

# NAMIBIA BUSINESS REVIEW

Where Business meets ideas

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## Recruitment of ECN commissioners raises concern



> Elsie Nghikembua



> Emmerentia Leonard

• STAFF WRITER

**T**HE recruitment process for two commissioners of the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) is under scrutiny amid allegations that key legal procedures may not have been followed.

Interviews for the positions are scheduled for 3 June, and will be used to appoint replacements for ECN chairperson Elsie Nghikembua and commissioner Emmerentia Leonard, whose terms are set to expire in September.

Leonard is among the four shortlisted candidates, alongside Julieta Ferreira, Josephine Hamwaama and Patricia Iлека. The new commissioners will join Gerson Tjihenuna, Pius Ikwambi, and Gerson Sindano in the body tasked with overseeing the country's elections.

Sources familiar with the process allege that concerns have been raised that the recruitment may not have complied with pro-



> Julieta Ferreira



> Josephine Hamwaama



> Patricia Iлека

visions of the Electoral Act. The matter is also said to have drawn the attention of the Namibia Central Intelligence Service (NCIS).

At the centre of the claims is whether the legally required pub-

lic recruitment process was properly initiated before candidates were shortlisted.

The Electoral Act requires the Secretary to the National Assembly to invite applications through

a notice in the Government Gazette and in at least two daily newspapers once a vacancy arises, or at least four months before the end of a commissioner's term.

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## N\$300m monthly fuel support drains National Energy Fund

• TIRI MASAWI

**T**HE National Energy Fund (NEF), which helps keep pump prices low, is now nearly empty after the government spent more than N\$300 million every month between April and May to subsidise fuel prices.

The Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy says the depletion was also contributed as a result of years of interventions to shield consumers from rising global fuel costs.

Minister Modestus Amutse confirmed the situation on Friday at Oshakati, Oshana region, while defending an emergency fuel arrangement with Vitol for the supply of petroleum products between July and September 2026.

"Before the conflict, the National Energy Fund held a substantial surplus.

That surplus is today almost exhausted," Amutse said.

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## Profit and fear at Herero Mall's crowded informal economy



READ STORY ON PAGE 3

> Herero Mall's 20-year wait for development as crime and neglect persist

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> Esther Kaapanda

Secretary to the National Assembly Esther Kaapanda declined to directly confirm whether this process had been followed.

"I do not have any knowledge of any ECN Commissioner who have tendered resignation. The ECN Commissioners do not report to the Secretary to the National Assembly either," she said.

Kaapanda referred further questions to ECN chief executive officer Peter Shamma.

ECN spokesperson De Wet Siluka also did not directly address the allegations, instead pointing to the legal framework governing the process.

"The requirements for appointing Commissioners of Elections are outlined in Section 6 of the Electoral Act, and the composition of the selection committee is specified in Section 5 of the same Act. Please refer to these sections. The process is overseen by the Speaker of the National Assembly," he said.

The Electoral Act sets out a step-by-step process meant to ensure transparency and public participation in the appointment of commissioners.

After applications are invited, a selection committee must review submissions and shortlist between 10 and 20 candidates for interviews. The shortlisted names must then be published to allow the public to submit objections before interviews are conducted.

The selection committee then recommends suitable candidates to the President, who nominates commissioners for approval by the National Assembly. Once approved, the President formally appoints the commissioners, who must then take an oath of office before assuming duties.

The current concerns centre on whether these steps, particularly the public call for applications and publication of shortlisted names, were followed before interviews were scheduled.

Affirmative Repositioning (AR) leader and member of the National Assembly Job Amupanda encouraged citizens to keep an eye on the process.

"People of Namibia. You are hereby informed that these are candidates that have been shortlisted by the selection committee chaired by the newly and gou-gou (hastily) appointed chairperson of the Public Service Commission to fill two vacancies at the ECN. In Terms of section 6 of the Act, ECN interviews are open to the public and the media. I am not sure if you are told. In this connection, I take an opportunity to inform and invite the public and media to these interviews," he said.

