

PRESS STATEMENT

The Namibia Tourism Board (NTB) is a statutory body established under the Namibia Tourism Board Act No. 21 of 2000.

Functions of the Board

Section 3 of the Act provides for the functions of the Board *inter alia* as follows:

- (a) to promote tourism by encouraging persons to travel to and within Namibia;
- (b) to take measures to ensure that services rendered, and facilities provided to tourists comply with the prescribed standards;
- (c) to consider and decide on applications for registration of accommodation establishments and regulated businesses and to grade accommodation establishments;
- (d) to promote the training of persons engaged or to be engaged in the tourism industry to ensure that they are adequately trained to provide services pertaining to that industry;
- (e) to promote the development of the tourism industry and to promote environmentally sustainable tourism by actively supporting the long-term conservation, maintenance and development of the natural resource base of Namibia;
- (f) to give advice and guidance to persons engaged in the tourism industry;
- (g) to promote tourism activities on a national, regional and local level, including the promotion of private sector associations to represent their members in the tourism industry;
- (h) to advise the Minister on any matter relating to –
 - (i) the formulation or implementation of national policy on tourism, including the creation of incentives to encourage tourism development projects; and
 - (ii) the administration of this Act or any other law relating to the tourism industry;
- (i) to carry out any other function conferred or imposed on the Board by or under this Act or any other law.

The Issue

The NTB received a complaint from a member of the public who was denied access to Hoodia Desert Lodge on the basis his wife is of Russian descent. It appears as if the said lodge has adopted a policy not to admit Russian nationals in its facilities because they are aggressive when intoxicated or rude. It also appears from the messages exchanged that the said visitors were particularly racist to the black employees and made sexual advances to the staff there.

Head Office
Namibia, Windhoek
Namibia Tourism Board Building
Corner of Sam Nujoma Drive & Haddy Street, Windhoek West
Tel: +264 61 290 6000
Fax: +264 61 254848
Private Bag 13244, Windhoek
info@namibiatourism.com.na
www.namibiatourism.com.na



Namibia Tourism Board

The policy, they say, hence stems from a need to protect the staff and other guests.

The NTB Stance

The interest of NTB is to protect the tourism industry as a whole. To that end, NTB believes that Namibia should have policies that encourage the entrance of tourists and not the other way round.

At the same time, NTB shall not tolerate any form of discrimination against any of the business entities required by law to be registered with NTB or against any visitor.

As a neutral party, NTB urges restraint and a balancing of rights.

On the one hand, NTB and everyone in Namibia is bound to abide by Article 10 of the Namibian Constitution, which prohibits any form of discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed, or social or economic status. We opine that a general or blanket prohibition of Russian nationals or any other nationality or tribal group within Namibia from entry is indeed discriminatory. The said Article 10 must be read together with Article 23 of the Namibian Constitution. As a destination marketing organisation, we wish to extend warm welcome to Russian nationals to visit Namibia, as we have proudly ploughed investment over the years by working closely with the Namibian Embassy in Moscow to penetrate and develop this market to contribute to the economic benefit Namibia as the country.

On the other hand, NTB is alive to the rights of the business entities required by law to be registered with NTB to ensure safety for themselves, their patrons and their employees.

The Recourse

In the present case, there is no Code of Ethics and Conduct or any other statutory instrument provided for in the NTB Act or in the associated Regulations of Registration governing breach or misconduct or unethical behaviour; hence NTB does not have powers to discipline the operator or revoke its registration in question.

The aggrieved party has recourse under civil law. He/she also has recourse under the Racial Discrimination Prohibition Act No 26 of 1991 in terms of which a criminal case may be lodged with the Namibian Police.

ISSUED BY:

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
NAMIBIA TOURISM BOARD**

