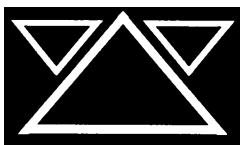


P O Box 604
4 Marien Ngouabi Street
Windhoek
Namibia

Tel: Int +264 61 223356
Fax: Int +264 61 234953
E-mail: info@lac.org.na
Web: www.lac.org.na



Toni Hancox (Director)

Corinna van Wyk
Chloe Brandt

LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE

Recipient of the UNICEF Maurice Pate Human Rights Award – 1997
JP Karuaihe Human Rights Excellence Award – 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016, 2020 and 2023 and Social Responsibility Award

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

06.03.2026

Hai||om People Launch Landmark Legal Action Against Namibian Government for Restoration of Ancestral Lands in Etosha National Park

WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA — The Hai||om Association, established in 2024 to represent the indigenous Hai||om people in the pursuit of their indigenous land and related rights, has initiated a significant legal action (Case No: HC-MD-CIV-ACT-OTH-2025/04463) against the Government of Namibia. The Hai||om, the largest San grouping in Namibia, have since time immemorial lived on their ancestral lands which includes what is today the Etosha National Park. They used the land and its resources for their livelihoods, but also to practice their cultural and spiritual rights and as an integral part of their identity. The lawsuit seeks the Court's recognition of these land and related rights, their dispossession and fair and equitable reparations for over a century of marginalisation, dispossession, and colonial subjugation.

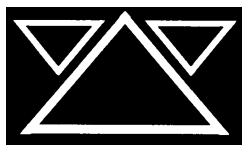
The Hai||om were first dispossessed by the German settlers in the 1890s, before much of their ancestral land was proclaimed as Game Reserve Number 2 in 1907, without any acknowledgment of their rights to the land. Their subjugation continued under the South African colonial government, until they were finally and violently evicted from the Park by the South African apartheid government in 1954.

Since then, they have been deprived access to the land, the resources and their cultural and religious sites.

The claimants say that, since independence, the Namibian government has not done enough to address their vulnerabilities and marginalisation.

Trustees of the Legal Assistance Trust:

Clement Daniels (Chairperson) Norman Tjombe Taamba Iithete
Toni Hancox (ex officio) Gladice Pickering



LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE

Recipient of the UNICEF Maurice Pate Human Rights Award – 1997

JP Karuaihe Human Rights Excellence Award – 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016, 2020 and 2023 and Social Responsibility Award

They ask the Court to find that they have ancestral ownership over Etosha and the neighbouring Mangetti West Farms; alternatively, that they were dispossessed of such ownership unlawfully. They ask the Court to grant them just and equitable compensation for the dispossession, either in the form of the restoration of their right, alternative land or financial compensation.

The Hai||om Association contends that the State's actions violate the **Constitution of Namibia** and multiple international frameworks, including the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** and the **African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights**. The Association asserts that the history of genocide and apartheid practiced against them necessitates comprehensive legal redress to restore their dignity and rights.

The Hai||om Association further wishes to address the misleading and culturally insensitive report published yesterday online by *The Namibian* titled, "**Hai||om San community sues Govt for N\$2.8 trillion.**" The Association strongly condemns the publication's failure to request any input from the Hai||om members or the Legal Assistance Centre prior to publication. Most distressingly, the article utilized an offensive picture seeming to be of the !Kung San to represent the Hai||om, a move that inaccurately homogenizes distinct indigenous groups and disregards the Hai||om's unique identity and dignity.

About the Hai||om Association: the Hai||om Association was formed in 2024 to advocate for the rights of the Hai||om people, an indigenous community with a distinct language and culture who have stewarded the lands of North-Central Namibia since time immemorial.

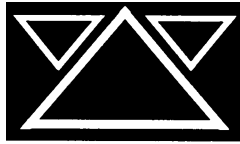
Quote Jan Tsumib, known as the Chief of Etosha: "Etosha means a lot to me because it is where our resources are. I don't know the name Etosha. I came to know about that name only now. As a young boy, I only knew the name Xoms. The name Xoms came from the way the sand used to sound whenever you walk, like "Xom Xom". That is the name I know."

Trustees of the Legal Assistance Trust:

Clement Daniels (Chairperson) Norman Tjombe Taamba Iithete
Toni Hancox (ex officio) Gladice Pickering

P O Box 604
4 Marien Ngouabi Street
Windhoek
Namibia

Tel: Int +264 61 223356
Fax: Int +264 61 234953
E-mail: info@lac.org.na
Web: www.lac.org.na



Toni Hancox (Director)

Corinna van Wyk
Chloe Brandt

LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE

Recipient of the UNICEF Maurice Pate Human Rights Award – 1997

JP Karuaihe Human Rights Excellence Award – 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016, 2020 and 2023 and Social Responsibility Award

#Media Contact: Corinna van Wyk, cvanwyk@lac.org.na, 061 223356.

TONI HANCOX
Director

Trustees of the Legal Assistance Trust:

Clement Daniels (Chairperson) Norman Tjombe Taamba Iithete
Toni Hancox (ex officio) Gladice Pickering