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An agreement with Germany on reparations for its 20th century genocide in Namibia is ready. The trial of the alleged perpetrators of the Fishrot Scandal is further delayed. Opposition Landless People's Movement (LPM) leaders take further legal action against their exclusion from parliament. Inflation rises to almost 4%. Diamond production fell by a third in the first quarter of 2021. Canada-based Reconnaissance Energy Africa Ltd is drilling its second exploration well in the Kavango Basin amid escalating controversy. The government checks whether the Covid-19 Indian variant has come to Namibia.

Genocide agreement with Germany is ready

In a ground-breaking agreement, **Namibia** is reported to have inked a deal with **Germany** after six years' negotiations, covering a formal apology and the payment of unspecified reparations for the early 20th century genocide perpetrated by German colonial forces against the **Ovaherero** and **Nama** people.¹ An estimated 75,000 Namibians from both communities were killed during an uprising against German rule of 1904-08 and were subsequently starved and tortured to death, with many Ovaherero fleeing across the **Omahake (Kalahari)** desert to seek refuge in **Botswana**, then **British-ruled Bechuanaland**. Germany colonised Namibia from 1884 to 1915, when it was ousted by **South African** forces during World War I. Neither the Namibian nor German government has yet confirmed the agreement or any details, although German news sources say Germany's president, **Frank-Walter Steinmeier**, will formally ask for forgiveness from Namibia's parliament, the **National Assembly** (lower house) and **National Council** (upper house).² Namibia's special envoy for the long-running negotiations, **Zed Ngavirue** – himself of Ovaherero descent – stated that the latest talks had been “fruitful” but would neither confirm nor deny news media reports that a definite deal had been signed:

“I cannot reveal any information yet without informing my principals, the president [Hage Geingob (2015-present)] and the minister of international relations [Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah].”³

German reluctance to concede the use of the word “reparations” has reportedly held up the finalisation of the agreement in case it opens the floodgates for similar claims from genocide victims in **Tanzania**, the mainland of which was formerly **German East Africa**. In an internal report circulated to German parliamentarians, the **Berlin** government maintains that planned additional aid payments to Namibia for infrastructure, healthcare and job-training programmes in areas of Namibia populated by Ovaherero and Nama do not amount to reparations in the legal definition of the word. No figure for the payments has been disclosed, although it is known that Namibia rejected an offer of \$12m in 2020.⁴

The agreement, when it is unveiled, is likely to be rejected by the Ovaherero and Nama leaderships – the **Ovaherero Traditional Authority (OTA)** and the **Nama Traditional Leaders Association (NTLA)** – as a betrayal of their demand to be directly involved in the negotiations and fully consulted on where any payments should go.⁵ The opposition **National**

¹ The Guardian, 21 May 2021; OkayAfrica, 20 May 2021, BBC News 1 Apr 2021

² OkayAfrica, 20 May 2021

³ OkayAfrica, 20 May 2021

⁴ OkayAfrica, 20 May 2021, The Guardian, 21 May 2021.

⁵ The Namibian, 20 May 2021

Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO) – a mainly Ovaherero-supported party – has already accused the ruling **South West African People’s Organisation (SWAPO)** of politicising the genocide negotiations and forfeiting the trust of the affected communities. NUDO secretary-general and MP **Joseph Kaundenge** claims the composition of the genocide committee in charge of the negotiations with Germany is not inclusive and is mainly composed of SWAPO members or sympathisers. Kaundenge said leaders of the genocide-affected communities had wanted to be directly involved in the negotiating team, as they knew how to identify the areas where development for their communities is most needed:

“The Namibian government simply ignored the call from the community leaders for the past six years and went ahead with the negotiations without the vast majority of the communities on board. We will not support a process which we did not have a say in.”⁶

Kaundenge said that the Namibian government had so far remained silent, even after the international news media had released information about aspects of the agreement, and should either confirm or deny the reports. Dissatisfaction with the outcome of the negotiations is likely to feed into demands for the government to formally recognise ancestral land rights of the affected communities. The government has yet to implement any of the findings of the **Commission of Inquiry into Ancestral Land Rights and Restitution Claims**.⁷ Geingob established the commission after the second national land conference of October 2018 with the aim of inquiring into ancestral land claims and the means of restoring such land to groups and individuals (see *ARC Briefing Namibia October 2018, November 2018*). The commission defines ancestral land as that occupied and used by the forebears of the country’s indigenous communities, while restitution involves restoring the rights to ancestral land lost through colonial disposition and other forms of contested alienation in pre- and post-colonial Namibia.

