

# NAMIBIA 2017/2018

The right to adequate housing was restricted and the situation was exacerbated by high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality. Eight prisoners of conscience in the long-running Caprivi trial were held 14 years after their arrest, on treason and sedition charges.

## ***Right to housing***

Housing remained inadequate; the government failed to ensure accessible, affordable and habitable housing. Over 500,000 people lived in shacks or makeshift settlements in urban areas while only 10% of the population could afford to buy a house which cost on average 800,000 Namibian dollars (USD58,474) per household. Rural to urban migration, high unemployment levels, low salaries, high rents and lack of available and affordable land plots with residential services led to inadequate housing particularly in the capital, Windhoek. On 28 March, 15 families were rendered homeless when Windhoek City Police arbitrarily evicted them, without an eviction notice, from their informal settlements in Agste Laan, Windhoek. Although the residents took their case to the High Court seeking to be allowed to stay in the settlement and have their shacks rebuilt while their case was finalized, the Court ruled against them on grounds that they were not legally resident on the site.

The inadequate housing in informal settlements was highlighted between 25 and 31 August when five children in the Erongo and Oshikoto regions died in their homes in separate fires after their parents left them alone in corrugated shacks.

The UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons noted that, while housing conditions for older people in rural areas had improved since the country gained independence in 1990, it had worsened in urban areas because of the growth of informal settlements where access to essential services like sanitation facilities and water and electricity supplies were inadequate.

## ***Caprivi detainees***

The trial of eight prisoners of conscience, accused in the long-running Caprivi case, resumed in May. Progress Kenyoka Munuma, Shine Samulandela, Manuel Manepelo Makendano, Alex Sinjabata Mushakwa, Diamond Samunzala Salufu, Hoster Simasiku Ntombo, Frederick Ntamilwa and John Mazila Tembwe were charged and convicted of treason and sedition in 2007. In 2013, the Supreme Court set aside their convictions and sentences ranging from 30 to 32 years and ordered a retrial. However, they remained in detention pending trial, in violation of international fair trial standards, at the end of the year.