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## LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE

Recipient of the UNICEF Maurice Pate Human Rights Award – 1997  
JP Karuaihe Human Rights Award – 2008, 2010 and 2013

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### **Namibia's planned withdrawal from the International Criminal Court**

The Legal Assistance Centre is greatly saddened by the news that Namibia plans to withdraw from the International Criminal Court.

The Legal Assistance Centre was one of the organisations that was part of a coalition that encouraged Namibia and other countries to ratify the Rome Statute that created the International Criminal Court. Namibia did so in June 2002 and we were proud to say that as a country we believed in accountability and that what happens in Namibia matters to the rest of the world - and *vice versa*.. We were not isolated and we too would stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who may suffer under atrocities sometimes committed by those tasked to uplift them.

The report in the newspaper quotes our President Hage Geingob as stating that the ICC was becoming an “abomination” that is not serving its mandate. We would suggest that the best way to encourage a process to change for the better and to ensure that it truly fulfils its mandate as a tool to fight impunity, is not to withdraw from the ICC but to remain within its fold and advocate for change. Using the processes offered by the ICC would also be a way of strengthening its possibilities.

Another reported concern that Namibia appears to have is that the ICC is interfering with domestic affairs. Human rights abuses are never a domestic affair. The words say it all – human rights belong to all humans - whatever their nationality and geographical location.

The Legal Assistance Centre therefore urges Cabinet to reconsider their stance and to reaffirm their commitment to making the ICC an institution of empowerment and protection for our fellow Africans.

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