



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Presidency Restates Commitment to Press Freedom Following Misleading Claims by Former Managing Editor of New Era Newspaper**

The Presidency wishes to clarify and refute misleading information published by Mr Jonathan Beukes, Former managing Editor of New Era newspaper in a widely circulated WhatsApp message in which he makes spurious allegations about purported deterioration of freedom of the press in Namibia since the passing of President Hage G. Geingob on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2024. What Mr. Beukes is falsely implying is that since then, President Nangolo Mbumba has not been a custodian of press freedom in the country. This implicit, if not explicit claim is entirely false. Namibia remains widely respected and lauded for press freedom in Africa and globally. President Mbumba will continue to champion our cause as a leading nation in press freedom.

Since assuming the Presidency on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2024, President Mbumba has upheld commitment to freedom of speech and expression, which includes freedom of the press and other media as enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia. President Mbumba has pledged to govern by the Constitution and it is a pledge the President executes daily in words and in actions that seek to advance the public interest at all times. President Mbumba has continued with the Namibian tradition of meetings in the Presidency that are widely open to the media. Moreover, the President emphasises availability and



access to the press. In that sense, the President has been an exemplary custodian of freedom of the press.

President Mbumba and the Government he leads remain firmly anchored in the values of the Constitution, of which freedom of speech is a fundamental human right. Should there be any incidences where press freedom is undermined, grievances must be channelled through the relevant institutions of the state, including the Office of the Media Ombudsman.

The Presidency would like to encourage individuals not to fall for generalisations and the Namibian public should not fall victim to unsubstantiated allegations that are manufactured by individuals with an agenda only known to themselves. In that vein, the Presidency would like to state that the generalisations by Mr. Beukes about the President's commitment to press freedom are misplaced, are a misrepresentation of facts and without substantiation. President Nangolo Mbumba has been an exemplary steward of our democracy and will continue to uphold our democratic values, including press freedom, specifically during this critical period of elections and beyond.

**ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**Media Enquiries**

**Dr Alfredo Tjiurimo Hengari**  
**Press Secretary**

**Email: [Alfredo.Hengari@op.gov.na](mailto:Alfredo.Hengari@op.gov.na) Mobile: +264811281496**



**@NamibianPresidency**

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