**THE CANDIDATES**

The Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) has five commissioners, with two positions reserved for women. Only female candidates have been shortlisted in the current recruitment process.

Julieta Ferreira is the national director of SOS Children's Villages and is pursuing a Doctorate in Business Administration at the University of Namibia. She holds qualifications in information studies and human resources and describes herself as experienced in project coordination, administration, and strategic planning within non-profit organisations.

Josephine Hamwaama is the acting manager for strategy and projects at the Government Institutions Pension Fund (GIPF). She holds an Honours degree in Clinical Psychology and Social Sciences and is completing a Global MBA at the University of London. She has about a decade of experience in strategy and project management and supports the implementation of the fund's strategic plan.



> De Wet Siluka

Patricia Iлека is a records and archiving manager at the Social Security Commission of Namibia. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Archival Science and a Master of Business Administration in Management Strategy from the University of South Africa. **NBR**



> Minister Modestus Amutse

He said the fund had been used to absorb under-recoveries and premiums charged above the Basic Fuel Price in order to protect consumers from rising fuel costs.

Amutse said the pressure on the fund was worsened by geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, which began on 28 February 2026 and disrupted global oil markets.

"Before that, the international oil market, and our own local market, were operating under normal conditions," he said.

He said Namibia has since seen significant increases in fuel prices, forcing the government to spend "well over N\$1 billion" to cushion consumers.

"I want to emphasise that the welfare of the Namibian people is our first priority," Amutse said.

The minister stressed that the country is not facing a fuel shortage.

"It is not an emergency of supply. Our fuel is available, and it will remain available," he said.

Instead, he said, the challenge is rising costs. "It is an emergency of cost," he said.

Amutse warned that without intervention, fuel prices would rise sharply from July, affecting transport, food and basic goods. "That increase would be felt in every household," he said.

**VITOL EXCLUSIVITY**

Amutse has come under fire after information leaked online showing that the

government has entered into an agreement with Vitol for the emergency fuel arrangements for the supply of petroleum products between July and September 2026.

Social media commentator Lee Garises refers to the deal as Vitol State Capture allegation.

"The press conference didn't explain why the minister became a referee and a player. I only heard Iran is the reason oil supply was compromised. Why this can only be solved by giving monopoly to Vitol was never made clear.

The ministry claims they are projecting pricing stability by giving one entity all the free reign to supply but that is a contradiction to the fuel price stabilisation strategy," she said.

She suggested that there should be a second press conference to explain what she says is a special relationship between ministry and Vitol.

Amutse defended the decision to enter into an exclusive agreement with Vitol - a global energy and commodities trading company headquartered in Geneva.

He said the government engaged sister

countries, embassies and oil companies to secure fuel at more affordable terms, and consulted the Namibian Oil Industry Association.

He said several offers were received from both local and international suppliers. "What set the offer from Vitol apart was that it met the country's fuel requirement in full," he said.

He said the arrangement provides fuel at the Basic Fuel Price, without additional premiums and without requiring public funding.

Amutse said the government's broader reform includes the Bulk Petroleum Import Coordination Regulations, which are at an advanced stage.

"These Regulations will enable the Government to take full coordination of the importation of all petroleum products into Namibia," he said.

He said the system is expected to be implemented by the end of September 2026, with a similar model already operating in Tanzania.

He said the current arrangement is a temporary bridge to that system.

Amutse also said the government may issue further invitations to suppliers if global oil conditions do not improve.

He rejected claims of wrongdoing.

"There is nothing improper in the arrangements the Government has made," he said. "They were made transparently, in the national interest and on terms that protect the consumer," he added. **NBR**

# Profit and fear at Herero Mall's crowded informal economy

> *Herero Mall's 20-year wait for development as crime and neglect persist*



• VERIPUAMI KANGUMINE

**A**T the end of every month, Herero Mall in Katutura transforms into a crowded and noisy night-life hub. People flood the informal market to eat grilled meat, drink at shebeens, and dance late into the night to popular songs with the playlist dominated by musician One Blood. What is usually a working space by day becomes a packed entertainment zone that draws hundreds of people from across Windhoek.

