

The Downing of Flight 103 over Lockerbie: It was the Uranium

Mystery continues to surround the 1988 downing of Panam Flight 103 at Lockerbie. Who did it, how, and why? UN Assistant Secretary-General and Commissioner for Namibia, Bernt Carlsson Died in the Crash

By [Global Research News](#)

Global Research, January 07, 2014

[The Ecologist](#)

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [History](#)

By Patrick Haseldine

[Patrick Haseldine](#) is a former British diplomat who was dismissed by the then foreign secretary, John Major, in August 1989. He is often referred to as the “Emeritus Professor of Lockerbie Studies”.

After 25 years study of the topic Patrick Haseldine reveals the shocking truth.

A little over two weeks ago, my wife and I were seated beside the flower bedecked pulpit in a packed Westminster Abbey.

There was an eerie hush as Big Ben’s muffled chimes tolled 7:00 pm – the exact moment 25 years earlier when [Pan Am Flight 103](#) was sabotaged over Lockerbie in Scotland on 21st December 1988.

All 259 passengers and crew were killed, as were 11 people in the town. The names of the 270 Lockerbie bombing victims were listed alphabetically in the Order of Service, and five relatives took it in turns to read them out.

Thus it was Jane Swire, mother of victim Flora and wife of [Dr Jim Swire](#), who read the name of the 43rd victim on the list: [Bernt Wilmar Carlsson](#).

United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Commissioner for Namibia, [Bernt Carlsson](#), was Lockerbie’s highest profile victim, yet the authorities and the media never mention him. Why?

As comedian Kenneth Williams used to say: *“I think the answer lies in the soil.”*

More specifically, I believe the answer lies in the processed uranium ore ([Yellowcake](#)) that was illegally extracted from Namibia in the period 1976 to 1989. A TV documentary film in March 1980 described succinctly what was going on:

“World In Action investigates the secret contract and operations arranged by British-based [Rio Tinto Zinc Corp](#) to import into Britain uranium (Yellowcake) from the [Rössing Uranium Mine](#) in Namibia, whose major shareholders are the governments of Iran and South Africa.

"This contract having received the blessing of the British government is now compromising the UK's position in the United Nations negotiations to remove apartheid South Africa from Namibia, which it is illegally occupying."

Thatcher "proud to be British"

Within four months of the [Lockerbie disaster](#), Prime Minister [Margaret Thatcher](#) decided to make a whistle-stop tour of southern Africa, and found time to visit Namibia's Rössing Uranium Mine where she was accompanied by [David Cameron](#), then a youthful Conservative Central Office researcher.

Mrs Thatcher was so impressed by the Rössing Uranium Mine that she declared it made her *"proud to be British"*.

While Mrs Thatcher was in Namibia, she put [improper pressure on the UN's man](#), [Martti Ahtisaari](#), head of the [United Nations Transition Assistance Group](#), to permit the South African Defence Force (SADF) to take action against [SWAPO](#) soldiers who were peacefully returning to Namibia to vote in the November 1989 independence elections.

As a result, as many as 308 SWAPO soldiers were killed – *"shot in the back"* according to former SADF major Nico Basson.

Whether Mrs Thatcher could have persuaded [UN Commissioner for Namibia](#), Bernt Carlsson, to agree to such treachery we shall never know since [Mr Carlsson](#) was assassinated fifteen weeks earlier, on 21st December 1988.

Illegal mining

In 1974, the [UN Council for Namibia issued Decree No. 1](#) prohibited the extraction and distribution of any natural resource from Namibian territory without the explicit permission of the [UNCN](#) (United Nations Council for Namibia).

It also provided for the seizure of any illegally exported material, and warned that violators could be held liable for damages. Projected to be Namibia's largest mining operation, [Rössing](#) became the primary target of Decree No. 1.

However, many Western governments (including the US and Britain) refused to accept Decree No. 1 as binding, with lawyers and government officials disputing whether the decree was juridically sound, whether and how it might apply, and which courts might enforce its application.

