

## **CHAPTER 7**

# **Legal Services and Policy-Makers**

# Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**Region and Scope of Service**  
 Head office: Khomas (Windhoek)  
 National coverage through  
 MGECW. regional offices - see  
 next page

**Street Address**  
 Tre Supermarket Building  
 Grimm Street Windhoek

**Postal Address**  
 P/Bag 13359 Windhoek

**Telephone Number**  
 Office hours: 061-283 3111  
 All sections

**Fax Number**  
 Office hours: 061-238941

**E-mail Address**  
 womenaffairs@mwacw.gov.na

**Contact Persons**  
 Permanent Secretary  
 Ms S Ausiku  
 Chief Development Planner:  
 Gender Mainstreaming:  
 Ms C Mbala

**Affiliations**

- Multimedia Campaign on Violence Against Women & Children
- Numerous committees, such as the Committee on Human Rights
- Networks with governmental and non-governmental organisations, community based organisations, churches and the private sector.

## MAIN SERVICES

Government policy implementation  
 Advocacy & lobbying  
 Information  
 Advice  
 Social support  
 Education and training

## NOTES/ADDITIONS/CHANGES

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## OVERVIEW OF MAIN SERVICES

The MGECWs mandate is “to promote, facilitate, co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate the empowerment and development of women to achieve gender equality in all spheres of life. It’s vision is to strive for full political and social commitment and equal participation by men and women in decision-making at all levels and for full recognition of the valuable contribution of women. [Its] mission is to promote gender equality by empowering women through the dissemination of information, co-ordination and networking with stakeholders, mainstreaming of gender issues, promotion of law and policy reform, and monitoring of progress so as to ensure that women and men can participate equally in the political, economic, social and cultural development of the nation.” (DWA Annual Report 1998)

The MGECW is headed by the Minister who is a member of Parliament and the Cabinet. The Under-Secretary is the DWA’s administrative head. The department consists of two directorates: the Women’s Desk and the Directorate of International Affairs. These directorates have the following divisions: Administrative & Ministerial Support Services; National Co-ordination; Training Programme Development & Ministerial Gender Focal Points; Multi & Bilateral Relations; Research & Legislation. These divisions have the following sub-divisions: Regional Offices; Gender Sectoral Committees; Training; Programme Development & Ministerial Focal Points; Research; Legislation.

In 1999 the MGECW began implementing the National Gender Plan of Action, which is guided by the National Gender Policy, the Namibian Constitution, the First National Development Plan, the Beijing Platform for Action and the African Platform for Action. The National Plan of Action addresses the following 10 critical areas of concern: 1) gender, poverty & rural development; 2) gender balance in education & training; 3) gender & reproductive health; 4) violence against women & children; 5) gender & economic empowerment; 6) gender balance in power & decision-making; 7) information, education & communication; 8) gender & environmental management; 9) the girl child; 10) gender & legal affairs. As part of the implementation process a Gender Directory is being produced for use as a referral manual, which will include information such as contact names and addresses for all organisations in the country dealing with gender issues.

The MGECW organises a wide variety of training workshops under each of its programmes, on a regular basis and for a range of target groups in all regions of Namibia. These include: joint regional workshops; joint gender sectoral committee workshops; gender sensitisation & awareness training workshops; business management training workshops; human resource development training workshops.

(Continued overleaf)

An important aspect of the MGECW's work is doing research for programme and legislative development, in collaboration with institutions like the University of Namibia and Legal Assistance Centre. One product of current research will be a data bank on professional women in Namibia in all fields.

The MGECW is responsible for producing Namibia's Beijing progress reports, and its country reports on progress made in implementing the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW). The last CEDAW country report was jointly produced by the Legal Assistance Centre and MGECW.

The MGECW represents the Namibian government on numerous national and international forums dealing with women's and children's rights. Over the past two years DWA officials have attended meetings of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and UN Commission on the Status of Women which focused on all forms of violence against women and children.

### **§ COSTS FOR SERVICES**

Government services are free of charge.

### **MGECW monitoring mechanisms**

The following mechanisms are used by the MWACW to monitor the implementation of its National Gender Policy through the National Gender Plan of Action.