Herero Mall, despite its name, is not a formal shopping centre. It is an informal business hub in the heart of Herero Location that has been operating for more than 23 years. Over time, it has grown into a dense economic space with more than 40 shebeens, restaurants, salons, car wash operations and upholstery businesses. Its central location and strong entertainment culture continue to attract customers every month, especially at month-end when money circulates.

But behind the busy trading and night-life, many traders say they are living under pressure.

The same crowds that bring customers and income also bring fear.

Traders say break-ins, theft and vandalism increase during peak periods, forcing some business owners to take extreme measures to protect their property.

For Uakutura Ngonga, a self-taught carpenter who runs a small workshop at the mall, month-end is no longer just about sales, it is about survival. His corrugated sheet workshop is packed with kitchen cabinets, wardrobes, night-stands and tables.

Since buying the two-room shack from a previous owner early last year, he says he has already experienced two break-ins.

Ngonga says the situation has forced him to sleep inside his workshop whenever the month ends. "I sleep here at the end of the month to stop people from breaking into my workshop and stealing

or vandalising my property," he said. For him and others, the absence of security guards and CCTV cameras has created a constant sense of vulnerability. Traders say they are left to protect themselves in a space that is otherwise heavily crowded and active.

While business activity is booming, crime has left a painful history at the mall. Between 2007 and 2022, four people were killed in separate incidents at Herero Mall. In 2022, a Windhoek City Police officer shot a suspected burglar after an alleged attempt to attack the officer with scissors.

In 2021, the body of 22-year-old bartender Leevi Kondjeni Paulus was discovered inside a refrigerator in a shebeen. Earlier, in 2011, Alfredo Ndisiro bled to death after being stabbed in the neck and stomach, while Rodney Nuweseb, aged 30, also died at the mall in 2007.

These incidents continue to shape how traders and residents view safety in the area.

Despite these concerns, Herero Mall remains an important source of income for hundreds of people. The informal hub supports livelihoods through a mix of small businesses that operate daily in a tightly packed environment.

Traders say the mall's location makes it a natural gathering point for customers, especially during weekends and month-end peaks when spending increases.

However, traders argue that the infrastructure has not kept up with the growth of business activity. Basic services such as sanitation, drainage, buildings and security remain limited.

Many say this imbalance has slowed

development and made daily operations more difficult, particularly during busy periods when the area becomes overcrowded.

**THE CITY IS AWARE**

The City of Windhoek says it is aware of these concerns but has not yet established a confirmed cost estimate for fully servicing the area. "At this stage, no confirmed cost estimate is available for a fully serviced market at Herero Mall, as costs vary significantly depending

on site conditions, design scope, and infrastructure requirements," said spokesperson Lydia Amutenya.

She added that the City is engaging traders and stakeholders to better understand the challenges on the ground. According to her, discussions are ongoing to identify possible interventions that could improve hygiene, sanitation and infrastructure conditions. The City also says it is open to exploring

partnership-based management models similar to those used at the Oshetu Community Market, located at Single Quarters, Katutura but stresses that such approaches require feasibility studies and stakeholder consultation before any decisions are made.

**REPEATED CHORUS**

For traders, these responses come after years of waiting.

The Herero Mall committee says it has been calling for development since the area was first initiated in 2003. Com-

mittee head Makena Siwogedi says the group has engaged various city leadership structures over the years, including different mayors, but has seen little progress.

She says the lack of sanitation facilities, proper buildings, drainage systems and security has limited business growth for decades.

According to her, even though the mall eventually received electricity in 2022 and was rezoned, traders still face high costs that make survival difficult.

Siwogedi says tenants signed a rental agreement of N\$163.69 with the City of Windhoek, while electricity costs remain high at about N\$50 per day.

