



NAMIBIA

TRAVEL & TOURISM FORUM

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Namibia Travel & Tourism Forum (NTTF)

P.O. Box 50533, Bachbrecht,
Windhoek, Namibia

8 August 2024

To,

Inspector General of Namibian Police
Lt-General Joseph Shikongo
Namibian Police Force
Windhoek, Namibia

Dear Lt-General Shikongo,

Re: Enhancing Safety and Security for Tourists in Namibia

On behalf of the Namibia Travel & Tourism Forum (NTTF), Tour And Safari Association (TASA) and the entire tourism sector, I am writing to express our concerns regarding the safety and security of tourists in Namibia. As a crucial stakeholder in the tourism sector, we believe that addressing these issues is essential for maintaining and enhancing Namibia's reputation as a premier travel destination.

Key Points of Concern:

- 1. Recent Attack on NWR MD:** The attack on Matthias Ngwangwama, MD of Namibia Wildlife Resorts, while hiking in Auasblick, has raised significant concerns. Such incidents create a negative perception of safety among potential tourists, deterring them from visiting. Enhanced security measures on popular tourist trails, including increased patrolling and surveillance, are necessary to prevent such occurrences. This would reassure tourists about their safety, encouraging more visitors.
- 2. Statistics on Crimes Against Tourists:** A lack of accurate and detailed crime statistics involving tourists hinders the ability to identify crime hotspots and times. This gap in data prevents targeted preventative measures and diminishes the ability to inform visitors transparently. By collecting and disseminating comprehensive crime data, we can better

prepare and guide tourists, enhancing their overall experience and confidence in visiting Namibia.

3. **Corruption at Roadblocks:** Corrupt practices at roadblocks, including demands for illegal cash payments, pose a significant deterrent to tourists. This not only damages Namibia's reputation but also discourages repeat visits and word-of-mouth recommendations. Implementing clear signage at roadblocks stating that spot fines are not legal, along with a hotline for reporting bribery, can help mitigate this issue. Strict anti-corruption measures and ensuring accountability within the police force are crucial for maintaining integrity and trust.
4. **Illegal Operations of Yango and InDrive:** Yango and InDrive operate without adhering to NTB regulations, unlike local companies like LEFA, which comply and face higher operational costs. This creates unfair competition and poses safety risks due to inadequate driver vetting. Ensuring all operators adhere to regulations will support compliant local businesses and provide safer transport options for tourists. It is essential to regulate these companies to maintain a fair market and ensure the safety of tourists using these services.
5. **Theft of Tourist Equipment:** The frequent theft of tourist equipment significantly tarnishes Namibia's image as a safe destination. Often, culprits are released after tourists leave due to a lack of follow-up. Streamlining processes to grant power of attorney to tourism operators could ensure continuity in legal proceedings and justice, deterring future crimes. Addressing this issue will protect tourists' belongings and enhance their experience, encouraging positive reviews and repeat visits.
6. **Police Visibility and Proactive Policing:** The police need better training and a visible crime prevention presence. Currently, there is a lack of street patrols in critical areas such as Independence Avenue, Church, Museum, and Post Street Mall. This reactive approach fails to deter potential criminals. Promoting more proactive policing, where officers are visible and engaged with the community, will send a clear message that criminal activities are being monitored and controlled, enhancing tourist safety and confidence.
7. **Country-Wide Efforts, Especially in Coastal Cities:** Crime prevention efforts need to be country-wide, with particular attention to coastal cities like Walvis Bay and Swakopmund, which attract many cruise visitors. These areas often see tourists targeted by criminals. Implementing enhanced security measures and ensuring a visible police presence in these regions is crucial for protecting tourists and maintaining a positive image of Namibia as a safe travel destination.

Additional Suggestions for Enhancing Tourist Safety:

