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**UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW
52ND SESSION**

**STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
FOR THE 52ND SESSION OF THE
UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW**

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Introduction

1. The European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) is a non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights around the world. The ECLJ also holds Special Consultative status before the United Nations Economic and Social Council. This report discusses the status of human rights in the Republic of Namibia (Namibia) for the 52nd session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

Background

2. Namibia is a country located off the southwestern coast of Africa and has a population of approximately 3.1 million people.¹ The population is predominantly Christian, with approximately 49.3% of the population identifying as Protestant, 17.7% as Roman Catholic, 14.1% as unaffiliated Christian, 10.8% as independent Christian, and 6% adhering to other traditional beliefs.²

3. Namibia's last review was held on May 3, 2021.³ As a result of the review, Namibia received 283 recommendations, 229 of which it accepted.⁴ It was recommended by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and supported by Namibia, that the government "[e]nhance public education programmes on human trafficking and ensure sufficient resources to fully train law enforcement and judicial staff in support of the Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act (1 of 2018)."⁵ No recommendations were made regarding religious freedom.

Legal Framework

4. Under Article 9 of the Constitution of Namibia, "[n]o persons shall be held in slavery or servitude. No persons shall be required to perform forced labour."⁶

5. Under Article 3 of the Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act of 2018, individuals convicted of human trafficking are "liable to a fine not exceeding N\$1[,]000[,]000 or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding 30 years or to both such fine and such

¹ Reginal Green, *Namibia*, BRITANNICA (2025), <https://www.britannica.com/place/Namibia>.

² *Id.*

³ *Universal Periodic Review – Namibia*, OHCHR, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/na-index>.

⁴ *Infographic- Namibia*, OHCHR, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Namibia_Infographic_38th.pdf.

⁵ OHCHR, UPR of Namibia (3rd Cycle – 38th Session) Thematic List of Recommendations, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/UPR38_Namibia_Thematic_List_of_Recommendations.docx.

⁶ CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA 1990 art. 9, <https://antislaverylaw.ac.uk/country/namibia/?dataset=adld>.

imprisonment.”⁷ Additionally, the fine increases up to N\$2,500,000 and imprisonment is increased up to fifty years in the case of a second or subsequent conviction.⁸

6. Namibia is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).⁹ Under Article 8 of the ICCPR, “No one shall be held in slavery; slavery and the slave-trade in all their forms shall be prohibited. No one shall be held in servitude.”¹⁰

7. Additionally, Namibia is a party to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.¹¹ Under Article 9 sec. 1 of this Protocol:

1. States Parties shall establish comprehensive policies, programmes and other measures:

(a) To prevent and combat trafficking in persons; and

(b) To protect victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, from revictimization.¹²

Human Trafficking

8. Namibia is primarily a destination country for both labor and sex trafficking.¹³ Victims of human trafficking are typically deceived by their traffickers and forced into exploitative situations.¹⁴ Children are most notably at risk for being trafficked for forced labor in domestic service, and in the agricultural, mining, and factory sectors.¹⁵ Those most at risk for being targeted by traffickers are often poor, unemployed, and lack access to education.¹⁶

9. Since its last UPR, Namibia implemented the National Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Persons (2023 to 2027) and the National Referral Mechanisms and Standard

⁷ COMBATING OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS ACT OF 2018 art. 3,
<https://antislaverylaw.ac.uk/country/namibia/?dataset=adld>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Ratification Status for Namibia*, OHCHR,
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=120&Lang=EN.

¹⁰ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights art. 8, *adopted* Dec. 16, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171,
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>.

¹¹ Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime art. 9 § 1,
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-prevent-suppress-and-punish-trafficking-persons>

¹² *Id.*

¹³ 90 People Returned Home After Team Witnesses Blatant Trafficking in Namibia Marketplace, LOVE JUST. INT’L (Apr. 20, 2022), <https://www.lovejustice.ngo/blog/90-people-returned-home-after-team-witnesses-blatant-trafficking-in-namibia-marketplace>.

¹⁴ Hileni Nembwaya, *Namibia Cracks Down on 28 Child Trafficking Cases*, THE NAMIBIAN (Aug. 5, 2024), <https://www.namibian.com.na/namibia-cracks-down-on-28-child-trafficking-cases>.

