

Answered on 21.9.2023



Republic of Namibia

MINISTRY OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS BY THE HONOURABLE MAXIMALLIANT T. KATJIMUNE

NOTICE OF QUESTION NO. 147 (15 JUNE 2023)

RESPONSE ON: 21<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023

Hon. Speaker

Hon. Members

I rise to respond to the questions that have been asked by Honorable Maximalliant T. Katjimune.

**Question No. 1**

***Why has the Honourable Minister dragged his feet in bringing the Rent Control Bill to Parliament?***

**Answer:**

There is no reason for me to delay in bringing the subject Bill before Parliament, not at all. As all Honourable Members of this August House know, Bills are brought before this August House once their drafting processes are complete through all relevant structures by means of scrutiny and consultations.

We have a draft bill but it is still undergoing a refinement process. The Ministry has engaged a team of experts to assist in this process, and we are also getting legal advice from the Office of the Attorney General to ensure a fine balance between the Constitutional provisions on the right to property and the other public interest or other challenge that we are pursuing to address through the proposed new law.

## **Question 2**

*When can we expect the Honourable Minister to table the Rent Control Bill in Parliament?*

**Answer:**

At this point in time, As I alluded earlier on , the team of expects are busy scrutinizing the draft bill which in due time is expected to be presented to relevant structures before it is table in this August House. I wish to report that progress is evident from us as a Ministry responsible, I thus request for a little more patient from the House and the Nation at large to allow us time to have it right.

## **Question 3**

*What are the hindrances in bringing this crucial piece of legislation to this August House?*

**Answer:**

I think, I have already outline where we are and what is still to be done.

## **Question 4**

*Finally yet importantly, what is the ideological posture of the SWAPO government regarding the property renting market in relation to the larger question of the inadequate mechanisms in place to address housing shortages across our 61 local authorities in the country?*

**Answer:**

For this specific question, I will confine myself to what is expected from the Ministry concerning the Rent Bill. Since the main issue in the question of the Hon Member is property rent, which is also the focus of the Rent Bill, my view is that his views should ideally be raised and discussed when the Bill is tabled and discussed in this August House.

I wish to thank the Hon Member for his questions. I so submit, Hon. Speaker.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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No. 147

NOTICE OF QUESTION

12-09-2023

BY

Hon. Maximilian T. Katjivune (PDM)

Signature: 

I hereby give notice that on Thursday, 21 September 2023, I shall ask the Minister of Urban and Rural Development, Hon. Erastus Utoni, the following:

Honourable Minister,

The Namibian working class confronts formidable challenges when it comes to unaffordable housing. The burgeoning property rental market, fueled by market dynamics, has left hundreds of thousands of ordinary, hardworking Namibians in the precarious position of being tenants. With housing costs soaring beyond their means, exacerbated by stagnant wages struggling to keep pace with inflation, the dream of homeownership remains elusive for many. The gap between income levels and the cost of urban land and housing continues to widen, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive housing policies and initiatives that can provide affordable and sustainable housing solutions for Namibia's working class. This factors are well elucidated in a book by revered financial writer Chloe Timperley in her book titled "*Generation Rent: Why You Can't Buy A Home Or Even Rent A Good One*".

It is therefore undeniable that the significant majority of our working class people cannot afford to purchase a property of their own, and have resorted to become tenants and rent. The harsh reality unfurls as rental rates in Namibia reach exploitative and exorbitant heights, pushing tenants into the labyrinth of subpar housing options while greedy landlords fatten their coffers. This crisis ought to have been resolved by the proposed Rent Control Bill, which is earmarked

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<sup>1</sup> Timperley, C. (2020) *Generation rent: Why You Can't Buy a Home (or even rent a good one)* Kingston upon Thames, Surrey: Canbury Press.



to operationalise the Rent Control Board in an effort to control renting prices in our city, towns and villages as well as handle and investigate complaints between tenants and landlords. It does appear however, for reasons known only to himself, that the Minister has been dragging his feet in bringing this crucial piece of legislation which would bring relief to tenants across our country to Parliament for debate.

This is despite the fact that under Pillar 3 of the of the Harambee Prosperity Plan 2 (Social Progression), the SWAPO government promised to "Promulgate the Rent Control Bill by the end of 2021 to enable the operationalization of Rent Control Board(s) and implementation of Rent Control Measures".<sup>2</sup>

I therefore ask the Honourable Ministers:

1. Why has the Honourable Minister dragged his feet in bringing the Rent Control Bill to Parliament?
2. When can we expect the Honourable Minister to table the Rent Control Bill in Parliament?
3. What are the hindrances in bringing this crucial piece of legislation to this August House?
4. Last but not least, what is the ideological posture of the SWAPO government regarding the property renting market in relation to the larger question of the inadequate mechanisms in place to address housing shortages across our local authorities in the country?

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<sup>2</sup> Republic of Namibia. (2021) Harambee Prosperity Plan (2) <http://hopp2.gov.na/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/HPP2.pdf>