But the bottom line was that Rössing aimed to supply at least 10 percent of the global uranium market which translated into one-third of Britain's needs, and probably more for Japan.

Decree No. 1 therefore sparked a lengthy international struggle over the legitimacy of [Rössing uranium](#). The UNCN sent out numerous delegations to convince governments to suspend their dealings with Namibia.

Only one country pledged to respect Decree No. 1

They heard many expressions of support for the independence process, but prior to the mid-1980s only Sweden (among the large Western uranium consumers) pledged to boycott Rössing's product.

Activists stepped up the pressure in a wide variety of forums. In the UK and the Netherlands, they joined forces with the anti-nuclear movement, resulting in organisations like the British CANUC (Campaign Against the Namibian Uranium Contract).

The UNCN held a week-long hearing in July 1980, during which experts and activists from Europe, Japan, and the United States gave presentations on Rössing's operations and contracts, and the TV documentary *Follow the Yellowcake Road* was screened.

Testimony focused on the relationship between southern Africa and the Western nuclear industry, arguing that all purchases of Namibian uranium effectively supported the colonial occupation via the taxes paid by the Rössing mine.

In 1981, Namibia's government-in-waiting (SWAPO) helped organise a seminar for West European trade unions as well as presentations on living and working conditions at Rössing and on the mine's paramilitary security forces, which appealed to the loyalties of the [International Socialist movement](#), where Bernt Carlsson was Secretary-General.

The seminar detailed the secret movements of Rössing uranium through European planes, ships, docks, and roads, noting that European transport workers had unknowingly handled barrels of radioactive substances.

A 1982 seminar organised by the American Committee on Africa on the role of transnational corporations in Namibia focused heavily on uranium, reprising many of the arguments mounted by European activists.

UNCN legal action

In May 1985, the [United Nations Council for Namibia](#) (UNCN) began legal action against [URENCO](#) – the joint Dutch/British/West German uranium enrichment company, with plants in Capenhurst (Cheshire, England), Almelo (Netherlands) and Gronau (West Germany).

Since URENCO had been importing uranium ore from the Rössing Uranium Mine in Namibia, the company was charged with breaching UNCN Decree No. 1.

The case was expected to be ready by the end of 1985 but was delayed because URENCO argued that – despite having enriched uranium of Namibian origin since 1980 – it was impossible to tell where specific consignments came from.

When the case finally reached court in July 1986, the Dutch government took URENCO's line, [claiming not to have known](#) where the uranium had been mined.

Upon the adjournment of the URENCO proceedings, SWAPO's UN representative, Helmut Angula, insisted that other companies, such as Shell, [De Beers](#) (Consolidated Diamond Mines), Newmont, and Rio Tinto were also likely to face prosecution for breaching the UNCN Decree.

Bernt Carlsson lays down the law

The man responsible for Namibia under international law, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and UN Commissioner for Namibia, Bernt Carlsson, spoke about these prosecutions in a *World In Action* TV documentary "[The Case of the Disappearing Diamonds](#)" which was broadcast by *Thames Television* in September 1987:

"The United Nations this year in July started legal action against one such company – the Dutch company URENCO which imports uranium."

When asked if he would be taking action against other companies such as De Beers, the diamond mining conglomerate, Bernt Carlsson replied:

"All the companies which are carrying out activities in Namibia which have not been authorised by the United Nations are being studied at present."

"As far as De Beers is concerned, the corporation has been trying to skim the cream which means they have gone for the large diamonds at the expense of the steady pace. In this way they have really shortened the lifespan of the mines."

"One would expect from a worldwide corporation like De Beers and Anglo-American that they would behave with an element of social and political responsibility. But their behaviour in the specific case of Namibia has been one of profit maximation regardless of its social, economic, political and even legal responsibility."

Delay in closing the UF6 loophole

In 1988, US Congressional Democrats began working to close the UF6 loophole. The State Department's Office of Non-proliferation and Export Policy did as well, declaring:

"It is not possible to avoid the provisions of the [Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act](#) by swapping flags or obligations on natural uranium physically of South African origin before it enters the USA."

