

Namibia

## Riotous Assemblies Act, 1956

Act 17 of 1956

Legislation as at 11 November 1977

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Riotous Assemblies Act, 1956

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Republic of Namibia  
Annotated Statutes

## Riotous Assemblies Act, 1956

### Act 17 of 1956

Published in South African Government Gazette 5651 on 16 March 1956

Assented to on 8 March 1956

Commenced on 16 June 1976

[This is the version of this document from 11 November 1977  
and includes any amendments published up to 14 June 2024.]

[Amended by [Riotous Assemblies Amendment Act, 1974 \(Act 30 of 1974\)](#) on 15 March 1974]

[Amended by [Internal Security Amendment Act, 1976 \(Act 79 of 1976\)](#) on 16 June 1976]

[Amended by [Riotous Assemblies Amendment Proclamation, 1977 \(Proclamation AG10 of 1977\)](#) on 11 November 1977]

[APPLICABILITY TO SOUTH WEST AFRICA: Section 19A, inserted by Act [79 of 1976](#), states “This Act and any amendment thereof shall apply also in the territory of South West Africa, including the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel.”]

[TRANSFER TO SOUTH WEST AFRICA: The administration of this Act was transferred to South West Africa by the Executive Powers (Justice) Transfer Proclamation, AG 33 of 1979, dated 12 November 1979. After the date of transfer, much of the Act was repealed by the South African Intimidation Act [72 of 1982](#), which was made expressly applicable to South West Africa by virtue of the Security Matters Proclamation, AG 29 of 1985 (OG 5059). However, other portions of the Act were repealed in South Africa by the Internal Security Act [74 of 1982](#) (RSA GG 8232), which did not apply to South West Africa because it was not made expressly so applicable. Act [17 of 1956](#) thus applied to South West Africa as it stood in South Africa after Act [72 of 1982](#), but before Act [74 of 1982](#).]

[Section 3(1)(f) of the transfer proclamation excluded the term “Republic” from the provisions of section 3(1)(c) of the Executive Powers Transfer (General Provisions) Proclamation, AG 7 of 1977, except where it occurred for the second and third times in section 5 of the Act (which was repealed in 1989). Thus, in the remainder of the Act, prior to Namibian independence, “Republic” continued to refer only to South Africa even after the transfer.]

[The Riotous Assemblies Amendment Proclamation, AG 10 of 1977 (OG 3665) repealed sections 4 and 19 of the Act. The Intimidation Act [72 of 1982](#) (RSA) (RSA GG 8222) – which was applied to South West Africa as of 15 June 1985 by the Security Matters Proclamation, AG 29 of 1985 (OG 5059) – repealed sections 10-15. The First Law Amendment (Abolition of Discriminatory or Restrictive Laws for the Purposes of Free and Fair Election) Proclamation, AG 14 of 1989 (OG 5726), which came into force on date of publication (11 November 1977), repealed sections 2 and 6. The Public Gatherings Proclamation, AG 23 of 1989 (OG 5756),

which came into force on the date of publication (21 July 1989), repealed sections 1, 3, 5 and 7-9. Thus, the only remaining sections of the Act are sections 16, 17, 18, 19A, 20 and 21.]

## ACT

To consolidate the laws relating to riotous assemblies and the prohibition of the engendering of feelings of grievous enmity between various sections of the inhabitants of the territory of South West Africa and matters incidental thereto, and the laws relating to certain offences.

[The long title is amended by Act 30 of 1974 and by AG 10 of 1977. The only remaining sections of the Act concern power to regulate the transportation of explosives and the criminal offences of incitement to public violence, conspiracy, attempted crimes, and inducement to commit crimes.]

(Afrikaans text signed by the Governor-General)

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, the Senate and the House of Assembly of the Union of South Africa, as follows:-

[AG 10 of 1977 makes the following substitutions throughout the Act (except in sections 1, 5 and 16):]

[\* "Administrator-General" for "State President" and "Minister";]

[\* "territory" for "Republic"; and]

[\* "Official Gazette" for "Gazette".]

