

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, 7<sup>th</sup> Parliament**

**REPORT FOR A MOTION ON THE DEPLORABLE CONDITIONS IN WHICH HOLDING  
AND CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES AND ARE IN WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF  
PROTECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL PERSONS WITH DIGNITY**

**PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND  
SECURITY**

**Report No. 04**



## Table of Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	4
2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND .....	4
3. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE .....	5
4. METHODOLOGY.....	5
5. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP .....	5
6. OBJECTIVES OF THE VISITS .....	5
7. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT .....	6
8. REGIONAL AND SECTORAL ASSESSMENTS .....	6
8.1 Police Stations and Correctional Facilities (Nationwide) .....	6
Overcrowding .....	6
Infrastructure Decay.....	6
Resource Shortages.....	6
Judicial Delays.....	6
Border Security.....	7
Human Rights Concerns: Dignity and Nutritional Feeds .....	7
ERONGO-SPECIFIC ISSUES .....	7
Walvis Bay Police Station: .....	7
Swakopmund Correctional Facility.....	7
Osire Refugee Camp (Otjozondjupa).....	7
Military, Naval, and Air Force Facilities .....	8
Achievements .....	8
Karibib Air Force Base.....	8
Rooikop Naval Training Centre.....	9
Training Programs .....	9
9. CROSS-CUTTING FINDINGS.....	9
10. CONCLUSIONS .....	9
11. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	10
Prisons/Police .....	10
Defence .....	10
Medium-Term Actions (6–18 Months).....	11
Long-Term Actions (18+ Months).....	11
12. SIGNATURES .....	11
Committee Members .....	11
END OF REPORT.....	12



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This comprehensive report consolidates findings from oversight visits conducted by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Security between May 2023 and July 2024. The missions assessed police stations, holding cells, and correctional facilities, military, naval, and air force infrastructure nationwide, including regions such as Zambezi, Kavango East, Kavango West, Ohangwena, Oshana, Omusati, Kunene, Otjozondjupa, Erongo, Oshikoto, and Omaheke.

Key issues identified include severe overcrowding in detention facilities (200–300% capacity), dilapidated infrastructure (90% pre-independence), systemic procurement delays, staffing shortages, and inadequate resources (vehicles, uniforms, equipment). The Osire Refugee Camp faced critical shortages of water, healthcare, and durable shelters. Military installations in Erongo highlighted risks such as collapsing naval vessels, outdated air force runways, and hazardous barracks conditions. At its core, the mission seeks to balance security concerns with humanitarian needs, ensuring that the rights of those incarcerated are upheld. The objectives are twofold: first, to perform a comprehensive assessment of the current conditions in various regions, identifying gaps in facilities and services; second, to recommend evidence-based policies that support rehabilitation and reintegration.

The report concludes with actionable recommendations to uphold human rights, modernize infrastructure, and enhance operational efficiency across security and refugee management sectors.

## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

On 17 October 2023, Hon. Koviao V.I. Hengari moved a Motion in the National Assembly, which "sought to debate on deplorable conditions in which police holding cells and correctional facilities are, and with the objective of protecting the human rights of all persons with dignity. The motion aimed to protect the right and dignity of all persons. The motion was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security for further scrutiny. However, the Committee was already busy with oversight visits to police cells, defence barracks and correctional facilities. Therefore, since it was the same stakeholders being visited, the Standing Committee resolved to combine the visits, i.e., the motion and oversight visits and engage relevant stakeholders countrywide.

Furthermore, the initiative to enhance human dignity within police cells, and correctional facilities stemmed from a growing need for reform and



improvement in offenders' treatment standards. The overarching aim is to initiate a cycle of positive change, where respect for human dignity becomes integral to police and correctional practices, ultimately reducing recidivism and fostering societal reintegration. The parliamentary committee, through its oversight function, endeavoured to provide a transparent and accountable framework that not only addresses these issues but also reflects a commitment to international human rights standards

Key oversight activities during this visit included visits to thirteen political regions, to address the both the visits and motion on deplorable detention conditions, as well as visit to the Osire refugee camp.

### **3. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE**

In terms of Article 59 of the Namibian Constitution, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security, has a mandate to deal with matters pertaining to Defence, Safety and Security, Home Affairs and Immigration, International Relations and Cooperation and Namibia Central Intelligence Service (NCIS). The Committee also has the duty to exercise an overall oversight function with regards to Namibia's foreign policy and its relations with other States on matter of defence and security amongst others. Where necessary, make recommendations to the National Assembly for implementation by the relevant sectors as indicated above.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

In order to conduct comparative consultations, the committee visited the Police Stations, Prison Cells, Correctional Facilities, Army Barack's in 14 regions respectively. In addition, discussions were held with the heads of facilities as well as had interviews with Inmates.