The Ovaherero and Nama were the principal victims of colonial land seizures, as northern Namibia was never settled by white colonists, and they contend that the post-independence land reform and re-settlement programme has disproportionately benefitted northern Namibians. The commission concluded that ancestral land restitution involves correcting the injustices of historic land dispossession, which fits into the broader concept of reparations under international and human rights law. It proposes a statutory framework for the resolution of ancestral land claims and restitution as an extension of the existing land resettlement process, although it cautions that the means of resolving overlapping claims and finding the money for restitution have to be established, leaving open the question of whether Namibian taxpayers or Namibia’s former colonial masters, Germany and South Africa, should foot the bill.⁸

Further delays in Fishrot trial

The long-delayed **Fishrot Scandal** trials of nine accused individuals – including former fisheries minister **Bernard Esau** and former justice minister **Sacky Shangala** – along with 11 corporate entities, faces further delay due to a disagreement over whether two trials should be merged into one, as the government prosecutor wants to happen (see *ARC Briefing Namibia Nov 2019-Mar 2021*).⁹ Esau, his son-in-law **Tamson Hatuikilipi**, and former **Investec Asset Management Namibia** client manager **Ricardo Gustavo**, are charged with corruption, fraud, racketeering, money-laundering and other offences related to the allocation of horse mackerel fishing quotas by the fisheries and marine resources ministry to an **Angola/Namibia** company, **Nangomar Pesca Namibia**. The fishing quotas were instead transferred to **Icelandic** fishing companies, principally Iceland’s largest integrated fishing and fish processing firm, **Samherji**,

⁶ The Namibian, 20 May 2021

⁷ The Namibian, 6 May 2021

⁸ The Namibian, 6 May 2021#

⁹ New Era, 21 May 2021

allegedly in return for bribes worth hundreds of millions of Namibian dollars.¹⁰ Separately, Esau, Shangala, Tamson and his cousin **James Hatuikilipi**, the former Investec managing director, former state-owned **Fishcor** chief executive officer **Mike Nhgipunya**, and three other local business persons are charged with similar offences relating to quotas allocated to Fishcor but transferred to Icelandic firms. In this case some N\$120m (\$8.6m) is alleged to have been misappropriated.¹¹

Defence lawyers served notice they would object to the so-called “joinder” action by deputy prosecutor **Ed Maroneddze** to have the corruption cases merged at the latest pre-trial hearing on 20 May in **Windhoek’s High Court**. Defence attorney **James Diedericks** maintained he needed more time to review the over 100 files which the prosecution had only recently disclosed. As Maroneddze did not oppose this request, Judge **Christie Liebenberg** gave the defence lawyers until 25 June to indicate whether they would oppose the joinder action. Maroneddze undertook to provide a complete list of witnesses due to testify in the trial by 28 May, along with a pre-trial memorandum and summary of substantial facts to all defence lawyers involved in the case.¹²

LPM leaders petition Supreme Court for reinstatement

Opposition **Landless People’s Movement (LPM)** leader **Bernardus Swartbooi** and his deputy, **Henny Seibeb**, have escalated their legal efforts to overturn the suspension of their right to attend parliamentary sessions imposed by NA speaker **Peter Katjavivi** in April (see *ARC Briefing Namibia April 2021*).¹³ Both had interrupted the question-and-answer session following the **State of the Nation Address (SONA)** delivered by President Hage Geingob on 15 April and were forcefully removed by security staff. They remain barred from the NA after a 21 April meeting of the parliamentary committee on standing rules and orders and internal arrangements upheld Katjavivi’s action.

