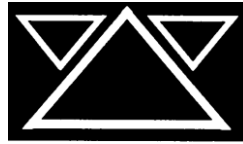


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## LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE

Recipient of the UNICEF Maurice Pate Human Rights Award – 1997  
JP Karuaihe Human Rights Excellence Award – 2008, 2010, 2014 and 2016 and Social Responsibility Award – 2013

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### PRESS STATEMENT

A headline in yesterday's *Namibian* newspaper:<sup>1</sup> ***“Woman dies in clinic queue”***.

The story explains that a woman died at the Robert Mugabe State Clinic after waiting some 4 hours to be assisted, despite requesting on 3 occasions that she needed to see a nurse urgently. When the clinic closed its doors for lunch, she died.

This is not a *new* story to Namibians. Reports about state health care workers not providing the services reasonably expected of them and stories of negligence are rife. This is confirmed by word on the street that: **“when you go to the State Health facilities you go there to die, not to get better.”**

Access to health care is one of the most important ways to ensure a person enjoys the right to dignity, a right entrenched in our Constitution under Article 8. While the minimum requirement is accessibility, The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,<sup>2</sup> has ascribed additional standards to protect the right to health and these contain inter alia **freedoms** i.e. the right to be free from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; and **rights** i.e. the right to a system of health protection providing equality of opportunity for everyone to enjoy the highest attainable level of health; **the right to equal and timely access to basic health services**; and that all services, goods and facilities must be available, accessible, acceptable and of good quality.<sup>3</sup>

**There is a constitutional and international obligation on a State to respect, protect and fulfil the human right to have timely access to acceptable basic health services. We call upon our Government to do so.**

**A country's difficult financial situation does NOT absolve it from having to take action to realize the right to health.**

***The Legal Assistance Centre herewith sincerely extends its condolences to the family and friends of the now late, Ms. Roimi Nandjebo, on her untimely and unfortunate passing.***

**TONI HANCOX**  
**Director**  
**22 August 2019**

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<sup>1</sup> The Namibian, 2019-08-22

<sup>2</sup> This body governs the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted in 1976 and ratified by Namibia in 2007.

<sup>3</sup> These are not the only listed rights which are key aspects of the right to health.

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#### Trustees of the Legal Assistance Trust:

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