



FORUM DEUTSCHSPRACHIGER NAMIBIER

FORUM OF GERMAN-SPEAKING NAMIBIANS

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FORUM OF GERMAN-SPEAKING NAMIBIANS:

PRESS RELEASE ON BADLY-EXECUTED PRESIDENTIAL AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS

It was with utter dismay that the Forum of German-Speaking Namibians watched how events on 27th of November - election day - evolved.

Namibians are used to long queues and generally patient. However, because of bad planning and execution on the side of the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN), this patience was exploited. Election day was a slap in the face of the Namibian population.

Reports have reached us of persons waiting for 14 hours and more, mostly in the open sun, often without water or toilet amenities being provided. Some travelled several hours - many on foot! - to try various polling stations, only to find that ballot papers had run out, the electronic equipment was defective, or a mobile polling station had closed without attending to all the voters present. The real challenge for future elections is that many Namibians will be hesitant to go through this ordeal again.

While the preparations for these elections were handled quite efficiently and voters well informed, the *only* day that really mattered, election day, was an organisational disaster. The Forum of German-Speaking Namibians would like to remind the ECN that **Namibians have a *right to vote*, it is not a *privilege* which the ECN may grant or withhold.**

We will never know how many voters went home without having had the opportunity to even reach the entrance of a polling station, but at least in some areas there may have been several thousand.

While the Forum welcomes the decision allowing voting to continue in some regions, again we would question why some have been excluded. There will still be voters whose rights have been violated.

Democratic processes have been harmed. Concerned voices are already heard, expressing scepticism about the validity of any outcome. Generally, doubts about the outcome of an election are harmful to a young democracy. In many countries of the world, election results are queried afterwards, often leading to distrust in the government and even to uprisings. It is in the hands of the ECN to avoid this slippery path to chaos and violence.

Vorstandsmitglieder:

H. Hecht (Vorsitzender), B. Herma, M. Nambela, H. Schneider-Waterberg, C. von Blotnitz, R. von Hase, M. von Wietersheim
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The Forum of German-Speaking Namibians calls on the Electoral Commission of Namibia to honestly and critically look into the numerous mistakes made. It must also re-consider the composition of the ECN, as well as roles and performances of current managers. Furthermore, the Forum proposes that the ECN set up channels – both digital and offline – for the public to give input, without fear or favour. During this process, there is a need for absolute transparency to avoid rumour-mongering, which would again harm our trust in the outcome of the elections. Namibians have to be certain that the elected leadership has come about through free and fair elections.

Namibia's future as a democracy depends on it.

Benita Herma

Vice-Chairperson / Forum of German-Speaking Namibian

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