**Gender Focal Points**, who are individuals based in various ministries who see that all policies and programmes developed in governmental bodies at the national, regional and local levels are gender focused.

**Gender Sectoral Committees** (one of which focuses on violence against women and children) to advise the MGECW on issues related specifically to their areas of focus. However, many of these are dormant at the time of writing. **Gender Network Co-ordinating Committees** to see that all the policies and programmes developed are implemented.

**A National Information Sharing Forum** to bi annually evaluate the progress made in implementing the policy.

**A Gender Commission**, a legal body to be appointed by the President of Namibia to reinforce policy implementation. The Commission will receive presentations and complaints from the public dealing with the policy implementation. **MGECW** to serve as the secretariat to all the above.

## **Regional Offices of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare**

**KARAS**  
**Keetmanshoop Office**  
☺ Liaison officer: Ms H Afrikaner  
☞ Governor's Office Block,  
Wheeler street  
✉ PO Box 304, Keetmanshoop  
☎ 063-333535/333063  
📄 063-225945

**HARDAP**  
**Mariental Office**  
✉ P/Bag 2017, Mariental  
☎ 063-242542  
📄 063-242670

**KHOMAS**  
**Windhoek Office**  
✉ P/Bag 13359, Windhoek  
☎ 061-2924378  
📄 061-220317

**OTJOZONDJUPA**  
**Otjiwarongo**  
☺ Liaison officer: Ms B Urika  
☞ Governor's Office Block  
Hospital Street  
✉ PO Box 2617, Otjiwarongo  
☎ 067-301269/302419  
📄 067-304037

**OMAHEKE**  
**Gobabis Office**  
✉ P/Bag 2277, Gobabis  
☎ 062-564687/5  
📄 062-562432

**OMUSATI**  
**Ombalantu Office**  
✉ P/Bag 523, Ombalantu  
☎ 065-251141  
📄 065-251189

**OSHIKOTO**  
**Tsumeb Office**  
☺ Liaison officer:  
Ms C Udjombala  
☞ Governor's Office Block  
✉ P/Bag 2020, Tsumeb  
☎ 067-220344/220924  
📄 067-220924/222676

**OSHANA**  
**Oshakati Office**  
☺ Liaison officer: Ms K Shilungu  
☞ Governor's Office Block  
✉ PO Box 5519 Oshakati  
☎ 065-220441/222447/231316  
📄 065-220441/221495/231317

**OHANGWENA**  
**Eenhana Office**  
☺ Liaison officer: Ms K Kassehele  
☞ Governor's Office Block  
✉ PO Box 13199 Eenhana  
☎ 065-263047  
📄 065-263062

**KUNENE**  
**Opuwo Office**  
☺ Liaison officer:  
Ms M Tjizembisa  
☞ Governor's Office Block  
✉ P/Bag 502 Opuwo  
☎ 065-273086  
📄 065-273580/273393

**KAVANGO**  
**Rundu Office**  
☺ Liaison officer: Ms J Ndumba  
☞ Office E-27, Government  
Building  
✉ PO Box 2985 Rundu  
☎ 066-256771/255939  
📄 066-256776/255603

**CAPRIVI**  
**Katima Mulilo Office**  
☺ Liaison officer: Ms M Mahoto  
☞ Governor's Office Block  
✉ PO Box 1416 Katima Mulilo  
☎ 066-252286  
📄 066-252217/252162

**ERONGO**  
**Swakomund Office**  
☺ Liaison officer: Ms J Nanus  
☞ Room 6 Mondesa  
Municipality Building  
✉ PO Box 2701, Swakopmund  
☎ 064-462580/462259  
📄 064-403294

# Directorate of Legal Aid

## MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY GENERAL

### CONTACT INFORMATION

**Region and Scope of Service**  
 Khomas (Windhoek)  
 National coverage

**Street Address**  
 Justitia Building, Independence  
 Avenue, Windhoek

**Postal Address**  
 P/Bag 13370 Windhoek

**Telephone Number**  
 Office hours: 061-2805111

**Fax Number**  
 Office hours: 061-230204

**Contact Persons**  
 Director/Chief Legal Aid  
 Mr Mbahuurua

**Affiliations**  
 None

### MAIN SERVICES

Free legal advice and representation  
 Referral

### NOTES/ADDITIONS/CHANGES

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### OVERVIEW OF MAIN SERVICES

The Directorate of Legal Aid was established in terms of the Legal Aid Act, 29 of 1 990. Its purpose is “to provide for the granting of legal aid in criminal and civil matters to persons whose means are inadequate to enable them to engage practitioners to assist and represent them.” A legal practitioner will be appointed to assist the person who has been granted legal aid to resolve the problem by reaching a settlement out of court or instituting court proceedings and representing the person in court.