Swartbooi and Seibeb have now filed an application to the **Supreme Court** to review last month’s dismissal of their case by the High Court, seeking to restrain Katjavivi from further interfering with their right to attend NA sessions and contribute to debates, as well as to declare their suspension unlawful and set it aside. The LPM leaders claim the High Court judge who dismissed their case for reinstatement last month misdirected himself in ruling the matter should be determined by parliamentary processes alone.¹⁴

The then newly-formed LPM won four of the 96 directly-elected seats with a 5% share of the vote in the 27 November 2019 National Assembly election, but the party made sweeping gains in the 25 November 2020 regional and local elections, pushing up its share of the vote to 7% and 14% respectively. It won majorities in Namibia’s two southernmost regions, **Hardap** and **Karas**, where the predominantly Nama community feels disenfranchised by the official land resettlement programme as this fails to take into account historic ancestral land claims (see above and *ARC Briefing Namibia Dec 2020, Dec 2019*).

In another sign of growing disillusionment with the Geingob government’s failure to tackle corruption effectively and deliver on its promises to improve economic conditions for the majority, former SWAPO MP **Sophia Swartz** resigned from the party to join the LPM in mid-May.¹⁵ A community activist in Karas region, she was appointed one of six non-voting NA members by former President **Hifikepunye Pohamba** (2005-2015) in 2010, and elected on the SWAPO party list in 2014, chairing the standing committee on natural resources.¹⁶

¹⁰ New Era, 21 May 2021.

¹¹ New Era, 21 May 2021

¹² New Era, 21 May 2021

¹³ The Namibian, 18 May 2021

¹⁴ The Namibian, 18 May 2021

¹⁵ The Namibian, 18 May 2021

¹⁶ The Namibian, 18 May 2021

Inflation rises to almost 4%

Year-on-year (y/y) inflation jumped to 3.9% in April from 3.1% in March, more than double the 1.6% rate of a year earlier and the highest for almost two years, mainly due to persistently higher food prices and increased domestic fuel prices.¹⁷ The rebound was to be expected as the economy moves into a – still modest – recovery phase. The latest **Namibia Consumer Price Index (NCPI)** published by the **Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA)** showed that annual inflation averaged 3.1% in the first four months of 2021, up from 2.2% in the same period of last year, when the impact of **Covid-19** restrictions sharply slowed economic activity. Twelve-month annual average inflation to April 2021 was 2.5%, up from 2.3% to March 2021. Prices for goods rose by 5.2% and services by just 2.2% in April, a significant widening of the differential compared to a year earlier when the respective rates were 2.2% and 0.9% respectively.¹⁸ Windhoek stockbroker **IJG Namibia** commented:

“The rising inflation rate is to be expected as the measurement period includes a low base, due to lockdown restrictions that constrained economic activities a year ago and Namibia is now in a recovery phase of the business cycle as it emerges from a trough.”¹⁹

IJG’s current inflation model forecasts an average annual rate of 3.6% both this year and in 2022. Prices for food and non-alcoholic beverages, with the second highest NCPI basket weighting (16.5%), rose by 5.9% y/y, accounting for 1.1 percentage points of April’s overall inflation rate increase. Of the 12 sub-categories, eleven recorded increases, with the highest price rises for meat (15.8%) and fruit (10.6%), although prices for most Namibians’ food staple, bread and cereals, increased by only 2.8%.

Due to successive domestic fuel price increases since the start of the year, transport (14.3% NCPI weighting), recorded 7.5% inflation in April, having been deflationary for most of last year, accounting for 1.0 percentage point of overall inflation. The cost of operating personal transport equipment, which primarily reflects higher fuel prices, rose by 8.1% y/y in April.²⁰ The mines and energy ministry raised local pump prices (**Walvis Bay**, point of entry) three times (in February, March and April), citing the rebound in global oil prices since the end of last year, which widened the under-recovery on domestic fuel prices compared to actual market prices, which the **National Energy Fund (NEF)** has to fund.²¹ The cumulative increase of N\$1.80 (\$0.13) per litre took pump prices to their current level of N\$13.15 (\$0.88) per litre of unleaded petrol and N\$13.18 (\$0.89) per litre of diesel. Domestic fuel prices were unaltered for May; ministry spokesman **Andreas Simon** said global oil prices had stabilised and under-recoveries had fallen:

“The current review has shown a sudden stabilisation in especially the barrel prices of oil which is very different from the volatile prices that were recorded over the last few months.”²²

However, current market expectations are that global oil demand is increasing again due to the reopening of the economies of major **European** economies and higher **United States (US)** travel numbers. This is coupled with continued production restraint by members of the **Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)**. The benchmark prices for **Brent** crude and **West Texas Intermediate (WTI)** stood at \$68.44 per barrel and \$66.05 per barrel respectively on 25 May, over 30% higher than at the start of the year when both benchmarks were trading at under \$50 per barrel.²³

¹⁷ Namibia Statistics Agency, Namibia Consumer Price Index Bulletin, Apr 2021.

¹⁸ Namibia Statistics Agency, Namibia Consumer Price Index Bulletin, Apr 2021

¹⁹ IJG Namibia, NCPI-April 2021

²⁰ Namibia Statistics Agency, Namibia Consumer Price Index Bulletin, Apr 2021

²¹ Namibia Statistics Agency, Namibia Consumer Price Index Bulletin, Apr 2021

²² Namibia Statistics Agency, Namibia Consumer Price Index Bulletin, Apr 2021

²³ OILPRICE.com, 24 May 2021.

Interest rates may be raised later in 2021

Despite rising domestic inflation, the **Bank of Namibia (BoN)** (central bank) looks likely to hold its repurchase (repo) rate at 3.75% when its next **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** meeting takes place on 16 June.²⁴ The **South African Reserve Bank (SARB)** (central bank) unanimously decided to keep its repo rate unchanged on 3.5% at its 20 May MPC meeting, and the BoN normally matches SARB interest rate decisions (see *ARC Briefing Namibia April 2021*).²⁵

However, monetary policy could be tightened in the second half of this year.²⁶ The SARB raised its GDP growth projection for South Africa to 4.2% (up from 3.8% previously), and, while shaving its 2021 inflation rate forecast to 4.2%, warned that risks to consumer prices are tilted to the upside.²⁷ Its quarterly projection model continues to advocate two 25 basis points rate hikes for 2021; this would lift South Africa's repo rate to 4% by year-end. If these are implemented and the BoN follows suit, Namibia's repo rate would increase to 4.25%, raising borrowing costs to consumers and businesses and risking nipping an economic recovery in the bud. For this reason, ARC expects that the BoN will hold off any repo rate increase for as long as possible.

Diamond and gold output fall in Q1

The mining sector is continuing to operate below par due to the ongoing impact of pandemic restrictions on operations. However, a strong revival in global activity as lockdowns are eased in many developed economies due to the roll-out of Covid-19 vaccination is feeding through into higher commodity prices, notably gold and copper, which will enable producers to lift output again. Rough gem diamond production by the country's sole producer, the 50:50 government/**De Beers** joint venture **Namdeb**, fell to 338,000 carats in Q1 2021, down 34% on a year earlier, due to previous capacity reductions and planned maintenance on several of the deep-sea mining vessels operated by **De Beers Marine (Debmar)**, an integrated part of Namdeb).²⁸ However, it was fractionally above the preceding quarter due to higher onshore production.

Namdeb diamond production ²⁹ (‘000 carats)					
	2021	2020		% change	
	Q1	Q4	Q1	Q1/Q1	Q1/Q4
Offshore (Debmarine)	249	256	417	-40	-3
Onshore	89	81	94	-5	10
Total	338	337	511	-34	0

Production decreased from a year earlier due to one vessel being under planned maintenance while a second remained demobilised as part of the response to lower market demand implemented in Q3 2020. However, De Beers' majority owner, **Anglo American plc**, noted that market demand in Q1 had recovered to pre-Covid 19 levels, with renewed confidence by midstream cutting and polishing firms in response to stronger consumer purchases of diamond

²⁴ Source, ARC Namibia analyst

²⁵ South African Reserve Bank, Statement of the Monetary Policy Committee, 20 May 2021; Pound Sterling Live, 20 May 2021.

²⁶ Source, ARC Namibia analyst

²⁷ South African Reserve Bank, Statement of the Monetary Policy Committee, 20 May 2021.

²⁸ Anglo American plc, Production Report for the first quarter ended 31 March 2021, 22 April 2021.