She says this is unfair compared to other markets that receive better infrastructure support. "Herero Mall was rezoned to be industrial but the electricity is the same as shopping malls. We are paying N\$50 per day for electricity," she said.

Despite these challenges, experts say Herero Mall plays a critical role in sustaining livelihoods in an economy marked by high unemployment.

Sociologist Ellison Tjirera says the demand for proper facilities and better management has existed for years, but the informal market continues to serve as a key survival space for many residents.

Labour researcher Herbert Jauch adds that the informal economy is not optional for many people but necessary for survival.

He says the City has an obligation to improve conditions rather than ignore them, stressing that better infrastructure would directly improve traders' livelihoods.

Business activist Donevel Kariko says the lack of development has also contributed to social concerns within the area, arguing that limited opportunities push many young people into alcohol-based businesses.

He also calls for broader youth opportunities that move beyond shebeens and drinking spots. **NBR**

**"In 2021, the body of 22-year-old bartender Leevi Kondjeni Paulus was discovered inside a refrigerator in a shebeen"**

# Letshego Namibia unaffected by group sale

• STAFF WRITER

**L**ETSHEGO Namibia says its operations will remain unchanged despite Letshego Africa Holdings Limited moving to sell its East and West African subsidiaries as part of a major restructuring plan.

The group on Monday announced it has entered into binding sale and purchase agreements with Axian Digital Venture Holdings and Management Limited, headquartered in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, for the proposed sale of 100% of several subsidiaries. These include Letshego Ghana Savings and Loans PLC, Letshego Faidika Bank Tanzania Limited, Letshego Microfinance Bank Nigeria Limited, Letshego Rwanda PLC and Letshego Uganda Limited.

Letshego stressed that the transaction has no impact on its Namibian business.

"This transaction does not have any impact on Letshego's Namibian operations. Letshego Namibia continues to operate as normal, and our commitment to serving our Namibian customers, employees and partners remains unchanged," the group said.

The company said the planned divestment forms part of its portfolio optimisation strategy aimed at improving capital efficiency and sharpening focus on its core Southern African markets.



> Ester Kali

Group Chief Executive Officer Reinette van der Merwe said the move is intended to strengthen the balance sheet and improve long-term shareholder value.

"This proposed transaction marks an important milestone in the execution of our strategy to simplify the Group and focus on markets where we have the greatest scale, stronger competitive positioning and the most compelling oppor-

tunities for sustainable growth," she said.

Van der Merwe added that streamlining the portfolio would allow Letshego to partner with a stronger, more aligned business capable of supporting the next phase of growth for the affected subsidiaries.

Letshego Holdings Namibia and Letshego Bank Namibia Chief Executive Officer Ester Kali also reassured customers

that local operations remain unaffected.

"For Namibia, it is business as usual – our operations are unaffected, and our full attention remains on delivering accessible financial solutions to our customers and growing our contribution to Namibia's financial inclusion agenda," she said.

Meanwhile, Axian Digital Venture Holdings Chief Executive Officer Erwan Gelebart said the agreement aligns with Axian's strategy to expand its financial services footprint in high-growth markets. "This agreement represents an important step in advancing Axian's long-term strategy to expand our financial services footprint across high-growth markets," he said.

He added that Axian aims to support the subsidiaries with operational and digital investment to drive growth and innovation, pending regulatory approval.

Letshego said the transaction is expected to strengthen its remaining portfolio by improving capital allocation, liquidity, and overall balance sheet resilience.

Letshego Africa Holdings is a Botswana-based multinational financial services group operating across 11 Sub-Saharan African markets, focused on providing inclusive finance to underserved populations. **NBR**



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## MTC invest N\$624 million on infrastructure upgrades



> Tim Ekandjo

• STAFF WRITER

**M**OBILE Telecommunications Ltd (MTC) will spend N\$624.9 million for the 2025/26 financial year, to strengthen Namibia's digital and telecommunications landscape through strategic infrastructure investment and technological advancement.

This was revealed during the ICT High-Level Stakeholder engagement held at Oshakati last week.

MTC's spokesperson Tim Ekandjo, said the investment will fund several key projects aimed at enhancing network performance, expanding connectivity, and enabling future-ready digital services across the country.

"This capital allocation is supporting initiatives such as network optimisation and modernisation, information and communication technology (ICT) upgrades, transmission expansion, construction of new network towers,

power infrastructure investments for network sites," he said.

He also added that: "In line with our strategic rollout plan, we will continue constructing new network towers and expanding transmission infrastructure to support increasing data demand and improve nationwide connectivity. This investment is particularly important in extending network coverage to underserved and remote areas, ensuring broader access to reliable telecommunications services for all Namibians."

MTC said they will also invest in power infrastructure initiatives aimed at improving operational continuity and strengthening network resilience across its footprint. According to the company, a portion of the allocated capital provides funding for new strategic business initiatives aligned with MTC's long-term growth objectives and innovation agenda. **NBR**

# High Court orders ex-GIPF employees to repay N\$18.6 million

• STAFF WRITER

**T**HE High Court has ordered two former employees of the Government Institutions Pension Fund (GIPF) to repay N\$18.6 million they defrauded from the pension fund, bringing a long-running civil case to a close.

GIPF on Monday confirmed the ruling against former staff members Martin Smith and Vabiola Aoses, who were found liable for the multimillion-dollar loss.

The court ordered the pair to repay N\$18.6 million, plus interest at 20% per annum from the date of judgment until full payment is made, as well as legal costs.

GIPF Chief Executive Officer and Principal Officer Martin Inkumbi said fraud prevention remains a key priority for the fund.

"Fraud risk management remains a priority for the GIPF as the Fund enforces its policy on fraud, supported by a whistleblower hotline. The Fund's legal counsel in collaboration with law enforcement will leave no stone unturned to recover its assets, freeze accounts, and pursue civil claims where losses have occurred," Inkumbi said.

He added that the fund remains committed to protecting members' savings and maintaining trust in the institution.

The pension fund said the outcome marks an important milestone in its efforts to safeguard members' contributions through a zero-tolerance approach to fraud and unethical conduct.

The case stems from internal investigations that led to the dismissal of the two employees after they were found guilty of fraud through disciplinary processes.



> Martin Inkumbi

Following their dismissal, GIPF instituted civil proceedings in the High Court to recover the N\$18.6 million. The matter was also reported to the Namibian Police for possible criminal prosecution.

The fund said it will continue strengthening internal controls, compliance systems and accountability measures to protect retirement savings and improve operational efficiency. **NBR**

# Govt pushes civil registration overhaul

• STAFF WRITER

**T**HE Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security says it is pushing to strengthen Namibia's civil registration and vital statistics system to ensure that "every citizen and resident is legally recognized, counted, and protected."

Executive Director Nghidinua Daniel made the remarks on Monday during the validation workshop of the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Strategic Plan for 2026/27 to 2030/31, where stakeholders reviewed the draft framework.

He said civil registration is not just administrative, but a fundamental right and key to national planning.

"Civil registration is more than an administrative process. It is a fundamental human right and the foundation for legal identity, social inclusion, and access to essential services," Daniel said.

He added that the system is central to

government decision-making, resource allocation, and service delivery.

"The registration of births, deaths, marriages, divorces, and other vital events provides individuals with recognition before the law while also generating vital statistics that are essential for national planning and sustainable development," he said.

Daniel said the strategic plan reflects wide consultations and comes at a time when the government is modernising public services.

He also urged stakeholders to critically assess the draft, pointing to ongoing challenges such as late and unregistered births and deaths, limited access in remote areas, and weak coordination.

"The success of this strategic plan will depend not only on the quality of the document itself but also on the commitment of all stakeholders towards its implementation," he said. **NBR**



> Nghidinua Daniel



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## African Union flags unemployment in Namibia as a security risk



> Mpule Kgetsi

• STAFF WRITER

**F**ORMER African Union Youth Ambassador for Peace for southern Africa, Mpule Kgetsi, says youth unemployment could be a major cause for instability and insecurity in Namibia, as it has been across the continent.

