



Republic of Namibia

Ministry of Urban and Rural Development

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Our Ref.: **13/3/R3**
Your Ref.:

Date: 26 March 2018

OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

The Editor
The Namibian newspaper
P.O.Box 20783
WINDHOEK

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: MINISTRY OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT REACTS TO A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ENTITLED "OMATALA STAND-OFF DRAGS ON"

The Ministry of Urban and Rural Development wishes to clarify some issues that are factually incorrect or have been misrepresented in the afore-mentioned article that appeared in The Namibian Newspaper of Thursday, 15 March 2018.

The specific issues are the following statements or claims, which according to your newspaper, have been made by or are attributed to businessman Dr. Erastus 'Chicco' Shapumba.

1. ***"The urban development ministry informed businessman Erastus 'Chicco' Shapumba last week that the land known as Omatala at Oshakati will be re-advertised"*(para 1)**

We wish to respond to the above-mentioned statement by firstly outlining the process and lines of communication that are followed between local authorities and the Ministry in respect of disposal of immovable property (urban land).

In terms of Section 30(1)(t) and Section 63 of the Local Authorities Act (Act No. 23 of 1992) as amended, a local authority council that intends to "*sell, let, hypothecate or otherwise dispose of or encumber*" an immovable property is obliged to obtain prior approval of the Minister and the Minister is empowered to set "*conditions, if any, as may be determined by him or her*". The Act, Section 63 (2) also obliges a local authority that intends to dispose of or sell an immovable property to publish its intention in the media for any objections. If there is an objection to the published intended disposal or sale of an immovable property, the Act (Section 63(3)(b) and (c), prohibits the local authority concerned to proceed with its intended disposal or sale of the said immovable property and for it (local authority) to obtain the approval of the Minister.

The line of communication and procedure that is in place and followed is that a decision of a local authority council to dispose of, sell, let or hypothecate an immovable property is submitted to the Ministry/Minister through a written submission under the signature of the Chief Executive Officer to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry. In the same way, the decision of the Minister is communicated to

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the Council by way of a written communication from the Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Ministry to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a local authority.

In light of the above background and explanation, the decision of the Minister in respect of Erf 1342, Oshakati (also known as Omatala or open market) was only communicated to the Chief Executive Officer of Oshakati Town Council in a letter dated 9th March 2018. The said letter was addressed to and sent to the CEO of Oshakati Town Council, and never to Mr. Shapumba as indicated in your newspaper article. From our records, there was no letter or communication that was sent by or from the Ministry addressed and sent to Mr. Shapumba in respect of the Omatala immovable property.

2. *“He said that the urban development ministry’s permanent secretary, Nghidinua Daniel, informed him last week that the land deal was off” (para 5).*

It is denied that the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, Mr Nghidinua Daniel, had contact of any sort with Mr. Shapumba as reported or claimed in the article.

3. *“They said I should pay N\$1 million, or risk losing it to the Chinese, who is willing to pay N\$45 million. I thought they were joking, but I received a letter from the urban development ministry’s permanent secretary on the same day, stating that the Omatala land will be re-advertised” (para 11).*

As stated herein above, the decision of the Minister on the disposal or sale of Erf 1342 (omatala), Oshakati was solely communicated to the Oshakati Town Council through a letter from the Permanent of the Ministry dated 9th March 2018 addressed and sent to the Chief Executive Officer of Oshakati Town Council.

4. *“Daniel declined to give details of his letter to the council...”(para 6)*

This claim by the journalist is not true and the concerned journalist when contacted by the PS for an explanation on Friday, 16 March 2018 through an sms responded by way of an sms as follows:

“Good evening comrade PS. This is well noted. I will get in contact with the news desk because the original story I submitted did not say you declined to give details. That must have been added during the editing process without my input. I will get back to you soonest. Best. Tuyeimo”.

The journalist contacted the PS for a response via an sms and the PS in turn responded via an sms and received a confirmation of receipt of his response from the journalist saying *“Duly noted. Many thanks”*. There was no indication from the journalist that some of the “details” that the journalist asked for were not provided.

5. In addition to the above, the Ministry is concerned about the **alleged attempts of bribery and blackmail towards businessman Shapumba** and wishes to encourage Mr Shapumba to report and provide the evidence thereof to the authorities for investigation and appropriate action.

In keeping with responsible and ethics of journalism and more importantly in order to correct the misinformation to the public, the Newspaper is hereby requested and urged to publish this response.

Yours faithfully


NGHIDINUA DANIEL
PERMANENT SECRETARY

cc: All Media Houses