Nevertheless, Rössing managed to delay the implementation of restrictions which could have put it out of business. And – in the end – that delay sufficed: apartheid South Africa and other negotiating parties signed an independence accord on 22nd December 1988.

It was on his way to the signing of the agreement at UN headquarters in New York, that UN Commissioner for Namibia Bernt Carlsson became the highest profile victim of the Pan Am Flight 103 crash at Lockerbie on 21st December 1988.

URENCO case dropped

Following Bernt Carlsson's untimely death in the [Lockerbie bombing](#), the case against URENCO was inexplicably dropped and no further prosecutions took place of the companies and countries that were in breach of the United Nations Council for Namibia Decree No. 1.

Despite this fairly obvious evidence that Bernt Carlsson was the prime target on Pan Am Flight 103, there has never been a murder investigation conducted by the [CIA](#), [FBI](#), Scottish Police or indeed by the United Nations.

Instead, fabricated evidence has been used to frame and wrongfully convict the Libyan

[Abdelbaset al-Megrahi](#) for the crime of Lockerbie.

URENCO privatisation

On 22 April 2013, David Cameron's coalition government announced plans to sell its share in URENCO – the uranium enrichment company owned by Britain, Germany and the Netherlands – unleashing a new wave of privatisations in an attempt to cut the public debt.

The UK government's one-third share in URENCO could fetch up to £3bn, making it one of the biggest privatisations in the UK in years.

Headquartered in the semi-rural Buckinghamshire village of Stoke Poges – where, appropriately enough given its atomic plot the James Bond film "Goldfinger" was partly shot – URENCO has a 31% share of the world's uranium enrichment market.

This provides the fuel for nuclear power utilities and URENCO has enrichment plants in the US and the three investor countries, including one in Capenhurst, Cheshire.

*"It's a ridiculous idea", says the GMB union's national secretary for energy Gary Smith, who earlier this week complained to *The Independent* of the prospect of the Chinese investing in the nuclear new-build programme. "We're flogging off precious nuclear assets instead of developing a strategy around nuclear. It's absolute madness."*

But there is a logic to the move: by privatising URENCO, the British government hopes to bring closure to the Lockerbie affair, and put a distance between itself and the Thatcher administration's criminal behaviour in processing Namibian Yellowcake contrary to United Nations Council for Namibia Decree No. 1.

United Nations Inquiry

In November 2013, I created [this e-petition](#) calling upon HM Government (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) to:

"Support a United Nations Inquiry into the deaths of UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld and UN Assistant Secretary-General Bernt Carlsson"

Dag Hammarskjöld was Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1953 to 1961. On the night of 17-18 September 1961, in the course of a UN mission to try to bring peace to the former Belgian Congo, Hammarskjöld's Swedish-owned and crewed plane crashed near Ndola airport in the British protectorate of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). All the passengers and crew died.

It now appears that [his plane was shot down](#) in order to protect western mining interests in Belgian Congo's mineral rich [Katanga province](#), to this day a major source of cobalt, copper, tin and diamonds – not to mention radium and uranium.

On 9 September 2013, the London-based [Hammarskjöld Commission](#) reported that there was *"significant new evidence"* about the plane crash that killed United Nations Secretary-General [Dag Hammarskjöld](#) and recommended that the adjourned 1962 UN Inquiry should now be reopened.

UN Assistant Secretary-General Bernt Carlsson was the highest profile victim on Pan Am

Flight 103 which was sabotaged over Lockerbie on 21 December 1988.

Since Bernt Carlsson's death has never been investigated, the British Government should propose extending the remit of the new UN Inquiry to cover the deaths of both senior diplomats: Dag Hammarskjöld and Bernt Carlsson.

His e-petition is open for signature by UK citizens and residents from 13 November 2013 to 13 May 2014, and can be signed [here](#).

Copyright Patrick Haseldine, The Ecologist, 2014

The original source of this article is [The Ecologist](#)
Copyright © [Global Research News](#), [The Ecologist](#), 2014

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Global Research](#)
[News](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.
For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca