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Occupational Safety & Health and Medical

by



## THE SHADOW PANDEMIC BREAKING NAMIBIA'S CYCLE OF SILENCE ON GBV

HOP INTO HEALTH • HEALTH & SAFETY: THE DANGER AT THE DOORSTEP • FUN TIME - JOKE OF THE WEEK •  
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# The Shadow Pandemic: Breaking Namibia's Cycle of Silence on GBV

*Windhoek* – As Namibia navigates the first quarter of 2026, a familiar and grim specter continues to haunt the nation's households. Despite a decade of legislative reform and high-profile awareness campaigns, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains a national emergency, with recent police statistics revealing that the "shadow pandemic" shows no signs of a quiet retreat.



Data from the **Namibian Police Force (NamPol)** indicates that between April 2024 and February 2025, over **4,400 cases of domestic violence** were reported—a staggering figure that experts believe represents only a fraction of the reality, as many victims suffer in the isolation of "permanent" abuse.

## A Culture Under Pressure

The drivers of violence in Namibia are as complex as they are tragic. While the government has rolled out the **3rd National**

**Gender Equality and Equity Policy (2025–2035)**, social workers on the ground point to a lethal cocktail of alcohol abuse, economic disparity, and a stubborn adherence to "harmful masculinity."

"We are seeing a rise in 'passion killings' and digital harassment," says a counsellor at the Lifeline/ChildLine centre. "Violence isn't always a black eye; it is the control of a bank account, the checking of a phone, and the slow erosion of a person's dignity."

## Prevention: The Shift to the Source

The narrative of prevention is shifting. While previous years focused heavily on victim support, 2026 marks a surge in "Source-Level Prevention."

- **The NFA 'Blow the Whistle' Initiative:** The Namibia Football Association has integrated GBV education into its youth leagues, teaching young men that respect is the ultimate badge of strength.
- **Bodily Autonomy in Schools:** Through the Ministry of Education, "Project HOPE" has introduced curriculum-based lessons on consent, ensuring the next generation understands that a "no" is a boundary, not a challenge.

## Trapped in the Cycle: What to Do

For those currently living in a cycle of occasional outbursts or permanent terror, the message from the **GBV Protection Units (GBVPU)** is clear: *You do not have to wait for a physical strike to seek help.*

### 1. The Survival Strategy

If an exit is not immediately possible, safety



experts recommend a **"Go-Bag"** strategy. "Hide your documents—ID, birth certificates, and spare keys—with a trusted neighbour," advises a NamPol officer. "Establish a code word with your children or a friend that means 'Call 10111 now.'"

## 2. Legal Armour: The Protection Order

Under the **Combating of Domestic Violence Act**, any victim can apply for a Protection Order at a Magistrate's Court. This legal tool can bar an abuser from the home, even if they are the primary breadwinner or homeowner. Crucially, the 2022 amendments to the **Combating of Rape Act** have strengthened the state's ability to prosecute, ensuring that "withdrawing a case" due to family pressure is becoming increasingly difficult.

### A Call to Action

GBV is not a "private family matter." It is a drain on the national economy, a trauma for the Namibian child, and a stain on the country's progress. Prevention starts with the neighbor who calls the police and ends with a legal system that refuses to look the other way.

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# Hop Into Health: How to Navigate the Easter Sugar Rush Without the Crash

**WINDHOEK** – As the Easter long weekend approaches, supermarket aisles are already overflowing with gold-foiled chocolate bunnies and marshmallow eggs. For many parents, the holiday has become synonymous with a "sugar fever" that leaves children hyperactive and eventually crashing.



However, health experts are now suggesting that Easter doesn't have to be a nutritional write-off. Drawing on insights from nutritionists, there is a growing movement toward "conscious snacking" that keeps the festive spirit alive without the excessive glucose.

## The Hidden Cost of the Bunny

While a single chocolate egg seems harmless, the cumulative effect of an Easter

egg hunt can result in a child consuming several times their daily recommended sugar intake in a single morning. This leads to dental concerns, energy spikes, and poor appetite for actual meals.

The key, experts say, is not total prohibition—which often makes sweets more "forbidden" and desirable—but rather a strategy of substitution and creativity.

## "Fun Food": Making Veggies Festive

One of the most effective ways to steer children toward healthier choices is through presentation. According to recent dietary guidelines, children are far more likely to eat fruit and vegetables if they are "themed."

