



# Political Parties in Namibia

Information Brochure | January 2022





## List of parties that are currently accredited with the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN).

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1. All People's Party (**APP**)
2. Christian Democratic Voice Party (**CDV**)
3. Congress of Democrats (**CoD**)
4. Democratic Party of Namibia (**DPN**)
5. Independent Patriots for Change (**IPC**)
6. Landless People's Movement (**LPM**)
7. Monitor Action Group (**MAG**)
8. Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters (**NEFF**)
9. National Democratic Party of Namibia (**NDP**)
10. National Empowerment Fighting Corruption (**NEFC**)
11. National Patriotic Front of Namibia
12. National Unity Democratic Organisation of Namibia (**NUDO**)
13. Popular Democratic Movement (**PDM**)
14. Rally for Democracy and Progress (**RDP**)
15. Republican Party of Namibia (**RP**)
16. Swanu of Namibia (**SWANU**)
17. SWAPO Party of Namibia (**SWAPO**)
18. United Democratic Front of Namibia (**UDF**)
19. United People's Movement (**UPM**)
20. Workers Revolutionary Party (**WRP**)

Source: <https://www.ecn.na/political-parties/> (Accessed: 20.01.2022).





# Namibia's Political Landscape

## The History and Spectrum of Political Parties in Namibia

Freedom, justice, and solidarity are the basic principles underlying the work of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. (KAS). In this regard, we are publishing this brochure, that aims to enable the people of Namibia to continue their education on politics, elections, and the current bandwidth of political parties. KAS vouches for a pluralistic democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. As the people are the most important element in a democracy, we truly believe that the elucidation of rights, the political system, and the functioning and differences of political parties is an absolute must.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation hopes to herewith contribute to the unprejudiced opinion-forming and to support the public with valuable information in order to encourage the people to execute their right to vote.

### Development of Namibia's political system

After Namibia was ruled by South Africa as a consequence of the League of Nations administration mandate, which South Africa had over Namibia since the end of World War I and which persisted until 1990, Namibia found itself in a liberation struggle gradually. Early resistance to the implemented political and racial segregation system by South Africa eventually developed in an idea of liberation and independence for Namibia.

After South Africa's refusal at the supersession of the League by the United Nations in 1946 to surrender its earlier mandate, it was the late

Herero Chief, Hosea Kutako through Rev. Michael Scott who petitioned the UN, becoming one of the first Namibians to do so.

The main purpose was to alert the UN and the world about the desperate plight of the black majority suffering under the South African apartheid regime. Hence, in 1956 the International Court of Justice advised the United Nations General Assembly to adopt resolutions in the mandated territory and to hear petitions. Around 1960, the political focus turned resistance into liberation, resulting in a transformation from the traditional thought of leadership to a more political party leadership thought.





After petitioning seemed unsuccessful<sup>1</sup> parties started taking their own initiatives to fight for liberation. Since its establishment in 1960, South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) evolved into a dominant party.

1988 marked a turning point in the liberation struggle when a military disaster was prevented at the northern border of Namibia and South Africa negotiated elections, a new constitution, and independence for Namibia. The first democratic elections followed in November 1989 and were supervised by the United Nations. SWAPO gained 57% of the votes and 60% of the seats. Finally, the party's long-time leader Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma became president.

## The Political Structures in Namibia

The Republic of Namibia is a democratic state which consists of two legislative chambers.

- ▶ The lower chamber is the National Assembly which is being elected every five years and has 104 seats – 96 of them are distributed by the results of the election and a maximum of eight seats can be appointed by the president. In these elections, the people of Namibia have the chance to vote for the party that is closest to their personal interests. During the five-year-terms, the elected and

appointed representatives, also called members of the Parliament (MPs) then shape the national statute by debating on laws, and passing new ones (Constitution of Namibia, Chapter 7).

- ▶ The upper chamber is called the National Council. The council represents the 14 regions of Namibia, sending 3 delegates from each, which equals 42 delegates in total. These, in turn, are elected by the constituency councillors. The task of the deputies of the regions is to review the bills passed by the National Assembly and also to forward recommendations of regional concern to the lower chamber (Constitution of Namibia, Chapter 8).

Next to the legislative pillar, there is the executive pillar. Part of the executive is the government, which consists of the president, the vice-president, the prime minister and the deputy prime minister, and such other ministers from the National Assembly. The cabinet's<sup>2</sup> task is to carry out the government's duties, which includes the co-ordination and collaboration of the individual ministries (Constitution of Namibia, Chapter 6). It is nominated by the elected President and can only be displaced if the National Assembly withdraws its confidence in a vote.