The following people qualify for legal aid:

- People who earn N\$100 or less after pension and tax deductions and who have 4 dependents
- People who earn N\$950 or less after pension and tax deductions and who have 3 dependents
- People who earn N\$800 or less after pension and tax deductions and who have 2 dependents
- People who earn N\$650 or less after pension and tax deductions and who have 1 defendant
- People who earn N\$500 or less after pension and tax deductions and who have no dependents
- Unemployed people

Applications are made by going in person to the head office in Windhoek, or to any regional office of the Ministry of Justice, which will then liaise with head office regarding the application. The applicant will be interviewed, and a decision will be made by the Director as to whether or not legal aid will be granted. Where a case will not necessitate litigation, the applicant will be given the necessary legal advice, or a referral will be made to the appropriate agency for mediation services to resolve the problem.

It is significant for the purposes of this directory to note that legal aid is available for divorce and maintenance cases, especially in cases involving domestic violence.

### **\$ COSTS FOR SERVICES**

Government services are free of charge.

# Directorate: Developmental & Social Welfare Services

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**T Region and Scope of Service**  
Head office: Khomas (Windhoek)  
Regional offices: see next page  
National coverage

**📍 Street Address**  
Central Hospital Complex,  
Harvey Street, Windhoek West

**✉ Head Office Postal Address**  
P/Bag 13198, Windhoek

**☎ Telephone Number**  
Office hours: 061-203 2602

**📠 Fax Number**  
Office hours: 061-223573

**😊 Contact Persons**  
Director: Ms BU Katjiungua  
Deputy Director: Ms Masebane-Coetzee

- ✕ Affiliations**
- Multimedia Campaign on Violence Against Women & Children
  - Women & Child Protection Units of the Namibian Police
  - Child Justice Forum
  - International Committee on Child Justice

## MAIN SERVICES

Counselling  
Advice  
Referral (shelter, legal, medical)  
Social welfare assistance  
Financial assistance  
Information  
Advocacy

## NOTES/ADDITIONS/CHANGES

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## OVERVIEW OF MAIN SERVICES

Any member of the public can contact the nearest office of the Directorate of Social Services for just about any kind of health or welfare-related problem or emergency. Trained social workers will provide advice and individual counselling, and make appropriate medical, legal and other referrals to shelters and places of safety, support groups, professional institutions, etc. The Directorate is particularly sensitive to its legal duty to protect women and children against domestic violence, sexual abuse and neglect.

The Directorate receives referrals from a wide range of organisations and institutions dealing with victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse, and along with the Women & Child Protection Units, the Directorate occupies a central position in the continuum of services available for victims throughout Namibia. If a person in need of assistance is unsure where to go to find it, 'the nearest regional office of the Directorate is probably the best place to start.

It is notable that under the draft Child Care and Protection Act, any person who is paid to provide any service to children (e.g. a teacher, doctor, nurse) is required by law to report any information that would cause a reasonable person to suspect that a child is in need of protection to a social worker in the Ministry of Health & Social Services, or to the Commissioner of Child Welfare or NAMPOL.

The Directorate of Social Services administers matters relating to foster care, adoption and the temporary placement of minor children in registered places of safety - in accordance with the Children's Act or the new Child Care and Protection Act when it is passed by Parliament. The Directorate is also responsible for the placement of children in hostels and orphanages.

As a member of Interministerial Committee on Juvenile Justice and all the Juvenile Justice Forums in Namibia, the Directorate also assists children who conflict with the law. It has the authority to recommend an alternative to sentencing for a juvenile offender, and is responsible for providing aftercare services for these children.

