

On toxic waste

AS a Namibian lawyer I strongly object to the dumping of any toxic substance in our beautiful country. Any dumping of such waste is a clear and basic infringement of the basic human rights of a people.

Every people has a right to a generally safe and satisfactory environment favourable to its development and this right is enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights adopted by a great number of African states.

This right is inherent in the sovereignty of states and in particular its attribute of the right of self-determination.

I call on all Namibians and especially those involved in decision-making, to prevent any form of dumping of toxic material in our country, irrespective of how high the payment for this dumping. We do not want money for the destruction of our country and its people.

I personally will not allow the dumping, be it on the Skeleton Coast (which is unique to Namibia) or the Namib Desert (which is even more unique).

Let them dump their wastes on the moon; they will in any event not be able to live on the moon.

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Right to contribute

An open letter to
the Constituent Assembly

Dear Members

MAY I offer my congratulations to you on speedily formulating a proposed constitution for independent Namibia, in a spirit of cooperation which is an inspiration to all Namibians and, for someone such as myself, who has been involved in solidarity work with the Namibian people, a joy to observe. The care with which basic human rights are being protected will hopefully ensure a peaceful society, free from

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discrimination and oppression, as is your aim.

I have been heartened by the public debate concerning the content of the constitution although, as was pointed out in The Namibian, this was not welcomed by members of the Standing Committee. However, it is surely important that the Namibian people have the right to contribute to something for which they have struggled for many years, and it should be encouraged to assist their personal development.

That the UN Declaration on Human Rights has been incorporated into the constitution bodes well for the future, but I beg to be allowed to point out that, even in the UN Declaration, one group of people is not accorded adequate protection, though many are working to improve this. I refer to the homosexual and lesbian communities which exist in every country throughout the world.

The right to freedom of sexual orientation is a highly contentious topic, which often brings condemnation from many sectors of society, yet homosexuals and lesbians also make equally valuable contributions to the societies in which they live, be they teachers, doctors, shop workers or whatever. Even without this contribution to their country's economy, many people in the homosexual and lesbian community, because of their own oppression and victimisation, have a greater awareness of the struggles of others and will stand in solidarity with them.

Yet there is often a reluctance to reciprocate this solidarity and homosexuals and lesbians are left to struggle alone for the right to live as they choose. Such struggles are made all the more difficult in societies where there is no real awareness of their

problems or where prejudice is entrenched. Consequently they themselves fear to speak out lest they be condemned and marginalised even further. This has sadly been the case in Namibia, where they have been scorned, intimidated and imprisoned.

At this momentous time in Namibia's development, I beg you to consider their situation and give serious thought to this sector of your people. Unless the law changes, they will continue to suffer and this surely runs contrary to the noble ideals of freedom which you seek to encompass in Namibia's constitution.

Referring to the relevant section in the constitution, Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, the article on Equality and Freedom from Discrimination could include "sexual orientation".

The goodwill and support of the government could do much to bring awareness, understanding and acceptance of homosexuals and lesbians in Namibia and allow them to take their open and rightful place in society.

May Namibia stand as a shining example of democracy to us all.

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Truth about police

A PERSON hiding behind the pseudonym of 'Civpol Monitor' made certain statements about the police in Namibia, which are unfounded and unjustified. You, Ms Lister, added venom to this person's utterances by implying that the letter is an official statement by Civpol on Swapol.

Only a few facts will prove that the writer of the open letter accusing

Namibian sons and daughters to be callous murderers and irresponsible people, has only one aim and that is to slander the good reputation our police has.

The Secretary General of the United Nations, his Special Representative, Mr Ahtisaari, Mr Thornberry, Commissioner Fanning and many other high-ranking UN officials, have publicly expressed their admiration for the professional work being carried out by Swapol. These people are responsible leaders who would not make such statements without verification.

Almost all members of Civpol have expressed their gratitude to Swapol members, not only for their fraternity, but also for their professional conduct towards them and the people. There were many occasions where members of Civpol declared categorically that cooperation with members of Swapol is excellent. Whenever problems arose, these were resolved satisfactorily.

Official statistics also prove the anonymous insulter of the Namibian people wrong. Namibians have a right to learn the truth about their police. From April to November 1989, the following facts were established: of the 69 complaints against members of Swapol intimidating people, only 28 were found to have any substance. A total of 929 complaints were reported during this period.

The cowardly 'Civpol Monitor' has no knowledge of the positive relationship between law-abiding peace-loving citizens of this beautiful country and their police. Here law and order prevails. Here people proved that a democratic election can be held without bloodshed. Here people proved that law and order is a priority and that those members of society who are entrusted to preserve and maintain it, are respected and supported.

The so-called 'Civpol Monitor' has forsaken his duty by not reporting instances of murder and assault allegedly committed by members of Swapol. He is also an outright liar whose identity has to be established to protect his people from a man, or woman, who is dishonest, who is too timid to openly report injustices and who insults people who have showered him with hospitality, goodwill and respect.

We in the police do know that there are elements in our midst who are not custodians of order and peace. We appeal to everybody, including the biased 'Civpol Monitor' to assist us in identifying such persons.

All members of the police are sons and daughters of this land. All of us have pledged to serve our people. We know that we have the support of the majority of our people and will therefore not waver to execute our duties to serve Namibia and its people.

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ATTENTION READERS

We would welcome contributions and suggestions concerning the future dispensation in an independent Namibia. For years the people of this country have wanted self-determination, now let us exercise it and examine all options open to us. We welcome vigorous debate on such issues. - Editor.