²⁹ Anglo American plc, Production Report for the first quarter ended 31 March 2021, 22 April 2021.

jewellery in the US and **China**. This was evidenced by an increase in rough diamond sales to 13.5m carats from three 'sights' (sales to approved customers) in Q1 2021, up from 8.9m carats from two sights a year earlier.³⁰

The **Otjikoto** mine northeast of Windhoek produced 23,042 ounces of gold in Q1 2021, 11% above budget, but 45% down on the 18,707 ounces produced Q1 2020.³¹ **Canada**-headquartered **B2Gold**, which owns a 90% equity interest in the mine (local empowerment firm **EVI Mining** owns 10%), said this was due to processed ore being primarily sourced from lower grade stockpiles while significant waste stripping continued at the Otjikoto and **Wolfshag** open pits, with production due to rise substantially in the second half of 2021 when mining reaches the higher-grade zone at the base of Wolfshag. Development of the Wolfshag underground mine continues on schedule with first recoveries to start in early 2022; the initial mineral reserve estimate is 210,000 ounces, grading 5.57 grams/tonne of gold. Full year production is forecast at between 190,000 and 200,000 ounces in 2021, reflecting higher gold recoveries later this year, with annual output set to remain at this level until 2024. New underground output will supplement Otjikoto pit ore, medium- and lower-grade stockpiles. The mine is a profitable operation for B2Gold; cash operating costs are well below the prevailing gold price at a forecast \$480 to \$520 per ounce for 2021. Based on current assumptions, including an \$1,800 per ounce gold price, B2Gold forecasts \$630m in cashflow from Otjikoto and its two other mines in **Mali** and the **Philippines** this year. Consolidated gold revenue was \$362m on sales of 202.3m ounces, at an average price of \$1,791 per ounce in Q1, with \$97m in attributable net income to shareholders.³²

Elsewhere, South Africa-based **AfriTin Mining**, which is listed on London's **Alternative Investment Market (AIM)**, has raised £13m (\$18.5m) via a share placement, to fund higher tin production by the **Uis** open pit mine in northwest Namibia, along with continuing metallurgical test work on potential tantalum and lithium oxide by-products. Capacity of the phase 1 plant is being raised from 60 tonnes to 100 tonnes of tin concentrate per month; the current resource is 72m tonnes grading 0.13% tin.³³ AfriTin chief executive officer **Anthony Viljoen** commented:

*"We are very pleased to announce today's oversubscribed placing which puts the company into the position to expedite Phase 1 expansion of our flagship Uis tin mine in Namibia at a time of unprecedented high tin prices. The proceeds also allow us to further investigate the exciting significant lithium and tantalum by-product potential we have across our extensive resource base."*³⁴

Tin prices are close to record highs because of a shortage caused by high demand for consumer electronics and shipping bottlenecks in **Asia**.³⁵ The price has risen by nearly 50% this year to almost \$30,000 per tonne on the **London Metal Exchange (LME)**.³⁶

ReconAfrica spuds 2nd Kavango well amidst mounting controversy

In a further boost to prospects for Namibia's first onshore oil discovery, Canada-based **Reconnaissance Energy Africa Ltd (ReconAfrica)** has begun drilling a second, stratigraphic exploratory well in the **Kavango Basin** located in north-eastern Namibia and north-western Botswana.³⁷ A joint statement issued by ReconAfrica and the mines and energy ministry in April stated that preliminary analysis of the first 6.2 well had provided clear evidence of a working conventional petroleum system in the basin (see *ARC Briefing Namibia April 2021*).

³⁰ Anglo American plc, Production Report for the first quarter ended 31 March 2021, 22 April 2021.

³¹ B2Gold Reports Strong Q1 2021 Results, 4 May 2021

³² B2Gold Reports Strong Q1 2021 Results, 4 May 2021

³³ AfriTin Mining, 12 May 2021

³⁴ AfriTin Mining, 12 May 2021

³⁵ The Times, 15 May 2021

³⁶ The Times, 15 May 2021

³⁷ New Era, 11 May 2021; RigZone, 6 May 2021

The firm holds exploration rights over 34,000 square km (25,200 square km in Namibia and 8,800 sq km in Botswana) of mainly pristine wilderness, including part of the watershed of the **Okavango Delta**, categorised as a world heritage site by the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)**. The area also contains six community-run wildlife reserves – which ReconAfrica accepts are off-limits for exploration activity – along with important migratory routes for the world’s largest remaining elephant population.³⁸