Speaking at the capacity building workshop for members of parliament and technical experts on the National Action Plan on Youth Peace and Security last week, Kgetsi said history in the region shows that when young people are shut out of the economy, they become vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups, violent extremism, and criminal networks.

"Unemployment has been found to be one of the biggest drivers of insecurity because if you look at things such as radicalisation, violent extremism, they are a result of unemployment," she said.

She added "you have young people that are susceptible because they don't have jobs, they don't have ways of living, they don't have money. And if somebody comes and says, 'Here's money. Go do something bad.' It's easy. So for Namibia, the opportunity here is to act in a preventative capacity," she said.

Namibia Statistics Agency shows that the country's population is predominantly young with the population under 35 reaching 2.1 million in 2023. This represents 71 percent of the total population. According to the 2023 Population and Housing Census Labour Force Report, the current youth unemployment rate is 44.4%.

However, national growth through

industrialisation is a significant key to maintaining peace and security.

Coordinator of Youth for Peace (Y4P) Africa Programme at the African Union Gloria Kabage said: "We must find ways to link peace to profits as private companies have a large role to play in economic inclusion of youth. On the other hand they also benefit from peace,"

### ROPE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The discussions at the workshop said that the private sector has a mixed-role in the youth, peace and security agenda. Experts at the gathering added that the private sector benefits from a peaceful landscape through assured stability and predictability in markets and minimised operational risks. On the other hand, the private sector, through the growth of developmental projects and creation of jobs and opportunities, can contribute to the YPS agenda.

According to Jessica Uiras, the President of Namibia Youth, Peace and Security Network, the private sector should be engaged as a strategic partner in advancing the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, particularly through youth employment, skills development, entrepreneurship, innovation and mentorship.

"Many of the drivers of youth insecurity are linked to exclusion, unemployment and limited access to economic opportunity. As Namibia develops its YPS National Action Plan, sectors such as mining, banking, telecommunications, tourism, agriculture, technology and green hydrogen can support practical implementation through internships, youth enterprise support, digital inclusion, community investment and partnerships

with youth-led organisations," said Uiras.

She further added that the private sector should therefore not only provide funding, but also help create pathways for young people to participate meaningfully in peacebuilding, governance and national development.

### MENTORSHIP IS KEY

Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sport, Arts and Culture, Sanet Steenkamp, speaking at the event highlighted the multistakeholder nature of maintaining peace and security.

She said, "If we are not ready to invest as civil society, as governments, or the private sector, if we are not prepared to invest in scholarships, mentorship programmes and coaching, we cannot talk about the youth being leaders of tomorrow."

Namibia has a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security which covers the period 2019 to 2024. The National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security will be seen as a complementary, rather than competing action plan that highlights the youth's role in peace and security. The country is also currently developing its second generation National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Earlier this year, Popular Democratic Movement (PDM) president McHenry Venaani called for youth unemployment to be declared a national disaster. Venaani is quoted in The Namibian newspaper saying that "There is nothing more urgent, young people have qualifications and degrees, but no jobs. One day they are going to revolt if extraordinary steps are not taken."

### A REGIONAL CRISIS

Namibia is not the only country in southern Africa faced with youth unemployment. According to the International Labour Organization, youth unemployment in Botswana stands at 38.2 percent. According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS), South Africans aged 15-24 face the highest unemployment rate at 60,9 per cent, followed by those aged 25-34 at 40,6 percent. Likewise, according to the Eswatini Integrated Labour Force Survey from 2023 youth unemployment in (ages 15-35) stands at a staggering 56 percent.

Ricky Simasiku, local political analyst said that the securitisation of unemployment may become a legitimate risk in the Namibian context, should the country not invest in meaningful employment.