Counselling is provided for women, children, men, couples and families - individually or in groups. People with alcohol or drug problems can also contact the Directorate for counselling and rehabilitation. Anyone needing counselling should contact the nearest regional office of the Directorate to arrange for it. Information and advice will be given on the telephone. *(Continued overleaf)*



## ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Administers all social allowances, such as old age pensions, maintenance grants for low-income single-parent families, disability grants and pensions, foster parent grants and death and survivor benefits. Also assists in obtaining court orders for child maintenance payments and alimony payments.

The Directorate can assist with emergency relief for the payment of rent, the exemption or reduction of school and hostel fees, hospital fees and related medical costs, and also with funeral expenses.

The Directorate will make appropriate referrals for people to obtain food aid under the National Drought Relief Programme and the Namibian School Feeding Scheme, which are administered by other ministries and agencies. Other kinds of emergency food aid, as well as clothing, can also be arranged.

The Directorate also makes appropriate referrals for people to obtain assistance from the War Orphan's Fund of the Social Economic Integration Programme for Ex-Combatants (SIPE) or from the Sam Nujoma Orphan's Fund.

The Directorate assists with referrals in cases of HIV/AIDS, other critical illnesses and disability.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES AND INVOLVEMENTS

- Beneficiary of the UNICEF-funded Mobilisation for Children's & Women's Rights Programme, which aims to strengthen the capacity of Ministries and other agencies to advocate and lobby for children's and women's rights, and to assist children and women in especially difficult circumstances.
- Beneficiary of the Finnida-funded Health and Social Sector Support Programme, which aims to develop a comprehensive social welfare policy for Namibia, including advocating for the rights and protection of children and women as its first medium-term priority.
- Subsidises qualifying welfare organisations with state funds. The National Welfare Act requires all non-governmental organisations offering welfare services to register with the Directorate.
- The Ministry of Health & Social Services conducted a survey on domestic violence and its health consequences in conjunction with the World Health Organization (WHO), as part of a comparative study involving Namibia, the Pacific Islands, Japan, Brazil, Peru and Thailand.
- The Ministry is also in the process of preparing a training manual on how to counsel male perpetrators of violence. Contacts for this programme are Veronica Theron or Betsy Boza Reyes.

## **S** COSTS FOR SERVICES

Government services are free of charge.

## REGIONAL & DISTRICT OFFICES OF THE DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The Directorate of Social Services has a Control Social Worker in each health region who can be contacted during office hours for assistance.

### **T** North East Health Region

(Kavango, Caprivi)

☎ Rundu 066-265551

Katima 066-253012

📄 Rundu 066-255371

✉ P/Bag 2094, Rundu

### **T** North West Health Region

(Oshana, Ohangwena, Omusati, Oshikoto)

☎ Oshakati (Oshana) 065-220211

Ondangwa (Oshana) 065 258811

Engela (Ohangwena) 065-261104

Ongandjela (Omusati) 065-252013

Tsumeb (Oshikoto) 067 224050

📄 Oshakati 065-220303

✉ P/Bag 5538, Oshakati

### **T** Central West Health Region

(Otjozondjupa, Erongo, Kunene)

☎ Otjiwarongo (Otjozondjupa) 067 303706

Grootfontein (Otjozondjupa) 067 242960

Otavi (Otjozondjupa) 067-234194

Okakarara (Otjozondjupa) 067-317004

Okahandja (Otjozondjupa) 062-503221

Khorixas (Kunene) 067-331493

Omaruru (Erongo) 064-570037

Usakos (Erongo) 064-530067

Swakopmund (Erongo) 064-412460

Walvis Bay (Erongo) 064-203441

📄 Otjiwarongo 067-303706

✉ P/Bag 2612, Otjiwarongo

### **T** Central South Health Region

(Komas, Omaheke, Hardap, Karas)

☎ Windhoek (Komas) 061-2032602

Gobabis (Omaheke) 062-562940

Rehoboth (Hardap) 062-523811

Mariental (Hardap) 063-245281

Keetmanshoop (Karas) 063-223365

Karasburg (Karas) 063-270167

Lüderitz (Karas) 063-202446


📄 Windhoek 061-2032602


✉ P/Bag 13198, Windhoek


This organisation offers the full range of professional social welfare services for persons of any religious denomination or culture.