ReconAfrica owns a 90% interest in Namibian petroleum exploration licence (PEL) 73; state-owned **National Petroleum Corporation of Namibia (Namcor)** holds 10% with costs covered to the development stage. This runs to end-January 2024, extendable for two years. By the end of 2021, it intends to complete evaluation of its first well, drill two more wells, conduct 450 km of 2D seismic data, and begin “*joint venture negotiations*” with other interested oil firms.³⁹

Oil production would provide Namibia with an additional source of public revenue and export earnings. Once a commercial discovery is declared, the government will grant ReconAfrica a 25-year production licence under a standard petroleum agreement, paying a 5% royalty payable on oil production, 35% corporation tax and a formula-based additional profits tax (APT).⁴⁰

But ReconAfrica faces mounting local and international opposition to its plans, due to concerns over the potential impact of drilling activities on the environment and wildlife. The government has now set up a high-level committee within the agriculture, water and land reform ministry to monitor the project, covering water resource management and supply, sanitation and communal land management.⁴¹ In mid-May, ReconAfrica declared it was committed to environmental protection and would act as a steward of the natural environment, noting that it had lodged an application for water extraction in September last year, even though the anticipated volume of water to be consumed would be less than half the 200,000 cubic metres per year required threshold.⁴² It added that it had worked closely with the traditional authority of the area to secure approval for the drilling of construction and community water boreholes. However, local communities and environmental activists have criticised the company’s application for occupational land rights over two small areas in two villages of **East Kavango** region for five years, saying the one-week timeframe provided for objections to be lodged was too short, while families claim the areas cover ancestral land.⁴³ The **Legal Assistance Centre (LAC)** has written to the **Kavango East Communal Land Board** to file one family’s objection to the land being granted, which says the **Shambyu Traditional Authority** had already authorised the transfers.

In a major escalation of global opposition to the project, a whistleblower complaint filed on 5 May with the **US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)** alleges ReconAfrica may have fraudulently misled investors by misrepresenting its work on the project.⁴⁴ The 44-page complaint, which the whistleblower filed anonymously, reportedly alleges the firm violated securities laws by failing to disclose crucial information about its exploration and well-drilling activities in a bid to inflate its share price. The complaint notes the share price has risen from \$191m to over \$1 billion by mid-May and cites over 150 instances of what it claims are misleading statements by ReconAfrica. In a brief formal response to the allegations on 24 May,

³⁸ ReconAfrica website; Wildlife Watch/National Geographic, 21 May 2021

³⁹ ReconAfrica website

⁴⁰ Deloitte, Oil and Gas Taxation in Namibia.

⁴¹ New Era, 11 May 2021

⁴² ReconAfrica, Commitment to Environmental Protection statement, 13 May 2021.

⁴³ The Namibian, 21 May 2021

⁴⁴ Wildlife Watch/National Geographic, 21 May 2021

the company said that allegations that it did not adhere fully to the legal obligations within all the territories in which it operates “*are categorically untrue*”.⁴⁵

Independent experts say the company has yet to complete a full seismic survey and that much more probing is needed to confirm an exploitable discovery, while its statements about the basin’s potential are at best premature. **Matt Totten Jnr**, a petroleum geologist who carried out oil and gas exploration in **Texas** (US) while working for **United Kingdom (UK)**-based oil major **BP**, says that more information from seismic analysis of the geology along with multiple test wells are needed to justify its claims. Until more data is made public, Totten cautions:

*“I think the public and local officials should remain cautious about the project.”*⁴⁶

Covid-19 Indian variant has yet to be detected in Namibia

The government is investigating whether the Covid-19 **Indian** variant (B.1.617) has arrived in Namibia. No cases have been recorded to date, although the variant has spread to both neighbouring Botswana and South Africa.⁴⁷ Health ministry executive director **Ben Nangombe** announced on 17 May that genome sequencing was being used to detect if the variant is now present; the two Covid-19 variants currently confirmed in Namibia are the South African B.1.351 and the UK’s B.1.1.7. Nangombe noted that a rise in the number of hospitalisations and deaths, and an observed lax compliance with Covid-19 health regulations throughout the country, are major concerns:

*“Increased hospitalisation has exerted pressure on the available capacity of intensive care treatment, both in public and private sectors.”*⁴⁸

Health minister **Kalumbi Shangula** kept existing Covid-19 public health regulations unchanged at the 27th Covid-19 briefing on 29 April, with restrictions extended from midnight 1 May until 30 May.⁴⁹ The limit on public gatherings remains at 100 persons both indoors and outdoors, with the curfew remaining in place between 10pm and 4am. Foreign citizens are required to present a negative PCR or antigen test result on entering Namibia.