"Youth matters such as unemployment, they are securitised which means creating a security problem out of nothing. Unemployment on its own does not create a security crisis because you can sit at home, plough and be happy. But when you have graduates without jobs, they will start questioning the government, you have given us education but where are the jobs. So these people can revolt and once they do, you have a national security crisis," he said.

In 2023, Namibia scored 0.696 in the 2023 Commonwealth Youth Development Index. This score places the country among the medium youth developed countries, and highest in Southern Africa. **NBR**



**"There is nothing more urgent, young people have qualifications and degrees, but no jobs"**



# ANALYSIS & OPINION



EDITORIAL

## Youth unemployment is a ticking time bomb

**F**EARS of high youth unemployment being a direct and immediate threat to the peace, security, and socio-economic stability of Namibia and the wider Southern African Development Community (SADC) region are becoming more and more realistic by the day.

Namibia's youth unemployment rate now hovering between 44.4% to 45%, and regional neighbors facing equally staggering numbers, millions of energetic and capable young people find themselves excluded from the formal economy.

This isolation creates a deep sense of despair, hopelessness, and psychological alienation. When a generation spends years acquiring education only to meet closed doors, the promise of structural development breaks down, leaving behind a volatile underclass with nothing to lose.

The exclusion of young people rapidly erodes the legitimacy of democratically elected governments across Southern Africa.

Data from research groups like Afrobarometer reveals that a vast majority of Namibian youth feel their leadership has failed to prioritize job creation.

When citizens lose faith in state institutions, the peaceful democratic process is viewed as ineffective. This political alienation fosters a fertile breeding ground for radicalisation, populism, and civil disobedience. The historic patience shown toward liberation-era ruling parties is fast expiring, replaced by a combustible generational anger directed at the political elite.

Speaking at the capacity building workshop for members of parliament and technical experts on the National Action Plan on Youth Peace and Security last week, Kgetsi said history in the region shows that when young people are shut out of the economy, they become vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups, violent extremism, and criminal networks.

This joblessness serves as a direct driver of violent crime, substance abuse, and localized civil unrest.

Without access to stable wages, many young people turn to the informal and illicit economies to survive, leading to an upsurge in theft, gang violence, and security breakdowns.

Desperate, idle, and economically marginalised, these populations are easily mobilised by populist movements and radical political groups. Localised grievances regarding a lack of opportunities can easily spill over into broader anti-government protests, threatening national security architectures and disrupting regional trade corridors.

Furthermore, the interconnected nature of the SADC region means that a youth revolt in one nation could trigger a dangerous regional domino effect.

Porous borders, shared cultural identities, and uniform economic grievances mean that political instability in a nation like South Africa or Zimbabwe can quickly destabilize neighboring Namibia.

A local uprising could lead to massive cross-border displacement, straining regional humanitarian infrastructure and destroying investor confidence across the entire trade bloc. The collective regional economy, heavily reliant on mining, tourism, and logistics, cannot withstand the systemic shocks of multi-country civil conflicts fueled by neglected youth.

To avert this looming security crisis, the Namibian government and its SADC counterparts must urgently overhaul their national education systems to bridge the critical skills gap.

Regional leaders must aggressively leverage from capital-intensive models to labour-intensive, diversified economic policies. SADC nations must leverage public-private partnerships to incentivize manufacturing, agro-processing, and value-addition industries rather than merely exporting raw materials.



**"This joblessness serves as a direct driver of violent crime, substance abuse, and localized civil unrest"**

## Leading Managed Care, Building Healthier Futures



• DANTAGO GAROSAS

**A**N important shift in healthcare means moving beyond simply paying for treatment and placing greater focus on helping members stay healthy for longer. That focus remains critical.

However, there is another part of that journey that directly shapes your experience - managed care.

Managed care may sound technical, but in simple terms, it is about making sure you receive the right care, at the right time, in a way that supports your health. Managed care is how you are guided through the healthcare system so that your experience is more seamless and coordinated.

It ensures that you are supported, not only when you are unwell, but also when you need ongoing care or monitoring.