<sup>1</sup>Petitioning the UN was one of three strategies to exert pressure on the Apartheid South African regime. Others were diplomacy through the UN (lobbying and meetings) and the armed resistance.

<sup>2</sup>The cabinet, describes the government team, including the President, Prime Minister, and other Ministers.



## Tasks and composition of the government

As written in the constitution of Namibia “[t]he President shall be the Head of State and of the Government and the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Force” (Article 27(1)).

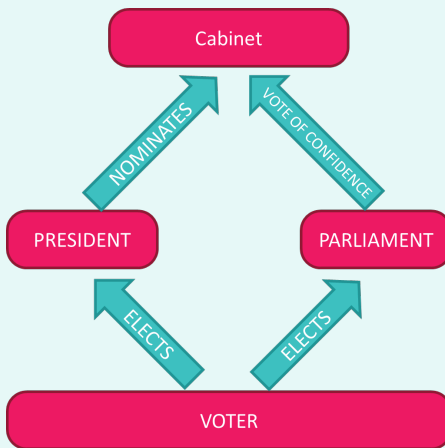


Figure 1: The semi-presidential system of Namibia

However, the President is not the only relevant person in the government. The President has to be in close consultation with the ministers who cover a wide range of departments. To name just a few, there is the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, the Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, the Minister of Defence & Veterans Affairs, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Justice, and a number of others. To get an overlook on the whole cabinet, you can visit the website of the Office of the Prime Minister at [www.opm.gov.na/ministers-pa](http://www.opm.gov.na/ministers-pa).

Hence, each minister is managing the corresponding Ministry. Likewise, the president’s tasks and duties, the ministers’ tasks are defined in the constitution in article 40. Some very important functions are the management and the overseeing of their ministry, as well as the associated parastatal companies, the proposal of laws to the National Assembly, to answer the Parliament regarding the legitimacy, wisdom, effectiveness, and direction of Government policies, and to issue notices, regulations, and guidelines.

On the whole, the government’s role is to steer and oversee the country’s course of policy and to represent the country externally to other countries.

## How can I cast my vote?

In order to vote, you have to register at your local authority and constituency. This step has to be taken only once and you have to fulfil two requirements:

1. you have to hold the Namibian Citizenship and
2. you must be at least 18 years old.

To verify that you are entitled to register as a voter you need your (valid) green passport, or either the old or new Namibian ID.

Please note, only original documents will be accepted. Copies of your documents won’t be recognised.

However, there are certain exceptions. To learn more about that, you can visit the website of the Electoral Commission of Namibia ([www.ecn.na](http://www.ecn.na)).

## The current allocation of Seats in Parliament

Since the country's independence in 1990, SWAPO is continuously forming the national government. With 63 elected seats SWAPO is holding the absolute majority, without the need to form a coalition<sup>3</sup>. The second-largest party in the Parliament is the Popular Democratic Movement (PDM) with 16 seats making it the official opposition party. After that comes Landless People's Movement (LPM) with four (4) seats, followed by All People's Party (APP), National Unity Democratic Organisation of Namibia (NUDO), United Democratic Front of Namibia (UDF), Republican Party of Namibia (RP), and Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters (NEFF) with two (2) seats each. Finally, there are three parties that hold only one (1) seat, namely Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP), Christian Democratic Voice Party (CDV), and South-West African National Union (SWANU).

In addition to the 96 elected seats in the National Assembly, the President has the possibility to appoint eight (8) further delegates. These seats are currently all occupied by members of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO).

<sup>3</sup>A coalition is an association of two or more parties that define a common agenda for one legislative period with the intention to gain a majority in parliament and form the government.

<sup>4</sup>Formerly known as DTA. The name was changed to Popular Democratic Movement (PDM) on November 4th, 2017.

National Assembly: Election results (in %)				
	2004	2009	2014	2019
SWAPO	76.3	74.29	80.01	65.5
DTA	5.1	3.13	4.8	-
CoD	7.1	0.66	0.38	0.6
UDF	3.6	2.4	2.12	1.8
NUDO	4.2	3.01	2.01	1.9
MAG	0.8	0.58	0.34	-
SWANU	-	0.62	0.71	-
RP	2	0.81	0.68	1.8
APP	-	1.33	2.29	1.8
RDP	-	11.16	3.51	1.1
other	0.9	0.71	-	-
CDV	-	-	-	0.7
LPM	-	-	-	4.7
NEFF	-	-	-	1.7
NDP	-	-	-	0.6
NPF	-	-	-	0.2
PDM <sup>4</sup>	-	-	-	16.6
UDF	-	-	-	1.8
WRP	-	-	-	0.4

**Table 1: National Assembly: Election results**

Source: Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN), retrieved 08.03.2021

## Political Parties in Namibia

From what is already mentioned, it can be inferred that a democracy is nothing without different parties. This section's purpose is to present a few parties that have proven to be relevant in the context of parliamentary work



over the past legislative periods, or that have gained significant results in the last election, namely the PDM.