### **5. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security has a membership of 19 Members of Parliament drawn from various political parties represented in the National Assembly.

The delegation that undertook the regional visits comprised of Hon. Leevi Katoma, Chairperson, Hon. Fenni Nanyeni, Deputy Chairperson, Hon. Hamunyera Hambyuka, Hon. Paula Kooper, Hon. Maximilant Katjimune, Hon. Henny H. Seibeb, Hon. Dr. Daniel Kashikola, Hon. Nghidipohamba Hamata, Hon. Vincent J. Mareka, Hon. Dudu Murorua, Hon. Patience Masua, Hon. Elma Deinda and Hon. Karondo. They were accompanied by Chief Parliamentary Clerk, Mrs. Namasiku Mushiba-Lizazi and Parliamentary Clerk, Mrs. Linea N. Shikongo.

### **6. OBJECTIVES OF THE VISITS**

The objectives were:

- a. To conduct comparative consultations with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security, specifically the Police and Correctional Service Departments, as well as the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs.
- b. To visit the infrastructures of the two Ministries.
- c. To identify the key challenges faced by the police and the Correctional services system in maintaining human dignity and rights.
- d. Produce a report with recommendations for adoption by the House

## **7. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The purpose of the report is to inform the National Assembly of the Committee's findings and recommendations to the relevant O/M/A's.

## **8. REGIONAL AND SECTORAL ASSESSMENTS**

### **8.1 Police Stations and Correctional Facilities (Nationwide)**

#### **Overcrowding**

Generally, in most regions visited, the conditions of infrastructure were fairly the same. Cells exceeded 200–300% capacity. For example, Ruacana Police Station held 71 inmates in a cell designed for 10. Katima Mulilo Police Station housed over 2,000 inmates in a facility with an 80-person capacity. Swakopmund Police Station, was built for 68 inmates, but held 88, with many inmates transferred to other regions due to space constraints.

#### **Infrastructure Decay**

Facilities were found to be outdated, many were built pre-independence, they suffered from leaking roofs, broken sewage systems, and unsafe structures. Classic examples are of Katima Mulilo and Mondesa Police Station in Swakopmund which were declared uninhabitable by health inspectors due to structural deficiencies. Furthermore, the Swakopmund Correctional Facility was constructed in 1905, at the Committee visit, it had dilapidated beds and inadequate transport for inmates.

#### **Resource Shortages**

About 70–80% of police vehicles were non-operational due to centralized procurement delays. Officers reuse uniforms for over 20 years, with no replacements provided. Many resorted to inheriting uniforms from retired or deceased colleagues. Moreover, Magistrates and social workers were overburdened, leading to prolonged judicial delays.

#### **Judicial Delays**

Over 2,000 inmates in Katima Mulilo Police Station faced delays in court cases due to a lack of magistrates and legal assistance. At about 80% police stations visited countrywide, mental health cases were particularly backlogged, with psychiatric evaluations delayed by up to 6 months due to Windhoek-centric services. Courts were overwhelmed by mental health cases, with no regional psychiatric support.



## **Border Security**

About 60% of Namibian border posts were ungazetted but frequently utilised, lacked fencing, patrol vehicles, and communication tools. Illegal crossings were rampant at ungazetted posts, such examples are that of Epupa and Okapalelona.

## **Human Rights Concerns: Dignity and Nutritional Feeds**

Examining human rights concerns within police cells and correctional facilities, especially concerning the crucial aspects of inmate dignity and the provision of nutritional feeds, demands a detailed and critical analysis of the existing conditions that prevail in these institutions. Across various regions, inmates are often subjected to environments plagued by significant overcrowding, insufficient sanitation facilities, and an appalling lack of access to adequate healthcare services. These conditions pose grave challenges and severely compromise the inherent dignity of individuals residing in correctional settings.

The issue extends further with the provision of nutritional feeds, which are alarmingly deficient in many institutions. Inmates frequently receive diets that are poorly balanced, lacking essential nutrients vital for maintaining good health. This nutritional inadequacy can lead to a host of health problems, including malnutrition, weakened immune systems, and a higher susceptibility to illness. Such health issues are not only a violation of basic human rights but also a testament to the neglect seen in ensuring the well-being of those in custody.