"Children eat with their eyes first," the report suggests. Instead of a bowl of candy, parents are encouraged to create "Easter Savouries":

- **Fruit Bunnies:** Use pear halves as the body and almond slices or banana rounds as ears.
- **The Veggie Garden:** A dip bowl of hummus surrounded by baby carrots and cucumber "grass."
- **Real Easter Eggs:** Brightly dyed hard-boiled eggs remain an excellent source of protein and provide the same "hunting" excitement as their chocolate counterparts.

## Baking with a Twist

For those who enjoy traditional Easter baking, there are simple ways to reduce sugar content. Swapping half the sugar in a recipe for unsweetened applesauce or mashed bananas can significantly lower the glycemic load of a cake. Using whole-wheat



flour or adding ground nuts also increases fibre, which slows down the absorption of sugar into the bloodstream.

### The Basket Beyond the Buffet

Perhaps the most significant shift recommended for 2026 is rethinking the contents of the Easter basket. Health advocates suggest that the "Easter Bunny" should focus more on activities than calories.

"An Easter basket can be just as exciting with a new set of sidewalk chalk, a bottle of bubbles, a colourful jump rope, or a puzzle," says a local Windhoek paediatrician. "These items provide hours of entertainment, whereas a chocolate bar is gone in minutes."

### Finding the Balance

The goal of a healthy Easter is not to eliminate joy, but to find a balance. Nutritionists recommend the "80/20" rule: 80% healthy, festive whole foods, and 20%

traditional treats. By offering a high-protein breakfast before the egg hunt starts, parents can ensure that children aren't searching for sweets on an empty stomach, which naturally leads to eating less candy.

As Namibia prepares for the holiday, the message is clear: Easter is a time for family and renewal. By prioritizing health-conscious snacks, families can ensure the only thing "hopping" this weekend is the kids playing in the garden—not their blood sugar levels.

### QUICK TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER EASTER:

- **Hydrate:** Offer water or diluted fruit juice instead of sodas to balance the sugar intake.
- **Quality over Quantity:** Choose one high-quality dark chocolate bunny over a bag of cheap, sugar-laden candies.
- **Get Active:** Plan a family walk or a game of football after the Easter meal to help process the extra energy.

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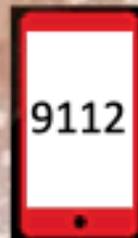
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# Health & Safety - The Danger at the Doorstep

**WINDHOEK** – As Namibia's urban centres continue to expand, safety experts are sounding the alarm over a hidden threat to workers and the public: the deteriorating condition of building exteriors and parking lots.



Following a global report released this week by *Occupational Health & Safety (OHS)*, local safety auditors are warning that "near-miss" incidents—events where an injury narrowly avoided—are skyrocketing in Windhoek's industrial areas and coastal business hubs due to neglected property maintenance.

## The Warning Before the Fall

A "near-miss" is often dismissed as a stroke of luck—a stumble over a cracked pavement or a slip on an oily patch in a parking bay that didn't result in a broken bone. However, safety specialists argue these are critical warning signs.

"In Namibia, we often wait for a tragedy before we fix a problem," says Justine Nghwada OSH-Med Windhoek - Campus Occupational HSE consultant. "The OHS data shows that for every major injury, there are dozens of near-misses caused by poor lighting, uneven paving, or debris. If your employee trips on a pothole outside your warehouse today, they might be in the hospital tomorrow."

## Local Hazards: Dust, Rain, and Salt

While international safety standards often focus on ice and snow, Namibian property owners face unique environmental

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challenges that contribute to dangerous exterior conditions:

- **Erosion and Potholes:** Following the recent seasonal rains, many gravel access roads and paved parking lots in areas like Northern Industrial and Lafrenz have developed deep ruts and "invisible" holes that pose a significant trip risk during night shifts.
- **The Coastal Corrosion:** In Swakopmund and Walvis Bay, the aggressive salt air causes rapid deterioration of outdoor railings, staircases, and light fixtures. A rusted

handrail that gives way is a classic example of a "near-miss" waiting to become a fatality.

- **Poor Lighting and Security:** With the rising cost of electricity, some businesses have dimmed exterior lighting. This not only increases the risk of criminal activity but also obscures physical hazards like curbs, loose gravel, or equipment left in walkways.

