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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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9 November 2020

### PRESS RELEASE

The Legal Assistance is extremely concerned about another incident of hate speech which took place on 7 November 2020 at which it was reported that General Shalli (RTD) threatened to execute members of the opposition parties. He stated that they “should not be shot, but slaughtered.” After the recent statement by our President threatening white voters, which was widely condemned, it seems that members of the ruling party still deem it appropriate to use threats of violence against those who oppose them.

The comments appear to be made at a SWAPO rally addressing the upcoming elections. The General is reminded that Article 21 of the Namibian Constitution provides for the fundamental rights of all Namibians, and states that (1) All persons shall have the right to “(e) freedom of association, which shall include freedom to form and join ... political parties.”

If General Shalli wants to criticise those who hold a particular point of view, he is welcome to do so – but he is not free to threaten them with murder. General Shalli has indicated in a Press Release of 8 November that the words used were “figurative”. Even more shockingly he indicates his opinion that it is in fact members of the opposition parties who should be ashamed for thinking that it was meant in another way. Regardless of what was in his mind when he spoke, the words are reckless and extremely dangerous.

This appalling statement was once again made in the context of the elections and it is once again necessary to remind Government that, every Namibian citizen has the Constitutional right “to participate in peaceful political activity intended to influence the composition and policies of the Government”, “to form and join political parties” and “to participate in the conduct of public affairs, whether directly or through freely chosen representatives” (Art 17). This right does not extend only to those persons who support the ruling party. Voting for the political party of one’s choice is not “war” against any other party, it is the democratic right of citizens of all races and all political convictions.

General Shalli is futher reminded that he has previously taken an oath to uphold, protect and defend the Namibian Constitution and to ensure justice for all the inhabitants of the Republic of Namibia. These responsibilities must supersede any political party loyalties. This means that General Shalli may not attempt to intimidate or suppress any group of voters, regardless of what party they support.

Thirty years after independence, in a nation which has managed to hold a series of peaceful elections from independence up to now, it is profoundly disturbing to hear such appalling and dangerous threats in the context of elections or indeed in any context.

General Shalli is called upon to retract his statements and to apologise to the members of the opposition parties as well as to their supporters.

**Toni Hancox**  
**DIRECTOR**

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#### Trustees of the Legal Assistance Trust:

Clement Daniels (Chairperson)      Esi Schimming-Chase      Taamba Iithete      Dantago Garosas  
Tangeni Amupadhi      Norman Tjombe      Toni Hancox (ex officio)

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