

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

NOTICE OF QUESTION

BY

Hon. Kazeongere Tjeundo

Signature: _____)

I hereby give notice that on **Thursday, 24 February 2022**, I shall ask the **Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation**, Hon. Utoni Nujoma, the following:

Honourable Minister,

Last week, dozens of workers were unfairly dismissed and evicted from the Erindi Private Game Reserve, and have since been forced to camp in tents and other makeshift structures under difficult weather conditions.

On Thursday, 10 February 2022, the leadership of the PDM went to meet these workers and uncovered the most brutal forms of exploitation of workers that are only reminiscent of the dark days of apartheid.

I say it now, without any fear of contradiction, that the owners and management of the Erindi Private Game Reserve have been allowed to get away with murder by the SWAPO government because of the failure of your ministry in ensuring that the labour laws of this country are abided to.

Allow me to outline just but a few of the exploitative instruments that the Management of the Erindi Private Game Reserve has employed against its workers:

- a) Staff are forced to sign warning letters based on hearsay allegations and rumours, and are continuously been subjected to threats by the HR Manager, one Jolene Jacobs.
- b) There is a pervasive culture of racism within the institution being peddled by the manager of the Game Reserve, Paul Joubert. There are complaints from staff that Mr. Joubert uses tribal undertones and connotations to address internal disputes within the workplace by delineating issues as “white” and “black”.
- c) Even more shocking is that the Erindi Private Game Reserve practices racial segregation by not allowing white staff to interact with their black counterparts, even in terms of facilities. For example, black employees are not allowed to sit and eat at the restaurant and make use of a number of other facilities.
- d) We have also uncovered that the management of the Erindi Private Game Reserve does not have private transport to any black employee who becomes ill or collapses during working hours. This becomes the responsibility of other black employees, who have to use their own vehicles to transport sick employees to and from health care facilities as opposed to their white counterparts.
- e) There are further allegations that some employees at the institution have been brutally tortured by the management. In one case, an employee relayed to us that he was once brutally beaten and tied to a tree by the management. He was lucky not to have been eaten by lions, and survived. However, the scars of that ordeal continue to have a major psychological and emotional toll on his life.

These are just but a few of the exploitative instruments being sanctioned against the employees of the Erindi Private Game Reserve by the management of the institution. The status quo cannot be allowed to continue unabated.

I thus ask the Honourable Minister

1. Now that the PDM has brought this issue under your attention, can the Hon. Minister assure this August House that the plight of the employees of the Erindi Private Game Reserve will be looked into with the speed and urgency it deserves, and that the unfairly dismissed employees will be reinstated?
2. Secondly, there seems to be a pervasive culture of non-compliance with the Labour Law transpiring in a lot of private businesses in Namibia. This non-compliance often continues unabated without the knowledge of the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation. Is the Directorate of Labour Services through the Labour Inspectorate doing enough in terms of fulfilling its mandate of conducting periodical workplace inspections at private businesses like the Erindi Private Game Reserve?
3. If not, what are the impediments facing the Labour Inspectorate in terms of fulfilling its mandate outlined in the Labour Act 11 of 2007? And can the workers of this country continue to entrust the Labour Inspectorate to protect them from the grave exploitation similar to what we witnessed at the Erindi Private Game Reserve?
4. Lastly, if the Labour Inspectorate does uncover that there has been serious violations of the Labour Law at the Erindi Private Game Reserve, can the Hon. Minister take this House and the workers of this country into

confidence and assure us that the owners and management of the establishment will be dealt with accordingly?

I so submit...