### The Legal and Financial Sting

Beyond the moral obligation to keep people safe, there is a mounting financial risk. Under Namibian common law and the Social Security Act, employers and property owners can be held liable for injuries sustained on their premises.

"A near-miss incident is free data," the OHS report emphasises. It is an opportunity for a business to fix a problem before it becomes a costly lawsuit or a Social Security claim. In a tightening economy, Namibian firms can ill-afford the loss of productivity that comes with workplace injuries.

### Proactive Steps for Property Managers

To combat these risks, experts suggest a "Walk-About" protocol. Property managers are encouraged to walk their premises from the perspective of a visitor or a tired worker leaving at 6:00 PM.

### Safety Checklist for Namibian Businesses:

1. **Level the Ground:** Fill potholes and repair lifting paving stones caused by tree roots or heavy trucks.

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2. **Clear the Clutter:** Ensure that delivery bays are free of discarded pallets, plastic wrapping, and construction debris.
3. **Audit the Lights:** Ensure all walkways and parking areas are brightly lit to reveal changes in elevation.
4. **Manage the Water:** Check that air-conditioning runoff or drainage pipes are not creating slippery moss-covered patches on sidewalks.

### A Culture of Reporting

The biggest hurdle in Namibia remain the "silence culture." Many employees fear that

reporting a near-miss will reflect poorly on them or result in extra work.

"We need to reward people for spotting the loose tile or the dim lightbulb," concludes Nghwada. "In the end, the cost of a bag of cement or a new LED bulb is nothing compared to the cost of a human life."

**Is your workplace safe?** *To report hazardous public infrastructure, contact your local Municipality. For private workplace safety concerns, consult your shop steward or the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation. If you need guidance or assistance in Health & Safety contact OSH-Med international - website: [www.osh-med.pro](http://www.osh-med.pro)*

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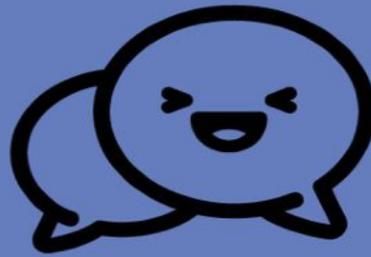


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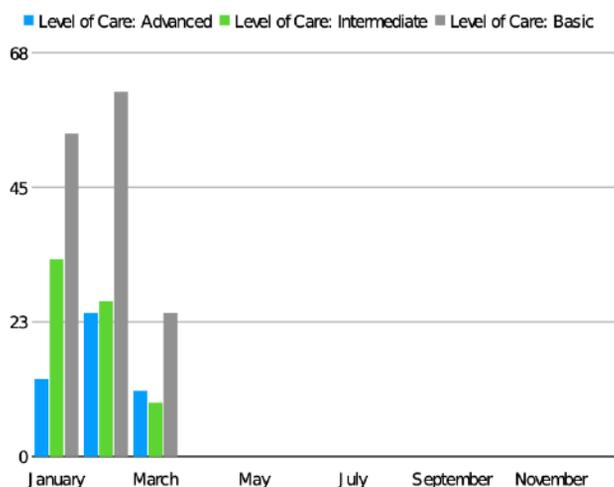
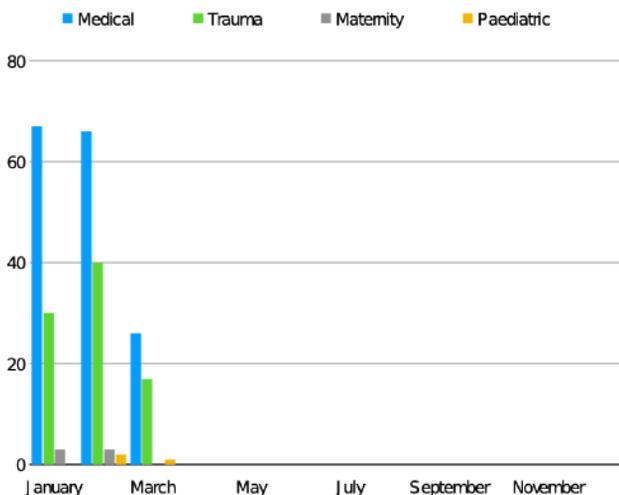
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February	66	40	3	2	24	26	61
March	26	17	0	1	11	9	24
April	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
June	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
July	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
August	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
September	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
October	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
November	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total per annum</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>				<b>255</b>		



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