1. **Increase Police Patrols:** Regular and visible police patrols in tourist hotspots and hiking trails can act as a strong deterrent to crime. By ensuring that police officers are consistently present in areas frequented by tourists, potential criminals are less likely to commit offenses. These patrols can also provide immediate assistance to tourists, enhancing their sense of security and well-being.
2. **Community Policing Initiatives:** Engage local communities in reporting and preventing crime through active involvement and collaboration with police forces. Community policing can include neighborhood watch programs, local safety workshops, and regular community meetings. These initiatives help build trust between the police and the community, encouraging locals to report suspicious activities and work together to create a safer environment for everyone, including tourists.
3. **Tourist Awareness Campaigns:** Inform tourists about potential risks and safety tips through comprehensive awareness campaigns. These campaigns can be conducted via social media, tourism websites, and information brochures available at hotels, airports, and tourist attractions. Providing practical advice on how to stay safe, such as avoiding certain areas at night and being cautious with personal belongings, can significantly reduce the likelihood of tourists falling victim to crime.
4. **Security Infrastructure:** Install surveillance cameras and emergency call stations in high-traffic tourist areas to enhance monitoring and quick response capabilities. Surveillance cameras can act as a deterrent to criminal activities and provide valuable evidence in the event of a crime. Emergency call stations ensure that tourists can quickly contact authorities if they need assistance, improving the overall safety and security of these areas.
5. **Quick Response Teams:** Establish dedicated quick response teams for tourist-related incidents to ensure rapid and effective intervention. These teams should be trained to handle a variety of emergencies, from minor thefts to more serious incidents such as assaults. Having a specialized unit focused on tourist safety can lead to faster response times and more efficient resolution of incidents, making tourists feel more secure.
6. **Collaboration with Tourism Sector:** Regular meetings between police and tourism operators to discuss emerging issues and collaborative solutions. By maintaining open lines of communication, both parties can stay informed about current trends and potential threats. Collaborative efforts can include joint training sessions, shared resources, and coordinated safety measures to address specific concerns related to tourist safety.
7. **Safe Reporting Channels:** Provide tourists with easy-to-use, anonymous crime reporting mechanisms to encourage prompt reporting of incidents. These channels can include mobile apps, dedicated hotlines, and online forms. Ensuring that tourists can report crimes without

fear of retribution or embarrassment increases the likelihood of incidents being reported and addressed promptly.

8. **Training for Police Officers:** Specialized training for police on interacting with tourists and understanding their unique needs to improve service delivery and trust. This training can cover cultural sensitivity, language skills, and effective communication techniques. Well-trained officers are better equipped to assist tourists, handle their concerns, and create a welcoming and safe environment.
9. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage partnerships between the government and private sector to fund and implement security measures, leveraging resources and expertise. These partnerships can lead to innovative solutions and shared investments in safety infrastructure, such as surveillance technology and public awareness campaigns. Collaborative efforts can significantly enhance the overall safety of tourist areas.
10. **Emergency Contact Information:** Ensure tourists have access to clear, widely disseminated emergency contact information for quick assistance in case of emergencies. This information should be available in multiple languages and prominently displayed at tourist information centers, hotels, and major attractions. Providing easy access to emergency contacts ensures that tourists can quickly get the help they need when faced with a crisis.
11. **Reminders at Roadblocks:** Clear signage at roadblocks to remind tourists that cash payments of fines are not legal in Namibia, along with information on how to report bribery, to combat corruption and ensure fair treatment. These reminders can help prevent tourists from being exploited and reinforce the message that the police force is committed to integrity and lawful conduct. Providing a hotline number for reporting bribery can also empower tourists to take action against corruption.

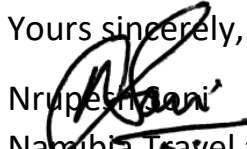
Success Cases from Other Countries in the Last 12 Months:

1. **South Africa:** The South African government, under the leadership of Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille, has focused on enhancing safety for tourists. Initiatives include the establishment of the National Tourism Safety Forum (NTSF) and the deployment of the Tourism Monitors Programme (TMP). These programs involve training and deploying unemployed youth to key tourist sites to patrol, raise awareness, and report crimes. This proactive approach aims to improve safety and security for tourists, thereby fostering a more favorable environment for tourism growth.
2. **Portugal:** Portugal has been proactive in maintaining a low crime rate through its "Safe Communities Portugal" program. This initiative involves close collaboration between police and tourism operators, dedicated tourist police units, and extensive community involvement. The program emphasizes crime prevention through environmental design and public awareness, which has contributed to a safer environment for tourists and a positive perception of Portugal as a safe travel destination.
3. **Japan:** Japan continues to benefit from its Koban system, where small police stations are strategically placed in urban areas. These police boxes provide immediate assistance and maintain public order, enhancing the safety and security of both residents and tourists. The visible and accessible police presence in busy areas has proven effective in deterring crime and reassuring visitors.
4. **Spain:** In major cities like Barcelona and Madrid, Spain has implemented the "Tourist Assistance Service" to reduce tourism-related crimes. These services offer multilingual support, help tourists file police reports, and provide guidance on avoiding common scams. The presence of these dedicated units has significantly improved the safety and overall experience for tourists, reinforcing Spain's reputation as a safe travel destination.

By adopting these strategies and learning from successful cases in other countries, we believe Namibia can significantly enhance the safety and overall experience for tourists, thereby boosting our tourism sector.

We look forward to your positive response and are ready to collaborate with your esteemed office to ensure the safety and security of our visitors.

Yours sincerely,


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