



MOTIVATION SPEECH BY HON LEEVI KATOMA, REPORT ON THE VISIT TO ZAMBEZI REGION, TO ASSESS THE SECURITY SITUATION ALONG THE BORDER OF NAMIBIA AND BOTSWANA BY THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND SECURITY

**Hon. Speaker of the National Assembly
Distinguished Members of this August House**

It is with humility that I rise to motivate the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security to a fact finding mission to Zambezi region on the security situation along our common border with Botswana.

As a Committee we have the mandate to deal with matters pertaining to Foreign Affairs, Defence and national Security of the country and to ensure to the maintenance of international peace and security. The Committee also has the duty to enquire into and monitor international protocols, conventions and agreements that may affect Namibia's foreign policy, defence and security, and where necessary, make recommendations to the National Assembly.

Our oversight visit to the Zambezi region was premised on the fulfillment of the specific mandates I outlined. The increase in incidents of the Botswana Defense Force (BDF) harassment and

shooting of the communities living along the Chobe River has reached in our view a critical stage where intervention to find a solution is paramount. The shooting of the three (3) Nchindo brothers and their Zambian cousin on 5 November 2020 suspected to be poachers attracted a public outcry for government to address the situation to avoid further loss of lives. Since independence, cases of such incidents have been experienced at many occasions despite Namibia and Botswana having signed a Boundary Treaty in 2018.

Furthermore, the 2018 Treaty, was being disputed by all four Traditional Authorities in the region and communities alike, who claim not to have been consulted prior to its signing and the implementation thereof. It is on this basis that the Committee embarked on a fact finding mission to the Zambezi region to assess the security situation and conditions under which the Zambezi residents living alongside the common border ~~live~~ *live* with their Botswana counterparts and to interrogate and understand the effects of the Boundary Treaty of 2018. *river/me*

Hon Speaker

Fellow Members

The situation at hand has unfavorably affected Namibian communities living along the Zambezi river more than the Botswana. Particular attention should be drawn to the fact that Namibia and Botswana indeed share a common border, however, the Botswana side bordering Namibia is a National game park, which is highly protected with entry restrictions, whereas the Namibian side is communal land occupied and habited by community members stretching from Linyanti all along the border to floodplains of Kabbe North and Kabbe East Constituencies.

**Hon Speaker,
Fellow Members,**

Without pre-empting the report allow me to share with you some of the key findings of the mission.

- MIRCO, has not yet deposited the instruments of ratification required for the treaty to become enforceable. A number of bilateral and stand-alone agreements on the 2018 Treaty are not yet completed as well as the standard operating procedures (SOPs). Similarly, the delimitation and demarcation of Kazungula Tri-Point for the two countries and including Zambia (Namibia, Botswana) is also not yet done.
- The regional leadership, traditional authorities and communities were all in total disagreement and unhappy with the ratification of the Boundary Treaty of 2018 between Namibia and Botswana, the discontent attributed more on the non-consultation of the people prior to the signing. As a democratic Nation, consultation is one of the key pillars of the rule for the people by the people, a principle residents feel were deprived of.
- People living along the border are prevented due to BDF intimidation, Harassment from accessing their daily socio-economic activities, such as fishing, grass and reed cutting and cattle herding, this has in turn resulted in increased poverty levels.
- The beacons are not visible along most areas along the borderline including border areas between Namibia and Angola despite NAMPOL having made recommendations to have them replaced. The non-visibility of beacons is mainly attributed to most incidences of arrests, harassment and shootings of Namibians as people are not aware where they are.
- Government is not providing assistance to victims of BDF shootings as Social justice compensations given that

majority of victims and their families have no steady employment except subsistence farming and fishing.

**Hon Speaker,
Fellow Members**

With our findings we have come up with a number of recommendations in an effort to address the situation for Namibians to harmoniously co-exist with our neighbour Botswana. We are a Nation that believes in peaceful resolution of disputes, thus MIRCO and all relevant government institutions should adopt strategies that will result in win-win situation, this is imperative to allow Zambezi residents to live in peace and tranquillity. I strongly urge Hon Members to peruse through the report to understand the experiences Zambezi residents encounter on daily basis for us to have productive deliberations on the matter.

Hon Speaker, with these few remarks, I now have the honor to submit the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security to this August House for consideration, discussion and adoption.

I so move Honourable Speaker,