New Covid-19 cases have resumed an upward trajectory. Global data shows that as of 25 May, a total 53,207 cases had been recorded in Namibia’s population of 2.49 million, with 49,360 recoveries and 774 Covid-19-related deaths, but no new cases or deaths on that day. However, 1,817 new cases and 51 deaths were recorded in the seven days to 25 May, up from 1,181 cases and 32 deaths in the preceding seven-day period.⁵⁰

As of 29 April, 20,315 Namibians, 1% of the total population, had received their first doses of Covid-19 vaccine, since the vaccine rollout programme began five weeks earlier. However, the health ministry has now established 383 vaccination sites around the country, of which 181 are fixed, 154 mobile and 48 are outreach points. Reportedly, some Namibians seeking vaccination had been turned away because they did not have a national identification document (ID), in which case Shangula said they could provide alternative proof of identity such as a driving licence or be vouched for by someone with a national ID.⁵¹

Continued delays in shipments under the **COVAX** global vaccine initiative of the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** could delay the vaccination rollout, although Namibia received an additional 43,000 **Oxford/AstraZeneca** vaccine doses in late May. Exports of **Covishield**

⁴⁵ Namibia Economist, 24 May 2021.

⁴⁶ Wildlife Watch/National Geographic, 21 May 2021

⁴⁷ New Era, 22 May 2021

⁴⁸ New Era, 22 May 2021

⁴⁹ Statement by Dr Kalumbi Shangula on the Occasion of the 27th Covid 19 Briefing, Ministry of Health and Social Services, 29 April 2021

⁵⁰ www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/ 25 May 2021.

⁵¹ Statement by Dr Kalumbi Shangula on the Occasion of the 27th Covid 19 Briefing, Ministry of Health and Social Services, 29 April 2021

vaccine doses (produced in **India** under licence from Oxford/AstraZeneca) are not likely to resume until October at the earliest. India suspended exports in March to prioritise its domestic vaccine rollout.⁵² The **Serum Institute India (SII)**, the largest single supplier to the COVAX scheme, was set to produce 240 million doses of Covishield by July, but only a fraction of these have been shipped.⁵³ SII stated in mid-May:

“We continue to scale up manufacturing and prioritise India. We hope to start delivering to COVAX and other countries by the end of this year.”⁵⁴

Global tourism conference boost for Covid-hit sector

The government hopes a global tourism conference in June will boost Namibia’s tourist sector, which has been badly affected by the Covid-19 travel restrictions introduced in March 2020.⁵⁵ A regional conference of the **UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)**, postponed from last year, takes place in Windhoek from 14-16 June on the theme *“Strengthening Brand Africa for the Swift Recovery of the Tourism Sector”*. Tourism minister **Pohamba Shifeta** said the event offered an opportunity to restart Namibia’s tourism offer to visitors:

“We feel this conference is very vital, especially this time and it is a necessity because we are trying to put everything back on track after we have had Covid-19 last year which is continuing this year.”⁵⁶

The government launched a tourism revival initiative in September, with mixed results so far. The hotels and restaurants sector, a proxy for the tourism industry, contracted by 33% in real terms last year, according to central bank estimates (the NSA has yet to publish Namibia’s 2020 preliminary national accounts).⁵⁷ The number of bed and room nights sold by the local hospitality industry sharply declined, with numbers for passengers using Namibian airports far below average. The regional and international arrivals and departure indices based on data from the state-owned **Namibia Airports Company** were down 45% and 57% respectively in March 2021 compared to a year earlier. However, recent easing of some Covid-19 global travel restrictions meant that compared to February 2021, the indices recorded month-on-month growth rates of 74% and 50% respectively.⁵⁸

According to the UNWTO, tourism for inclusive growth identifies branding as a crucial means of helping create a positive image of Africa as a tourism destination and support efforts to promote tourism by governments and travel sector firms.⁵⁹