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ Tuyeimo Haidula, *National Action Plan on Trafficking Launched*, THE NAMIBIAN SUN (Aug. 1, 2023), <https://www.namibiansun.com/government/national-action-plan-on-trafficking-launched2023-08-01>.

Operating Procedures on Trafficking in Persons.¹⁷ Additionally, the government also created a human trafficking training manual for police and prosecutors. It further provided social workers and police with anti-trafficking specific training.¹⁸ The government also increased funding for protective services for victims of human trafficking.¹⁹ These services included providing victims with housing, counseling, and medical and psychological support.²⁰ All of these efforts are necessary to prevent human trafficking and protect victims of human trafficking, as is required by the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

10. We have already seen how these new measures have led to an increase in the authorities' ability to investigate cases of human trafficking. Between January 2021 and December 2023, authorities in Namibia investigated and prosecuted twenty-eight human trafficking cases.²¹ Between March 2024 and August 2025, authorities drastically increased investigations and identified thirty-six cases of human trafficking.²²

11. Below we have highlighted some cases and statistics showing the positive work authorities have done to arrest traffickers and rescue victims.

12. In July 2025, a thirty-five-year-old woman was arrested for trafficking an eleven-year-old girl from Zambia to Namibia.²³

13. That same month, authorities repatriated six nationals who were trafficked to Southeast Asia between June 2024 and June 2025.²⁴

14. In November 2023, four individuals were convicted of trafficking two girls, one of whom was from Angola.²⁵

15. In March 2022, authorities launched an investigation into a suspected human trafficking operation.²⁶ Authorities believe this operation was responsible for trafficking twenty-six Namibians to Oman.²⁷

¹⁷ Andrea Damon and Hileni Nembwaya, *28 Children Trafficked in Namibia in Three Years*, THE NAMIBIAN (Aug. 6, 2024), <https://www.namibian.com.na/28-children-trafficked-in-namibia-in-three-years>.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ Republic of Namibia – Submission of Information to the Note Verbale, UN WOMEN (Apr. 15, 2024), <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/a-79-322-submission-namibia-en.pdf>.

²¹ Hileni Nembwaya, *Namibia Cracks Down on 28 Child Trafficking Cases*, THE NAMIBIAN (Aug. 5, 2024), <https://www.namibian.com.na/namibia-cracks-down-on-28-child-trafficking-cases>.

²² *Namibia Records 706 Human Trafficking Cases*, NAMPA (Sep. 5, 2025), <https://www.nampa.org/text/22727075/>.

²³ Lilian Berseford, *Namibian Woman Arrested on Human Trafficking Charges*, THE NAMIBIAN (July 20, 2025), <https://www.namibian.com.na/namibian-woman-arrested-on-human-trafficking-charges>.

²⁴ Hertta-Maria Amutenja, *Six Namibians Trafficked to Asia*, WINDHOEK OBSERVER (July 2025), <https://www.observer24.com.na/six-namibians-trafficked-to-asia>.

²⁵ Carmel Rickard, *Successful Human Trafficking Prosecution Could See Namibia's Ratings Improve*, AFRICAN LII, <https://africanlii.org/articles/2023-11-24/carmel-rickard/successful-human-trafficking-prosecution-could-see-namibias-ratings-improve>.

²⁶ *Police Unmasks Human Trafficking Syndicate in Namibia*, ALL AFRICA, <https://allafrica.com/view/group/main/main/id/00081938.html>.

²⁷ *Id.*

16. In February 2022, two individuals were arrested for trafficking two children under the age of fifteen.²⁸ The traffickers exploited the two children for labor and forced them to work as cattle herders.²⁹

Recommendations

17. We are encouraged by the work Namibia has done to both investigate cases of human trafficking and provide aid and assistance to the victims. Namibia's numerous efforts to combat human trafficking have focused both on catching traffickers and helping victims. We want to encourage Namibia to continue with the measures it has implemented since its last UPR and remain dedicated to fighting human trafficking.

²⁸ *Namibia: Brothers Remanded for Human Trafficking, Child Labour*, ALL AFRICA (Feb. 10, 2022), <https://allafrica.com/stories/202202100374.html>.

²⁹ *Id.*