

Need To Revamp Namibian Police

AS a taxpayer I am concerned about the effectiveness and responsibility of the police in our country. After independence the police became ineffective and I have reached the conclusion that this is as a result of ineffective management, specially in Windhoek.

The following are matters of concern to me:

(1) Abuse of state vehicles and revenue ... When lodging a complaint with the police one is always informed that there are no police vehicles available to attend to your complaint. Even so, one waits for hours, even days, before the officers respond. However, come weekend and one is amazed at the number of police vehicles on the road in the "clean-up/crime prevention operations". I support the clean-up operations and believe them to be very effective if done for the benefit of the community. I suspect that mismanagement and lack of proper planning results in the abuse of state vehicles.

(2) Lack of motivation: The police is an important component of national security and requires a large budget for effective operation. Although police officers work under constant pressure and are exposed to high-risk situations (sometimes at the cost of their lives), they are greatly underpaid and poorly accommodated. Does the government intend to wait until the police officers organise a strike before they will consider their plight? What did

the Wascom recommendations do to justify the salaries of police personnel? If government, as stated, does not have enough funds to pay adequate salaries to police personnel how does it intend to finance its self-enrichment scheme? I suggest that the Inspector General reshuffle his management especially at District levels, and replace them with more capable and committed personnel, since those currently in these positions leave much to be desired.

To address the situation the ministry concerned should consider the following:

- (1) Appoint a commission of inquiry into malpractice and mismanagement of state property.
- (2) Find an alternative way of combating crime other than police vehicles roaming the streets at night. This is a total misuse of taxpayers' money and abuse of state property.
- (3) Consider the salaries of police personnel and adjust it in line with those of other civil servants.
- (4) Train police staff to enable them to meet the required standards.

Now is the right time to act before the situations gets out of hand. The public would be immensely proud to be served by a capable police force.

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Steve Biko: A Tribute To The People's Hero