## 1. SWAPO

The South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) has been very relevant in the context of Namibia's struggle for independence. Since independence the party has changed from a marxist into a social-democratic pro-capitalist setup supporting a mixed economy where all basic industries are publicly owned. Swapo introduced the 40h working week and abolished forced labour. As a governing party since independence, the current state of the Namibian Republic is fundamentally the result of Swapo's agenda during the last three decades. The party aims to fight against the high inequality prevailing in Namibia and to reallocate wealth from the rich to the poor.

In addition to that, the party focuses on the education of young people which should remain to be inclusive and free of charge in order to reverse the generation of young job seekers into employment creators. In line with this intention, industrialisation initiatives shall be created. Other topics highlighted by Swapo are the importance to fight GBV, providing affordable, dignified housing, universal access to health care regardless of physical or mental issues, increasing the contribution to a blue economy (namely tourism, renewable energies, and water desalination), access to productive land and security of tenure, and inclusive development of Namibia. Hence, Swapo celebrates the diversity of the people, but reaffirms the importance of nation-

building and vouches for the protection of independence and sovereignty.

*(Swapo Party Election Manifesto 2020-2025; Boer, 2004)*

## 2. PDM

The Popular Democratic Movement was established in 1977. Their fundamental objectives are to fabricate a fair, just, and equitable society that enables all Namibians to realise their full potential. PDM promotes a social security system that fights extreme poverty, wants a functional and efficient criminal justice system, high-quality education and healthcare, and a growing economy. In terms of the people, PDM puts specific interest on families, as they describe it as the foundation for the maturation of human beings, but also on the rights of the child and the empowerment and advancement of women.

Hence, the party aims to decentralise the countries authorities and powers as close as possible to the people. They promote "a fair distribution of agricultural land among the demographic groups of Namibia, taking into account historical dispositions", the self-sufficiency of farmers, and the formalisation of informal housing in all urban centres. Last but not least, the party strives for a common patriotism that still recognises the cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity of the Namibian people.

*(Constitution of the PDM, 2017).*





### 3. LPM

The Landless People's Movement describes itself as a "peasant, landless working class, urban dwellers, and wretched of the earth movement" (LPM Manifesto). The party defines in its constitution that it wants to accelerate rural and equitable development. Hence, they put particular focus on a well-crafted agrarian policy, health, education, and a transparent economy that is free but with certain political interventions if required.

In the current manifesto, the party advocates for tax incentives for SMEs and more adaptive fiscal policies to respond to economic growth. Also, LPM wants to invest in labour-intensive sectors, implement a franchising law and reorient Black Economic Empowerment.

In terms of state structures, the party wants to reduce the number of 14 regions to 6 provinces. These Provinces shall have their own chief provincial Ministers which promotes the state's decentralisation, reduces the number of constituencies and priorities 're-municipalisation'. In addition to that, the government will be downsized to 12 cabinet ministers, the executive is to be held liable, and the position of the vice-president is to be abolished.

State-Owned-Enterprises (SOEs) that are unproductive or unprofitable will be alienated to the private sector for optimisation to reduce wastage of government spending.

LPM recognises that the land distribution is

still affected by the colonial times, which is why it prefers a land redistribution, however, this should happen on a case-per-case basis. Some more objectives are the reduction of waste and pollution, reduction of unemployment, more investments in sports, creating a new independent commission against corruption, tackling GBV with an allocated amount of N\$1 billion over 5 years, and strengthening African unity.

*(LPM Elections manifesto 2019)*

### 4. NUDO

The National Unity Democratic Organisation, was formed in the year before the Turnhalle Conference in 1964. In a former election manifesto, the party reveals a number of topics that are considered as most important. NUDO wants to transform Namibia into a social welfare state with an egalitarian, non-racial, non-tribal, non-sexist, and just society.

The party strives for a sustainable way of privatizing state-owned companies, resolving the issue of the 1904 and 1905 Genocide with adequate compensation, implementing free education from pre-primary to tertiary learning, as well as a fairer distribution of fishing quotas to create income for the poor and the implementation of resettlement programs which distribute family-owned land back to their descendants.

*(Third manifesto of NUDO)*

### 5. UDF

The United Democratic Front of Namibia has initially been an alliance of eight different parties, whose aim was to form an opposition







to Swapo after the international community declared it the sole liberation movement in Namibia in 1978. Today, UDF is promoting the mixed economy system with the guaranteed right to own property but the potential right to intervene in the market to prevent monopolies and economic sabotage.