## **ERONGO-SPECIFIC ISSUES**

### **Walvis Bay Police Station:**

The mortuary was found to be too adjacent to the food storage and it raised hygienic concerns. The kitchen at the station lacked proper allowable ventilation, the malfunctioning of the air conditioner causes excessive heat. - Officers relied on community donations for basic supplies like stationery and vehicle parts.

### **Swakopmund Correctional Facility**

Swakopmund Correctional facility's 104 inmates are served by only 65 staff, leading to understaffing and overworked officers. Beds in the facility are dilapidated and transport shortages hindered operations.

### **Osire Refugee Camp (Otjozondjupa)**

The camp has a population of 6,032 asylum seekers, primarily from Eastern and Western Africa. It has a water shortage, with only 5 out of 15 boreholes

functional, forcing refugees to rely on weekly water trucking. Temporary shelters made of iron sheets and maize stems were erected around the camp, however, they were inadequate for long-term habitation.

There was a shortage of health care facilities in the camp. The absence of a clinic at the camp forces refugees to wait up to 30 days for medication or travel about 120 km to Otjiwarongo to seek medical attention. There is also no permanent healthcare staff at the camp, leading to refugees' reliance on infrequent medical visits.

As for security in the camp, alcohol smuggling and unmonitored movements of rejected asylum seekers posed security risks. After rejection they are given about 7 working days to leave the country, however, due to the uncertainty of where to go to, and even a lack of funds, they remain in the camp causing them to move in and out of the camp to seek for alternatives.

The refugee community, especially those granted refugee status requested the government of Namibia, to give them employment opportunities and access banking services.

### **Military, Naval, and Air Force Facilities**

Vessels like patrol boats "Elephant" was at risk of grounding due to reduced water depth. The allowable depth is 6–7m, however, as it stands, it has exceeded that depth, sinking deeper and further down. Dredging operations were urgently needed to prevent international embarrassment.

The Fleet headquarters building was ramshackle, exacerbated by coastal weather. In this instance, base walls were damaged by underground oil pipelines, leading to sand debris overgrowth.

### **Achievements**

Among the base achievements is the participation in joint operations with Fisheries Maritime Affairs and international naval exercises.

### **Karibib Air Force Base:**

With a lot of damaged infrastructure in the base, among them was the runway which was posing dangerous hazards. The F-7 fighter aircraft was damaged due to loose stones on the runway. The runway requires prompt rehabilitation which was delayed due to funding shortages. Not only that, the Karibib base lacks facilities such as aircraft hangars, leaving aircrafts exposed to harsh weather. There are also no fire engines or munitions storage facilities, posing safety risks.

### **Rookop Naval Training Centre**

The Rookop training centre has a bad open, sewage system, broken pipes, and no electricity in the barracks. The centre barracks were declared barracks uninhabitable. However, the management said, they had no other alternative, hence keep the soldiers in the same building. The mess - a dining hall for soldiers were non-functional, broken appliances were observed and strong odour's was obvious.

### **Training Programs**

- Ongoing cooperation with the Brazilian Navy for training and capacity building.

General Police and CORRECTIONAL SERVICES SPECIFICS

## **9. CROSS-CUTTING FINDINGS**

1. There is a high degree of infrastructure neglect in all regions
2. Procurement Bottlenecks\*\*: Centralized processes under the Procurement Act caused 6-month delays for spare parts, uniforms, and stationery.
3. At Karibib naval air base, the Air Traffic Control Tower was 90% complete but non-operational due to missing communication systems.
4. Staffing Shortages: There is a high volume of vacancies in magistrates, social workers, and technical personnel.
5. There is a 90% of facilities built pre-independence are neglected and need urgent modernization;
6. Border Security is compromised, in that 60% of border posts are ungazetted, this is attributed to insufficient patrols and surveillance.

## **10. CONCLUSIONS**

The Committee acknowledges efforts by security forces across the country but wish to emphasize urgent reforms in the sector. The report highlights critical issues affecting holding cells and correctional facilities, Infrastructure deterioration in the visited regions including overcrowding, including adverse living conditions faced by police officers are of great concern. Urgent attention is required to address them in order to uphold the dignity and human rights of all persons affected. By tackling these critical deficiencies, police and correctional systems have the potential to transform the environments in which they operate. It is imperative that these spaces are seen as rehabilitative rather than purely punitive. This transformation is contingent upon systematic policy

improvements that prioritize human rights. Regular oversight must be instituted to monitor the conditions within these facilities consistently. In addition, the allocation of adequate resources is crucial, ensuring that these institutions are equipped to meet the health and dignity needs of their populations effectively.