# Law Reform and Development Commission (LRDC)


## CONTACT INFORMATION

 **Region and Scope of Service**  
Khomas (Windhoek)  
National coverage


 **Street Address**  
Justitia Building, Independence Avenue, Windhoek


 **Postal Address**  
P/Bag 13302 Windhoek

 **Telephone Number**  
*Office hours:* Ministry of Justice switchboard: 061-2805111

 **Fax Number**  
*Office hours:* 061-240064

 **E-Mail**  
lawreform@moj.gov.na

 **Contact Persons**  
Chairperson: Mr UD Nujoma  
Secretary: Mr WJ Potgieter

-  **Affiliations**
- Multimedia Campaign on Violence Against Women & Children
  - Working Group on Domestic Violence Law Reform

## MAIN SERVICES

Research  
Law reform and development  
Legal services  
Information

## NOTES/ADDITIONS/CHANGES

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## OVERVIEW OF MAIN SERVICES

The LRDC was established by an Act of Parliament - the Law Reform and Development Commission Act 29 of 1991. It is an institution established by the Government to advise the Government on the reform and development of the law of Namibia. The LRDC is not restricted to any branch or aspect of the law: it can undertake research and make recommendations for changes to any existing law, or it can suggest new laws in any area of law. The LRDC does have specific projects, however, and it works according to a programme with priorities.

Any person is welcome to submit to the LRDC his or her views about what law-related issues should be researched and improved on. As far as is necessary for the purposes of a project, the LRDC will always try to achieve a thorough consultation process with the public, through methods such as workshops and interviews.

The LRDC consists of a Chairperson, the Ombudsperson, an officer of the Ministry of Justice, two practising legal practitioners and three other people. Appointments are made by the President, and the legal practitioners are appointed after consultations with the Law Society of Namibia - for a 4-year period. The LRDC is served by a secretariat provided by the Ministry of Justice.

According to its establishing statute, the objectives of the LRDC are to undertake research on specific branches of the law, and to make recommendations for the reform and development thereof. The LRDC should concentrate on the repeal of obsolete (outdated) law, and the consolidation or codification of the law, or any other measures to make it more accessible; on the harmonisation of customary law with the common law; and on improving procedures for the administration of justice. The LRDC's scope is not limited, however, and the Minister of Justice may refer any matter to it. The LRDC can also be requested to comment on draft legislation prepared by the Government.


The LRDC must fulfil its task according to a programme which must be approved by the Minister of Justice. This requirement is meant to enhance co-ordination and to ensure a well-planned process. Its enabling statute gives the LRDC all the powers usually given to a presidential commission of inquiry.

The LRDC is represented in several national forums. Those relevant to this directory are listed on the left.


*Source: Information pamphlet of the LRDC*


# Legal Assistance Centre (LAC)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

 **Region and Scope of Service**  
Head office: Khomas (Windhoek)  
Advice office: see next page  
National coverage


 **Street Address**  
4 Korner Street, Windhoek


 **Postal Address**  
PO Box 604, Windhoek

 **Telephone Number**  
*Office hours:* 061-223356

 **Fax Number**  
*Office hours:* 061-234953

 **E-mail Address**  
info@lac.org.na

 **Contact Persons**  
Director: Mr N Tjombe  
Manager: Ms E Weitz  
Land issues: Ms E. Zimba-Naris  
Human rights issues:  
Ms T Hancox  
Education issues: Mr J Nakuta  
Gender issues: Ms D Hubbard  
Child justice: Ms C Zaahl  
HIV/AIDS: Mr. D Cupido

 **Affiliations**

- Multimedia Campaign on Violence Against Women & Children
- Interministerial Committee on Child Justice (NGO rep.)
- National Advisory Committee on Gender Based Violence
- Windhoek Child Justice Forum

## MAIN SERVICES

Legal advice and representation  
Information  
Research  
Advocacy & lobbying  
Legal education & training  
Publications on law & human rights  
Referrals (medical, welfare, other)

## NOTES/ADDITIONS/CHANGES

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## OVERVIEW OF MAIN SERVICES

The LAC is a non-profit public interest law firm with a head office in Windhoek and additional offices in Katutura, Ongwediva and Keetmanshoop. The LAC's work is supervised by the Legal Assistance Trust, whose trustees include legal practitioners, church leaders and other community leaders. The LAC's main objective is to protect the human rights of all Namibians.

