

NAMIBIA 2020 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Namibia is a constitutional multiparty democracy. In the presidential and parliamentary elections in November 2019 President Hage Geingob won a second five-year term, and the South West African People's Organization retained its parliamentary majority, winning 63 of 96 National Assembly seats. International observers characterized the 2019 election as generally free and fair.

The national police maintain internal security. The military is responsible for external security but also has some domestic security responsibilities. The Namibian Police Force reports to the Ministry of Safety and Security. The Namibian Defense Force reports to the Ministry of Defense. Civilian authorities maintained effective control over the security forces. Members of the security forces allegedly committed some abuses.

Significant human rights issues were limited to acts of official corruption.

The government took steps to prosecute or administratively punish officials who committed abuses, whether in the security services or elsewhere in the government.

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from

a. Arbitrary Deprivation of Life and Other Unlawful or Politically Motivated Killings

There was one report that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings. The Namibian Police Force (NamPol) conducts internal investigations of police misconduct and presents its findings to the Office of the Prosecutor-General, which determines whether to pursue charges.

On March 17, the government instituted COVID-19 state-of-emergency measures, including travel restrictions, a curfew, restrictions on public gatherings and business activity, and mandatory supervised quarantines for confirmed COVID-19

NAMIBIA

The Ministry of Labor, Industrial Relations, and Employment Creation mandates occupational safety and health (OSH) standards, and the law empowers authorities to enforce these standards through unannounced inspections and criminal prosecution. The law requires employers to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of their employees; the responsibility for identifying unsafe situations remains with OSH experts and not the worker. The law covers all employers and employees in the country, including the informal sector and individuals placed by a private employment agency (labor hire), except independent contractors and members of the NDF, the Namibia Central Intelligence Service, the Namibian Correctional Service, and police. By law employees have the right to remove themselves from dangerous work situations, and authorities effectively protected employees in such situations.

The government enforced wage, hour, and safety standards laws in the formal sector but did not consistently enforce labor law in the informal sector, which included an estimated 57 percent of workers. Penalties are commensurate with those for similar violations, but they were seldom applied in the informal sector. Resources to enforce the law were limited, and the number of inspectors was insufficient to address violations. Inspections occurred proactively, reactively, and at random. Due to the ministry's resource constraints in vehicles, budget, and personnel, as well as difficulty in gaining access to some large communal and commercial farms and private households, labor inspectors sometimes found it difficult to investigate possible violations. The Namibian Employers' Federation reported that the most prominent offenses concerning employee rights and working conditions were in the informal sector, including for domestic workers, street hawkers, and employees in the common informal bars known as *shebeens*.

Workers in the construction, agriculture, and mining sectors faced hazardous working conditions. There was one report of a fatal industrial accident. On November 19, an employee of Dundee Precious Metals Inc. was killed while conducting maintenance activities.

Allegations persisted that, in addition to not adhering to the law on hiring and firing, Chinese firms failed to pay sector-established minimum wages and benefits in certain industries, failed to respect work-hour regulations for public holidays

