



Alleged police brutality alarming – NamRights

Police 'human too', make 'human errors'

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Human rights organisation NamRights says it is becoming increasingly alarmed by widespread allegations of torture and other cruel treatment of ordinary citizens by the Namibian police and other law-enforcement agencies.

The executive director of NamRights, Phil Ya Nangoloh, says the organisation has reasonable cause to believe that there is evidence that citizens in general are no longer safe in police custody.

He says “very urgent and exceptional measures” must be instituted to protect the rights of citizens and urged NamPol chief, Inspector-General Sebastian Ndeitunga to institute a speedy, thorough and impartial investigation into the alleged incidents and to bring the accused to book.

NamRights is particularly concerned about four cases that took place over the last two weeks.

On or about 12 October, Zakonenua Ndiaombe died in a Tsumeb medical facility while in police custody.

Ndiaombe was arrested with three other suspects on suspicion of rhino poaching and/or illicit trafficking, several kilometres south of the Oshivelo veterinary checkpoint on or about 25 September.

NamRights alleges that the four were denied medical treatment despite severe injuries sustained during police interrogations.

Ndiaombe was taken to a medical facility on 12 October when NamRights intervened, but it was too late.

NamRights also alleges that a 15-year-old girl believed to be mentally challenged, who was kept at a so-called “victims' room” at the Oshikango police station, was raped by a police officer.

The girl was allegedly brought to the station after she was raped by an uncle.

The suspected police officer was arrested and charged, appeared in court and was denied bail. NamRights says he is being held either at the Oluno Correctional Facility or in police cells near the Etayi constituency office in the Omusati Region.

In another incident an unknown Angolan man was allegedly bludgeoned to death by a police officer who goes by the name of 'Shorty' or 'Shaanika'. The Angolan was allegedly illegally selling petrol on the Namibian side of the border between the two countries.

The police officer was arrested and charged with murder. He appeared in court and was denied bail. He is also alleged to be held in custody at the Oluno Correctional Facility or at the Etayi police cells.

Social media is abuzz with allegations of the alleged gang-rape of Ishmael Benyamen at the Windhoek police station. He had been arrested for obstruction of justice after resisting arrest for a traffic violation.

This incident allegedly happened on or around 28 September.

NamRights says the gang-rape was allegedly ordered by police officers from either the City Police or NamPol. This matter is



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/asse-police-brutality-alarming-namrights2018-10-230.jpg>)

ALARMED: NamRights executive director Phil Ya Nangoloh. Photo File

being investigated.

Police acknowledge violations

The Namibian police have acknowledged these cases and stressed that those implicated in the crimes would be held accountable.

In the case of Ndiaombe, police spokesperson Chief Inspector Kauna Shikwambi said a post-mortem was conducted on 19 October to determine his cause of death.

Shikwambi said the suspect in the rape of the mentally challenged girl – who she said is 17 years old, not 15 – was arrested and appeared in court at Ohangwena on 12 October. He was denied bail and is to reappear in court on 26 November.

The suspect in the killing of the Angolan man was also arrested and will also reappear before the Ohangwena magistrate's court on 26 November.

Shikwambi said the police were aware of the alleged gang-rape at the Windhoek police station and a criminal case was opened at the gender-based violence protection unit in Katutura.

She said criminal investigations were under way and an internal disciplinary investigation was at an advanced stage.

While acknowledging these incidents, Shikwambi said police officers are “human too” and therefore not immune to “human error”.

She added that police officers were committed to treating members of the public with courtesy while maintaining peace and order.

She said the chief of police would not hesitate to direct internal investigations when police officers conduct themselves in an “unbecoming manner”.

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