

IMAGINE: you have a society that is sick, the very same society knows that it is sick and regard this sickness as wrong through its judicial system.

The citizens and leaders of the society are well informed and have a list of all the people who are either perpetuating and or blessing the sickness. The question I want to direct to myself is; what kind of a society is this? Don't expect to find answers in the following paragraphs, believe me there are none.

For argument sake, let me use this scenario: there was a man called Anyman With Fists who happened to be a respectable man, especially among his peers and colleagues. He lived with his wife in a worn down house and like in any community the people started to talk of his laziness and uselessness at home.

Because of all this gossip, other men did not welcome Anyman With Fists during work, games and even discussions. After some time Anyman With Fists became so depressed and lonely that the idea to use his fists came like a dream upon him. It was late in the afternoon when people started coming back from harvesting, so did the wife of Anyman With Fists. Later into the evening, a family fire lit every homestead and meals were prepared. At the homestead of Anyman With Fists, it was a different story all together. When the wife arrived that afternoon, Anyman With Fists started quarrelling with his wife. He found all sorts of reasons and pitiful excuses to kickstart the use of his fists.

At the end of all the quarrelling Anyman With Fists used his fists so effectively on his wife

# Open Letter To The Criminally-Minded

that he became so popular in this small village overnight. He was quite pleased with his newly acquired skill. It was not long after this incident before Anyman With Fists was visited by men who admired him, he was invited to drinking sprees, discussions and games by men from near and far.

As Anyman With Fists explained his renowned hobby of solving all his problems with his fists, men listened attentively and affirmed everything. Through highly appreciated discussions, Anyman With Fists selflessly advised men on how to be more masculine and be proud of it in their homes.

He said men would command respect if they stop being nice and discipline their wives and girlfriends as well as younger members of the community. The number of men who found the method applied by Anyman With Fists effective increased overnight and very soon, men from all around used their fists to solve all their problems. They effectively took charge of their lives and dominated the rest of the community. Anyman With Fists became the most respected man on earth.

The scenario is mine, I know that it is Molamade, yet the reasoning is social. We in the Namibia society have ac-

cepted and are taking a lot of things for granted, if not as traditional or even religious. It's like smoking among teenagers. It is a respectable thing to be smoking and drinking to be accepted by a clique or grouping. Most of us who grew up in Katutura went through a stage of growing. By growing I mean being involved in crime, it could be serious or petty crime, drinking, wasting ourselves with drugs, etc. The process of finding and defining yourself has always been difficult, especially in Katutura. It is only a very small group of teenagers who decide to specialize in the many faculties offered by the institute of Katutura. This is a fact.

Namibian society has accepted violence as part of informal education and religious practice. Note: if you should disregard all the violence taking place in Namibia, then your interest in the country is questionable. The criminal minded men in Namibia, here I am talking about men with criminal intentions and not all the men; men who think just because they have hands, which can be quickly turned into fists, they are like Anyman With Fists. They think that they can go around and fix all their problems with fists. They think that they can dish out blows if some-

body does not please them at a particular point in time. Whether you concur with the understandings of what human rights is, or you behave conservatively like an old priest, violence against women and children affects you. Even if you are as ignorant as a commercial farmer to change, violence against women and children is something that we in Namibia have to address and readdress at the same time. Unlike the community in our scenario which has accepted violence and subsequently attached discipline and authority to it.

We know that violence is taking place on a daily basis, but we choose to protect the criminal-minded men and even regard the violence, especially amongst young lovers, as a sign of love. Neighbours are fully aware of abuses and assaults taking place but do not bother. Indeed we play ignorant to such human infringements, and in some cases we are the perpetrators of such crimes.

Sometimes I think that we have build high walls of silence or soundproof houses so as to confine all the abuse and violence within these walls. What I have learned, while growing up in Katutura, which is wrong, is to keep quiet and through doing this,

keep the peace. It is the same with families in Namibia; they have learned to harbour the abuse of their children, violence against women and in some instances men, and by doing this save character and face. I for one have noticed and learned that being notorious, especially in Katutura, honours you with respect from the society you live in. For an example, being a thug brings you all the beautiful girls, as opposed to being a law-abiding teenager or citizen.

Coming back to our scenario, for Anyman With Fists to be respected and accepted in the other circles of men, he had to be violent towards his wife.

It is the same with criminal-men, especially boyfriends who beat, assault and even threaten their girlfriends with death, to regard the violation of human rights, as a sign of expressing love.

For the criminal-minded men, when they infringe the fundamental human rights of the other person, does not seem to be wrong. However my question to them is: are they aware of the pain, humiliation, psychological trauma, social withdrawal and other defects they cause to the other person? Are they aware of the actions that can be taken against them or do they rely on the

ever-extended family that will excuse the assault by commanding the victims to keep quiet and even withdraw cases? Do they rely on the ineffectiveness of the police force or the reluctance of the police officers to carry out their duties?

What society are we living in? Is it a society that condones violence, a society that respect criminals, disregards human integrity? What kind of people can allow themselves to be ruled by criminals and then just roll over and accept it? What man in his right mind can blackmail women and children and continuously abuse them?

Who has the answers and why don't they give them to us? Are women

going to be kept hostage by criminal-minded men or has the society cast a blind eye on the pain inflicted upon itself? Is Namibian society going to groom Anyman With Fists' in the future?

Like I said before, I don't have answers, just questions that are very soon to turn me into a criminal. If the system fails to protect the innocent, let the very same system not pursue innocent people who cannot accept the injustices they are suppressed with on a daily basis. The patience of many of the law-abiding citizens of Namibia is running low, as we have no confidence in the law system or the policing system. We are not going to be quiet for much longer.

**Keamogets J. Molapong WINDHOEK**

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