The consultations highlight critical shortcomings in the current trial awaiting system, especially in terms of overcrowding, health care, and human rights abuses. The recommendations proposed herein aim to address these issues by focusing on immediate reforms and long-term strategies to improve the conditions in holding cells and correctional facilities. Implementing these changes will require collaboration across government bodies, civil society with a firm commitment to upholding the dignity and human rights of all individuals in custody. Key to these are to

- Alleviate overcrowding and improve detainee/refugee welfare.
- Modernize infrastructure and decentralize procurement.
- Address critical risks in military installations (e.g., naval vessels, air force runways).

## **11. RECOMMENDATIONS**

After the parliamentary mission, it was established that a comprehensive review to pinpoint critical areas that require substantial improvement within the police and correctional facilities, with the overarching aim of upholding human dignity in a more effective manner was imperative. Central to this initiative is the imperative to significantly enhance the living conditions within these facilities. This begins with addressing the pervasive issue of overcrowding, which not only exacerbates tensions among inmates but also reduces the overall quality of life. Therefore, the Committee recommends:

### **Immediate Actions (0–6 Months)**

#### **Prisons/Police**

- Decongest cells via bail reforms and remand facilities;
- Improve visits to primary health facilities and improve quality of life and dignity of offenders;
- Repair 50% of non-functional boreholes at Osire Camp;
- Training of police and correctional staff is cornerstone. Specifically, equipping them with comprehensive training on human rights and ethical treatment of inmates;
- Implement regular inspections conducted by independent bodies.

#### **Defence**

- Remove debris from naval vessel \*Elephant\* to prevent grounding;
- Allocate emergency funds for air force runway repairs.

## Medium-Term Actions (6–18 Months)

### Infrastructure

- Construct new police stations (Katima Mulilo, Mondesa);
- Install solar water pumps at Osire Camp.

### Policy

- Amend the Procurement Act to empower regional procurement;
- Gazette all border posts and deploy biometric systems;
- Critical need for a data-driven approach to resource allocation. This approach aims to systematically address disparities across various regions, ensuring that resources are distributed equitably and effectively where they are most needed.

## Long-Term Actions (18+ Months)

### Military

- Build aircraft hangars and munitions storage facilities;
- Replace Rooikop barracks with modern housing;
- Overhaul kitchen infrastructure, utensils and electrical wiring.

### Systemic Reforms

- Expand psychiatric and forensic services to regions;
- Establish regional forensic labs to reduce judicial delays;
- Investment in rehabilitation programs: key priority;
- collaborative engagement with civil society organizations is strongly encouraged to bolster advocacy efforts.

## 12. SIGNATURES

### Committee Members

Hon. Leevi Katoma

 Chairperson

Hon. Fenny Nanyeni \_

\_\_\_\_\_ Deputy Chairperson

Hon. Mathias Mbundu

\_\_\_\_\_

Hon. Elma Jane Dienda

 \_\_\_\_\_

Hon. Kletus Karondo

 \_\_\_\_\_

Hon. Dudu Murorua



Hon Nghidipohamba Hamata



Hon. Theofelus Kamati



Hon. Philipus Katamelo



Hon. Vincent Joseph Mareka



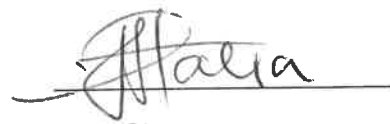
Hon. Maximalliant Katjimune



Hon. Agnes Mpingana Kafula



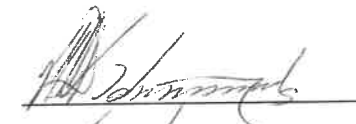
Hon Hamunyera Hambyuka



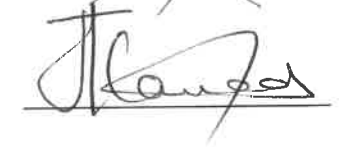
Hon. Paula Kooper



Hon. Dr. Daniel Kashikola



Hon. Josef Kauandenge



Hon. Patience Masua



Hon Dr Tobie Aupindi



Hon. Mike Rapuikua Venaani



**END OF REPORT**