



National Assembly

Media Release

13 September 2021

RESPONSE TO AN EDITORIAL OF THE NAMIBIAN NEWSPAPER:

“A dangerous precedent”

We respond to the editorial in the Friday 10 September 2021 edition of *The Namibian* with the heading “**A Dangerous Precedent**”. The National Assembly wants to put the record straight as follows.

The statement that “the National Assembly is setting a dangerous biased precedent by recommending punishment for elected lawmakers while ignoring the violent involvement of the president’s bodyguard in the fracas”, does not address the reality of what transpired in the National Assembly on 15 April this year.

The presence of the President’s security personnel on that occasion cannot be questioned, as they have to be there when he is delivering his State of the Nation Address. Mr Ndjarunguru was acting in his professional capacity to safeguard the security of the President.

With regard to the behaviour of the two MPs in question on that day, we refer you to the following:

Under Section 12(b)(i) of the Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament Act, 1996 (Act No. 17 of 1996), the Committee of Privileges may, subject to Part III, investigate, either of its own accord or upon a complaint made by the House, any matter relating to **the conduct of any Member** within the precincts of Parliament or an **alleged breach by any Member** of the relevant Standing Rules and Orders. In the same Act member is defined as a Member of the House.

The Committee of Privileges met on a number of occasions after 15 April and reached conclusions based on evidence presented by witnesses and video footage. This was in line with its terms of reference, the empowering provisions in the Privileges Act, the Code of Conduct for Members of the National Assembly and the Standing Rules and Orders, which are there to ensure that the House does not degenerate into chaos.

The National Assembly rejects *The Namibian*’s suggestion that when MPs breaks the Standing Rules and Orders, they should not be disciplined.

It is disingenuous of *The Namibian* to cast doubt and question the Speaker's chairmanship of the Committee of Privileges. This is provided for by part II Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament Act, Act No. 17 of 1996. The law is crystal clear on the powers of the committee as well as the powers of the chairperson of the committee. The committee has a duty to investigate and report to the House, for it to take a decision.

As it stands, the Committee has completed its work and submitted the report for the House deliberations and decision. Any sanctions to be meted out to those involved in the undesirable events of 15 April will be decided upon by the House and not by the Speaker.

'ENDS'

Issued by:

David Nahogandja
Public Relations Officer
National Assembly
Email : d.nahogandja@parliament.na