The LAC provides legal advice and representation services for people who cannot afford to pay a lawyer. These services are provided only in public interest cases - where the case is likely to have an impact beyond the people directly involved. The lawyers and paralegals are available to give legal advice to anyone approaching their offices with a legal problem or a question about the law. Clients will be referred to the appropriate agencies for further assistance, e.g. to the Ministry of Health & Social Services for welfare assistance and counselling.

The LAC has a **Legal Education Unit** which offers education on a wide range of legal issues for community groups, school groups, non-governmental organisations and other interest groups. The trainers go out to communities to provide this education on request, and they also target groups who may need this education. The department also trains people who can in turn educate their own community members. The main topics covered in the training workshops include the Namibian Constitution and the laws which provide for the rights of workers, women and children, e.g. the labour law and the laws on marriage, divorce, maintenance, rape and domestic violence.

A very important aspect of the LAC's work is to do legal research and make policy recommendations for law reform and the use of Namibian legislation to protect the rights of all Namibians. The **Gender Research & Advocacy Project** is one of the LAC's permanent projects which does this kind of work. This project has published numerous studies and papers on topics relating to women and children's rights, as well as a wide range of educational materials on women's and children's rights (in different Namibian languages), which are available from any of the LAC offices. Most of the materials are free of charge. The project is currently focusing on law reform in the area of family law.

Another permanent project of the LAC is the **Child Justice Project**, which works together with government ministries and non-governmental organisations to find

(continued overleaf)



alternatives to prison sentences for children (people under 18 years old) who conflict with the law. The alternative sentencing options are meant to keep children out of the criminal justice system, rehabilitate them and reintegrate them into the community. This project occupies a central position in the continuum of services for children in need of care, and works very closely with the Namibian Police and the other members of the Interministerial Committee on Child Justice and the regional Child Justice Forums, which include governmental and non-governmental representatives.

Another relevant project of the LAC is the **AIDS Law Unit**, which promotes a human rights based approach to HIV/AIDS in Namibia, addresses issues of social inequality that increase vulnerability to HIV infection as well as discrimination on the basis of HIV status and provides an avenue for remedies for people with HIV or AIDS who have been discriminated against. It enjoys a close working relationship with other AIDS service organisations in Namibia such as NANASO, Catholic AIDS Action and the AIDS Care Trust as well as with organisations of people living with HIV/AIDS such as Lironga Eparu. The Unit also enjoys a close working relationship with the Ministries of Health and Social Services, Basic Education and Labour as well as with trade unions such as the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) and employer organisations such as the Chamber of Mines and the Namibian Employer's Federation and plans and executes its activities in close collaboration with these partners. It also hosts the regional offices of the AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA)

**ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

- The LAC publishes the Index to the Laws of Namibia (NAMLEX), which is updated as required.
- The LAC produces the bi-annual Namibian Law Report as a special project.
- Another project is the Land, Environment and Development Project, which carries out

research and makes recommendations for law reform in these areas.

- The various projects and departments produce articles on law-related topics for publication in local newspapers, and will do so on request.
- LAC staff can be called upon to join radio and TV panel discussions. The Legal Education Unit makes extensive use of radio to educate communities and will facilitate radio talk shows on request.
- LAC legal practitioners assist in lecturing law students at the University of Namibia, and in training justice officials (magistrates and prosecutors), as well as government and police officials, on various areas of the law.
- Non-governmental and community-based organisations can approach the LAC for assistance in drafting their constitutions and other legal documents.
- The LAC can be called upon to conduct research on behalf of or in conjunction with other organisations - governmental or non-governmental.
- The Legal Education Unit organises community events to mark internationally recognised human rights holidays, such as International Human Rights Day.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES AND INVOLVEMENTS**

The LAC is a member of numerous committees and networks in Namibia and Southern Africa, and provides ongoing legal, educational and research support to many governmental and non-governmental bodies in Namibia and Southern Africa. Among these bodies are the Southern African Human Rights NGO Network (SAHRINGON) and the Southern African Legal Assistance Network (SALAN). The Namibian bodies relevant to this publication are listed on the previous page.