⁵² The Namibian, 24 May 2021

⁵³ The Namibian, 24 May 2021

⁵⁴ Daily Telegraph, 18 May 2021

⁵⁵ New Era, 20 May 2021

⁵⁶ New Era, 20 May 2021

⁵⁷ New Era, 20 May 2021

⁵⁸ Namibia Statistics Agency, Travellers Arrivals & Departures Sectoral Report- March 2021

⁵⁹ New Era, 20 May 2021

Planner

16 Jun 2021 **Windhoek (Namibia) Bank of Namibia** Monetary Policy Committee meeting

14-16 Jun 2021 **Windhoek (Namibia) United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)** regional conference on strengthening brand Africa

Chronology

24 May 2021 **Walvis Bay (Namibia) New Era. Anti-Corruption Commission** director **Paulus Noa** announces that consultations are underway to draft a second **National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan (NACSAP)** for the 2021-2025 term with a draft expected to be tabled at parliament in August;

24 May 2021 **Aukam (Namibia) Mining Journal. Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX) (Canada)**-listed **Gratomic** Aukam graphite project recommences operations following a shutdown sparked by a case of **Covid-19** amongst the workforce on 14 May;

24 May 2021 **Windhoek (Namibia) The Namibian**. The government receives a shipment of 43,000 **Oxford/AstraZeneca Covid-19** vaccinations from the **World Health Organisation (WHO) COVAX** facility;

23 May 2021 **Windhoek (Namibia) Macau Business**. State-owned entity **Namibia Institute of Pathology (NIP)** partners with **United States**-based **Johns Hopkins University** to launch a project to deliver **Covid-19** vaccines and other medical services by drone in inaccessible and rural areas;

20 May 2021 **Windhoek (Namibia) Reuters**. The government issues a prospectus for 87,500 metric tonnes of its horse mackerel fish quota formerly reserved for **Fishcor**, stating that bids must be submitted by 18 June and be in multiples of 100 tonnes, with a minimum bid of \$213.24 per metric tonne of freezer fish;

19 May 2021 **Windhoek (Namibia) The Namibian. Namibian Stock Exchange (NSE)**-listed **Namibia Breweries** cautions that a proposed deal by **Netherlands**-based brewing company **Heineken NV** to secure a majority stake in **Savanna** cider-producer, currently owned by **South Africa**-based **Distell Group**, could affect its business and its 25% stake in **Heineken South Africa**;

18 May 2021 **Windhoek (Namibia) Namibia Sun. Landless People's Movement (LPM)** leaders **Bernadus Swartbooi** and **Henny Seibeb** appear before a parliamentary standing committee on privileges for a preliminary hearing;

17 May 2021 **Windhoek (Namibia) Reuters**. The agriculture ministry announces a ban on all imports of poultry and poultry products from **South Africa** following an outbreak of avian influenza (bird flu) in **Ekurhuleni (East Rand, Gauteng)**;

12 May 2021 **Entebbe (Uganda) Daily Monitor**. **Namibia's** President **Hage Geingob** is among 11 **African** presidents attending the swearing in of President **Yoweri Museveni** in Entebbe;

10 May 2021 **Windhoek (Namibia) Xinhua**. Health minister **Kalumbi Shangula** launches the **Private Sector Roadblock Covid-19 Testing Initiative**, which aims to optimise Covid-19 testing services for the tourism industry;

6 May 2021 **Kavango Basin (Namibia) RigZone. Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX) (Canada)**-listed **Reconnaissance Energy Africa Ltd** announces the commencement of drilling at its second well site in **Kavango Basin** (North Eastern Namibia);

29 Apr 2021 **(Southern Africa) ESI Africa. Botswana, Namibia and United States** governments sign an historic memorandum of intent to create a **Mega Solar** project in

Botswana and Namibia;

28 Apr 2021 **Windhoek (Namibia)** *Namibia Economist*. Members of the standing parliamentary committee on foreign affairs, defence and security express concern at the availability of “*confidential information*” in the public domain, potentially jeopardising national security;

22 Apr 2021 **Windhoek (Namibia)** *The Namibian*. Opposition **Landless People Movement (LPM)** president **Bernadus Swartbooi** and vice president **Henry Seibeb** remain barred from the national assembly following a meeting of the parliamentary committee on standing rules and orders and internal arrangements on 21 April;

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