If you are living with a condition such as diabetes or high blood pressure, managed care programmes help ensure that you are properly registered, receiving the correct medication and support.

This reduces the risk of complications and helps you stay healthier over time. Managed care also plays an important role when you are admitted

to the hospital. It helps ensure that the care you receive is appropriate, necessary and coordi-

nated, aiding a smoother recovery. Importantly, managed care works closely with preventative care. Prevention helps to identify health risks early, while managed care ensures that the right assistance and treatment follow. When these two work together, the results are better health outcomes and a more sustainable system.

This approach is becoming increasingly important as healthcare in Namibia grows more complex, with rising levels of chronic conditions and increasing demands on the healthcare system. Supporting members through this complexity requires more than just funding care - it requires coordination, guidance and continuity.

At its core, managed care is about ensuring that you are not navigating the healthcare system on your own. It is about creating a more supported, structured experience so that you can focus on your health, rather than the process.

Ultimately, healthcare is not just about systems, it is about experience. It is about whether you can access care when you need it, and whether the system works for you.

This is the standard we should all be working towards.

**\* Dantago Garosas is the Principal Officer Namibia Health Plan**

# The deal that saved 1,500 Glencore jobs, South Africa's struggling chrome industry



**"For Glencore workers, the immediate threat of retrenchment has been lifted"**



• AYODEJI ADEGBOYEGA

**T**HE decision marks one of the clearest signs yet that government efforts to rescue South Africa's struggling ferrochrome industry may be gaining traction after years of plant closures, rising energy costs and declining global competitiveness.

Glencore's ferrochrome business, operated through a joint venture with Merafe Resources, announced on Monday that it had withdrawn a retrenchment process that could have led to significant job losses.

The move follows a decision by South Africa's energy regulator, Nersa, to ap-

prove a special electricity tariff of 62 cents per kilowatt-hour for ferrochrome producers, substantially reducing one of the industry's highest operating costs.

The company said the approval represented "a further step towards stabilising operations and progressing the phased restart of the business".

The retrenchment process began after the Glencore-Merafe venture suspended production at its Boshhoek, Wonderkop and Lion smelters in 2025, citing mounting financial pressure and concerns over the long-term viability of operations.

jobs and the erosion of value-added mineral processing capacity.

## MORE THAN JOBS

The tariff relief approved by Nersa extends beyond Glencore as fellow ferrochrome producer Samancor Chrome also secured approval for a discounted electricity arrangement, while regulator-backed measures have been introduced to support other energy-intensive smelting operations facing similar pressures.

Nersa approved the discounted arrangement for Glencore-Merafe for three years and for Samancor Chrome for five years.

Eskom will be required to submit regular reports to monitor the implementation and socioeconomic impact of the agreements.

The regulator has also approved temporary relief measures for Transalloys' manganese ferroalloy smelting operations in Mpumalanga to help prevent closures and protect industrial activity.

The interventions reflect growing efforts by South African authorities to stem industrial decline and preserve strategic manufacturing capacity linked to the country's mining sector.

For Glencore workers, the immediate threat of retrenchment has been lifted.

For South Africa's ferrochrome industry, however, the bigger challenge remains whether cheaper electricity can help restart idled smelters, attract investment and restore competitiveness in a sector that has spent years fighting for survival. \* *Business Insider Africa*

## INDUSTRY UNDER PRESSURE

South Africa remains the world's largest producer of chrome ore, a key raw material used to produce ferrochrome, which is essential for stainless steel manufacturing.

Yet despite its vast chrome resources, the country has struggled to maintain its position as a major ferrochrome producer.

The main challenge has been electricity. Ferrochrome smelting is among the most energy-intensive industrial activities in South Africa.

Over the past two decades, power prices have risen sharply, squeezing profit margins and forcing operators to idle capacity or shut plants altogether.

Industry data shows that only 11 of South Africa's 66 ferrochrome smelters remain operational, highlighting the scale of the sector's decline.

The crisis has raised concerns among policymakers, labour unions and mining companies about the loss of industrial

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