**\$ COST FOR SERVICES**

Almost all services are free of charge. Some publications must be paid for, as well as specialist services such as research and lecturing services.

**LAC REGIONAL ADVICE OFFICES**

**Katutura Advice Office**  
(Khomas Region - Windhoek)

☺ Co-ordinator: Mr J Nakuta  
☎ 061-264641/262333  
📄 061-262297  
✉ PO Box 62053 Katutura  
📍 Katutura Community Centre Independence Avenue

**Human Rights Centre**  
(Oshana Region - Ongwediva)









☺ Co-ordinator: Ms R Hekandjo  
☎ 065-230178 or 230444  
📄 065-230443  
✉ P/Bag X5534 Oshakati  
📍 ELCIN Centre, Ongwediva

**Keetmanshoop Advice Office**  
(Karas Region)

☺ Co-ordinator: Mr A Katzao  
☎ 063-223187  
📄 063-223758  
✉ PO Box 180 Keetmanshoop  
📍 Cnr. Suider & Hoog Street

# Office of the Ombudsperson

## CONTACT INFORMATION

-  **Region and Scope of Service**  
 Khomas (Windhoek)  
 National coverage
  
-  **Street Address**  
 Corner of Robert Mugabe Ave &  
 Peter Muller Street, Windhoek
  
-  **Postal Address**  
 P/Bag 13211 Windhoek
  
-  **Telephone Number**  
 Office hours: 061-2073111
  
-  **Fax Number**  
 Office hours: 061-226838
  
-  **E-mail Address**  
 Imungund@ombudsman.org.na
  
-  **Contact Persons**  
 Ombudsperson: Mr J Walters
  
-  **Affiliations**
  - Multimedia Campaign on  
 Violence Against Women &  
 Children
  - Law Reform & Development  
 Commission

## MAIN SERVICES

Complaints investigation  
 Legal services  
 Information  
 Advice  
 Referral

## NOTES/ADDITIONS/CHANGES

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## OVERVIEW OF MAIN SERVICES

The Namibian Constitution provides for an independent Ombudsperson - a lawyer or a judge who is appointed by the President to assist members of the public with their complaints against the government. This is a very important aspect of Namibia's system of government. The Ombudsperson is answerable only to the Constitution and laws of Namibia. No member of the Cabinet or Parliament or any other person can tell the Ombudsperson what to do. All government bodies are required to give the Office of the Ombudsperson any help needed to protect the independence, dignity and effectiveness of the Ombudsperson.

The Ombudsperson's job is to investigate complaints from members of the public regarding the actions of government officials; to stop violations of fundamental rights and freedoms by any person or Organisation - including government, parastals and private bodies or individuals; and to protect Namibia's natural resources and environment.

The role of the Ombudsperson is not to replace the courts of law, but to settle disputes amicably outside court. The Ombuds-person has the power to take a wide range of steps to correct wrongdoing, including taking a case to court if necessary.

The Ombudsperson has jurisdiction (legal authority) over all levels of government, and can investigate complaints about any official of a government department, board or body; of a regional or local government body; of a parastatal; oi, of the defence force, police force or prison service. Where a complaint is about a violation of fundamental rights and freedoms, the Ombudsperson has the power to investigate private persons and institutions. The Ombudsman does not have the power to interfere with the decision of a court, but can investigate wrongdoing on the part of a judge or magistrate.

Any person in Namibia - not only citizens or residents - can make a complaint to the Ombudsperson. People outside Windhoek can go to any Regional Council office or the Clerk of the Court at any magistrate's court. The complainant will normally be asked to complete a complaint form, People needing help to complete the form will receive it and it will be completed in the complainant's chosen language. If the form is completed at a Regional Council office or magistrate's court, the complainant can seal it in an envelope to protect his or her privacy, and it will be forwarded to the Ombudsperson. People who cannot make their complaint in person can explain their problem in a letter addressed to the Ombudsperson. People who cannot make their complaint in person or write a letter can telephone the Office of the Ombudsperson for advice on the best way to make the complaint. People who are not able to make their complaint themselves for some reason can ask someone else to do so on their behalf.

*Source: Information booklet titled Go To the Ombudsman*