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Hon. Evilastus Kaaronda, Motivation - Motion on the Employment Conditions of all uniformed personnel services in Namibia

18th June 2025

Honorable Speaker,

Honorable Members,

I rise to table a motion on the employment conditions of all uniformed personnel services, especially those in the employ of the Namibian Police force, the Namibia Correctional Services. This is also true of the Namibia Defense Forces.

SWANU of Namibia considers all uniformed personnel or officers as workers who in exchange of their labour power and time expect to be fairly remunerated so as to lead lives they have reason to value. In its founding document, also known as the constitution, SWANU confirms as its ultimate aim the establishment of an egalitarian socialist society based on the alliance of the working people. It is this expressed desire and the obtaining working conditions in the police, correctional services and defense forces that inform the urgent need for this motion. SWANU wishes to state at the very outset that this motion is not an indictment of those responsible for any of these entities but an urgent call for action to help improve the working conditions of these workers.

It is common cause that members of what i will refer to as uniformed personnel services, just to give a collective name for ease of reference, espe-

cially those outside of management ranks work under the most harsh and difficult conditions. In fact these workers put their lives in harms way and at risk every single day of their working lives, to protect and serve all of us.

Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members, there is too much power concentrated in the hands of one individual, whether this is the Inspector General or Commissioner General depending on which institution you are dealing with. As a direct result of this over concentration of power in the hands of one individual, workers are transferred from one duty station to another as a result of which they are compelled to pay for their own houses as well as for the accommodation to which they are transferred. This is a double burden suffered by these workers on account of a decision taken by the Public Service Commission.

Disciplinary procedures are grossly arbitrary as the Commissioner General is the one who appoints disciplinary hearing committees, charges employees as well presides over the review or appeal processes.

In respect of promotions there is no fair and objective performance appraisal system in place which is followed as the ultimate decision lies in the hands of the Commissioner General who can choose to promote a worker or simply ignore such worker. In some instances where a worker is promoted and another ignored, the one ignored ends up training and or teaching the promoted worker which in the end kills the morale of the entire workforce.

We are aware that during the times of both Cdes. Nangolo Mbumba and Nicky Iyambo at the helm of the ministry under which the police force resorts fact finding missions were instituted across the country to determine the conditions of work of our officers and offer solutions. To this very day, the conditions of work of our officers have not changed for the better and the legislative environment within which they work remains unchanged.

Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members,

It is also common cause that the Labor Act, does not apply to these uniformed personnel services and as a result ~~these~~^{is} workers do not enjoy the basic right of negotiating their conditions of service directly with their employer. The non application of the Labour Act to these categories of workers also means that they are not allowed to be paid overtime even if they work long hours for which others would ordinarily qualify to be paid overtime. The most closest example to home, Honorable Speaker is the time we spent here debating the National Budget long hours into the early hours of the next morning with the police officers sitting outside the chamber, and still we got paid overtime and they did not.

Our uniform personnel are by definition of the our existing laws not regarded or seen as employees or workers despite meeting all the salient requirements of being classified as workers. This is all because the Labour

Act does not apply to them. We must as legislators come to the rescue of these workers as they have no legal body to speak for them.

The regulations passed under the Police Act (both Namibia Police and the Municipal Police) make what i would best characterize as a fictitious provision to the effect that any member of the Police Force who wishes to form or join a trade union of his or her choice must first obtain written authorization from the Inspector General of the Namibian Police.

Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members, this provision creates the fiction that when such written authorization is submitted, there is somehow the possibility that such authorization will be granted. In truth, this authorization in respect of those who sought it, was never granted and the reason which the Inspector General cites in his letters to decline this authorization are not only arbitrary but border on the absurd.

In one of his letters denying the workers the right form and or join trade unions, the Inspector General states; "The law enforcement agencies in Namibia such as the Namibian Police Force, Namibian Defence Force, Namibian Correctional Services are statutorily precluded from joining trade unions without the permission of their Superintendents as they are expected to operate impartially at all times. Trade Unions are political bodies by their nature and the participation of law enforcement agencies in political activities will compromise the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of

Namibia, national security, public order, decency or morality and Force discipline".

This is indeed an unfortunate mischaracterization of what trade unions are about. It is almost impossible to comprehend how public order, decency or morality and the discipline within the force could be negatively affected by the officers forming or belonging to a trade union of their choice.

In the face of this mischaracterization the rights of police officers and of those other uniformed personnel continue to be violated and what is true about their working conditions is that they are paid low salaries, they are not paid any overtime even if they are required to work overtime day in and day out, no payment of danger allowances, night shift allowances, no proper housing or car allowances, arbitrary and unlawful dismissals, especially constructive dismissals.

The workplace tyranny to which these workers are subjected has left and continues to inflict untold suffering. Police Officers are not promoted in rank through a transparent, participatory and democratic process as they are literally left to the whims of the Inspector General and his cronies.

Several complaints have been raised about how sexual favors are demanded of some female members of the Police Force to secure their upward mobility. For far too long these matters have fallen on deaf ears and it

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is time that this august house brings justice to the downtrodden of our Police Force members and those of the other uniformed services.

Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members, the Inspector General is protected by law and has access to free legal services paid for by the tax payers while the ordinary police officer has no such privilege or right and even if they want to legally challenge their employer they just do not have the money to afford lawyers. The extend to which this workplace tyranny has the members of the force petrified must no longer be allowed to persist as a norm. These workers are so afraid to fight for their rights because of persecution, intimidation and unfair dismissal. This is untenable a workplace situation in a democratic country.

Honorable Speaker, Honorable Members, Max Weber once said, **“We are called upon in life to serve different goals. The goals of political action rest on values different from those of scholarly reflection and direct us to give priorities to different obligations. However, activists and managers do not inhabit different worlds”**.

I therefore move that this motion be debated and adopted and that it be referred to the relevant Parliamentary Standing Committee.

I so move.