### 16. Special precautions in the interest of public safety as regards explosives

- (1) Whenever the State President deems it necessary to take special precautions to maintain public order or to protect life and property he may, by proclamation in the Gazette, prohibit for such period as he may think fit the transportation of explosives from any place to any other place in the Republic, except under such safeguards and conditions as are prescribed by regulation, and may make regulations, to be in force for such limited period as he may think fit, as to the transportation of explosives to and from particular areas, or as to the storage, removal, possession or use of explosives within any particular area by all persons or by persons of specified occupations or callings, and may limit or vary the conditions of any licences or permits held or to be issued under the Explosives Act, 1956 (Act No. 26 of 1956), or the regulations made thereunder.

[subsection (1) substituted by Act 30 of 1974]

- (2) Any person who contravenes or fails to comply with the provisions of any proclamation or regulation issued under sub-section (1) shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to the penalties mentioned in section fifteen.

[AG 10 of 1977 directs generally that the word "Administrator-General" is to be substituted for "State President", "territory" for "Republic" and "Official Gazette" for "Gazette" throughout the Act, but it excludes section 16 from these substitutions.]

[Section 3(1)(f) of the Executive Powers (Justice) Transfer Proclamation, AG 33 of 1979, excluded the term "Republic" in this section from the provisions of section 3(1)(c) of the Executive Powers Transfer (General Provisions) Proclamation, AG 7 of 1977. Therefore, prior to Namibian independence, "Republic" in this section continued to refer only to South Africa.]

## Chapter III Amendment of the Criminal Law

### 17. Acts or conduct which constitute an incitement to public violence

[The verb "constitute" in the heading should be "constitutes" to be grammatically correct.]

A person shall be deemed to have committed the common law offence of incitement to public violence if, in any place whatever, he has acted or conducted himself in such a manner, or has spoken or published such words, that it might reasonably be expected that the natural and probable consequences of his act, conduct, speech or publication would, under the circumstances, be the commission of public violence by members of the public generally or by persons in whose presence the act or conduct took place or to whom the speech or publication was addressed.

## 18. Attempt, conspiracy and inducing another person to commit offence

(1) Any person who attempts to commit any offence against a statute or a statutory regulation shall be guilty of an offence and, if no punishment is expressly provided thereby for such an attempt, be liable on conviction to the punishment to which a person convicted of actually committing that offence would be liable.

(2) Any person who -

- (a) conspires with any other person to aid or procure the commission of or to commit; or
- (b) incites, instigates, commands, or procures any other person to commit,

any offence, whether at common law or against a statute or statutory regulation, shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to the punishment to which a person convicted of actually committing that offence would be liable.

## Chapter IV Supplementary Provisions

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### 19A.

This Act and any amendment thereof shall apply also in the territory of South West Africa, including the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel.

**[section 19A, without a heading, inserted by Act 79 of 1976]**

## 20. Repeal of laws

(1) Subject to the provisions of sub-section (4), the laws specified in the Schedule are hereby repealed to the extent set out in the third column of the Schedule.

(2) So much of the common law as renders illegal any gathering of persons in the open air without the consent of the authorities shall cease to be in operation in the territory.

**[Subsection (2) is amended by Act 30 of 1974 to substitute “Republic” for “Union”, and by the global substitutions in AG 10 of 1977 to substitute “territory” for “Republic”.]**

(3) In the event of any conflict between the provisions of any law, or bye-law or regulation made under a law, and the provisions of this Act, the provisions of this Act shall prevail, but, save as herein provided, the provisions of any such law, bye-law, or regulation shall be of the same force and effect as if this Act had not been passed.

(4) Any proclamation, regulation, notice, order, prohibition, authority, permission, information or document issued, made, promulgated, given or granted and any other action taken under any provision of a law repealed by sub-section (1), shall be deemed to have been issued, made, promulgated, given, granted or taken under the corresponding provision of this Act.

**21. Short title**

This Act shall be called the Riotous Assemblies Act, 1956.

**Schedule**  
**Laws Repealed**

No. and Year of Law.	Title.	Extent of Repeal.
Act <a href="#">No. 27 of 1914</a>	Riotous Assemblies and Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1914.	So much as is unrepealed.
Act <a href="#">No. 19 of 1930</a>	Riotous Assemblies (Amendment) Act, 1930.	The whole.
Act <a href="#">No. 15 of 1954</a>	Riotous Assemblies and Suppression of Communism Amendment Act, 1954.	Section two <b>[full stop missing in Gazette]</b>