In addition to that, in its 2014 election manifesto, the party promoted a digital register of all citizens, that goes along with the proper equipping of Namibians with national documents, the recognition of the importance of land and the agricultural sector, as well as the significance of the youth, sport, recreation and cultural activities for business creation.

*(Pütz, Von Egidy & Caplan 1990:80;*

*UDF Campaign Manifesto 2014)*

## 6. RP

Even though it has existed before, the Republican Party of Namibia was first officially registered in August 2009. The RP identifies itself as a Christian Party promoting Christian moral values. In addition to that, the party was founded as a countermovement to other voices during the Turnhalle Constitutional Conference 1977, supporting to maintain certain rules of apartheid.

In general, the RP follows the principles of a democratic state, with freedom equality, and the eradication of all forms of corruption, suppression, unfair preference, and nepotism. Moreover, the party plans to create two new ministries, a 'Ministry for Employment Creation & Poverty Reduction.

*(The Manifesto of The Republican Party of Namibia)*

## 7. NEFF

In an interview with The Namibian, Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters President and commander-in-chief Epaphras Mukwillongo said, the party is a mass-based organisation that fights inequalities, unemployment, and poverty. In addition to that, it dissociates itself from racial discrimination, imperialism, and capitalism. He also added that the core aim of the party is to "defeat all traces of imperialism and neo-colonialist opportunism".

*(The Namibian, 22.10.2019)*

## 8. IPC

The independent patriots for change is a fairly new party, officially established in August 2020. IPC sees itself as a grassroots participatory democracy build on the principles of law, integrity, dignity, and rule of law. Above that, the party attaches importance to being diverse with no protection of certain ethnic groups. Next to this declaration of the party's fundamental standpoint, it also promotes three projects. First, to supply the girl child with sanitary products to enable them to go to school, secondly, IPC runs a project in Twaloloka providing meals to children and thirdly, a dry-pit project for people living in informal settlements.

*(www.ipc-namibia.com)*

## 9. RDP

The Party Rally for Democracy and Progress was launched in 2007 under the leadership of Hidipo Hamutenya and Jesaya Nyamu. The current leader is Mike Kavekatora. The party's principles are unity, democracy,





freedom, integrity, justice, and social progress. The identified priority areas are economic development, a better healthcare system, employment creation and support for Namibians to start business ventures, better housing, fair and equitable redistribution of land, the fight against crime and gender-based violence, and an independent and efficient judiciary. Added to that, the party highlights, that good governance entails discussion, consultation, and consensus. Therefore, it is stated that accountability and transparency are of great importance. Next to that, one headword in the field among the human rights ambitions is to make food security a basic right.

Taking a look at the democratic system, RDP suggests changing the system of party lists for elections to a system where people elect “their own leaders through a constituency system” *(RDP Election Manifesto 2014)*.

Shifting to the economy, the party promotes a free market with an adjusted tax system, that with progressive income taxation, which will be reviewed regularly. Also, there shall be tax incentives for manufacturing enterprises and the focus on power production should be reinforced with a focus on renewable energies. *(RDP Election Manifesto 2014)*

## 10. CoD

The party Congress of Democrats was founded in 1999 out of a protest against prevalent politics at that time. The party sees itself as an urban left-wing party, speaking out against authoritarian, national socialist, corrupt and tribal tendencies. Instead of homogeneity CoD is promoting ethnic, linguistic, and cultural plurality. Above that, environmental protection is taking over a prominent role.

In reflection to the predominant unemployment, the party considers the government as a responsible actor who should encourage unemployed people to attain relevant skills and provide funds for that.

*(Namibian Institute for Democracy, 2014; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2015)*





### ABOUT KAS:

Freedom, justice and solidarity are the basic principles underlying the work of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS). The KAS is a political foundation, closely associated with the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU). As co-founder of the CDU and the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967) united Christian-social, conservative and liberal traditions. His name is synonymous with the democratic reconstruction of Germany, the firm alignment of foreign policy with the trans-Atlantic community of values, the vision of a unified Europe and an orientation towards the social market economy. His intellectual heritage continues to serve both as our aim as well as our obligation today.

The self-initiated measures of the KAS offices play an increasingly important role. Through such instruments, pressing problems and questions can be immediately addressed. KAS in Namibia cooperates closely with the office of the Ombudsman and The University Centre for Studies in Namibia (TUCSIN), in order to focus on measures dealing with good governance, the rule of law and political parties.

A further task of the Windhoek office is to support Angola's democratic development. With this goal in mind the foundation cooperates with the Ombudsman of Angola, as well as the Instituto de Desenvolvimento e Democracia (IDD). Furthermore, measure have been initiated which aim at establishing a training centre in the Kwanza Sul province.

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