Group size

- The indigenous groups make up about 8% of Namibia's population (IWGIA 2021). [0.08]

Regional concentration

- EPR includes three groups – the Himba, Nama, and San – and codes all of them as regionally concentrated. EPR applies a lower bar than we do, but we could not find better figures. It is worth noting that the Hailom San community, which is among the strongest mobilizing groups and the largest San community, is widely dispersed (Hitchcock 2015). This does not apply to all groups, however. [regionally concentrated]

Kin

- We found no evidence for numerically significant transborder kin groups. There are San in South Africa and Botswana; however, their number is below 100,000 (cf. Gibson 2004). [no kin]

Sources

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