

HUMAN RIGHTS IN NAMIBIA

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INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FOR
SELF-DETERMINATION

Situation in Namibia.

Issue 1: Lack of legal recognition of Indigenous Peoples

- Previous UPR cycle: Namibia noted and supported recommendations to strengthen Indigenous Peoples' rights.
 - Ratify ILO Convention No. 169
 - Recognize Indigenous Peoples' rights in the Constitution
 - Reform the Traditional Authorities Act
 - Adopt and implement the White Paper on Indigenous Rights
- New developments: None of these recommendations have been implemented. Indigenous Peoples are still considered “marginalized communities”, not recognized under international law.
- This lack of legal recognition has concrete consequences: it weakens the protection of our lands and resources, limits our participation, and increases our exposure to displacement, poverty, and violence.

Recommendations on Issue 1: Lack of legal recognition of Indigenous Peoples

- To legally recognize Indigenous Peoples
- To ratify ILO Convention No. 169
- To ensure commitments are reflected in binding legislation and effective policies
- To develop protections with Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)

Situation in Namibia.

Issue 2: Discrimination and Land Rights Violations

- Previous UPR cycle: Namibia supported recommendations to improve land access for Indigenous Peoples.
- New developments: We remain vulnerable.
 - Privatization and illegal conservancies limit access to ancestral territories
 - Prevents gathering essential foods and medicinal plants
 - Deadly land conflicts: In Tsumkwe, a San man was killed collecting devil's claw in a privatized area
 - FPIC ignored: ReconAfrica oil and gas project in the Kavango Basin, a vital water source for nearly one million people, proceeded without consent. This threatens water, wildlife, and livelihoods.
 - Promised community benefits have not materialized

Recommendations on Issue 2: Discrimination and Land Rights

- To recognize and title ancestral lands, prevent illegal privatization
- To fully implement Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for all projects
- To suspend projects like ReconAfrica until meaningful consultation occurs

Situation in Namibia.

Issue 2: Indigenous Women Rights

- Previous UPR cycle: Namibia supported recommendations to improve access to decent employment and prevent/respond to violence against Indigenous women and girls
- New developments:
 - Structural barriers persist: early school dropouts, economic dependency, exclusion from formal work
 - Legal protections exist but are ineffective, especially in rural areas
 - San girls face sexualization, leading to high rates of adolescent pregnancy, sexual abuse, trafficking, and higher HIV/AIDS risk.
 - Access to justice is limited: protection orders hard to obtain, language barriers block legal processes
 - Violence often occurs with near-total impunity.
 - In 2025, a foreign tourist was arrested with over 1,500 illicit images of San minors, which exposes the cultural and sexual exploitation.

Recommendations on Issue 2: Indigenous Women Rights

- To strengthen access to justice: mobile courts, Indigenous language-speaking personnel
- To adopt policies to combat harmful stereotypes and practices: early marriage, trafficking, adolescent pregnancy



THANK YOU