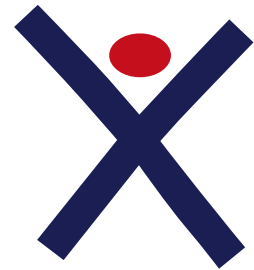


# Election Watch Namibia



## **MEDIA RELEASE: Call for the Release of the 2013 Delimitation Report**

September 28 2015

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### **Call for the release of the 2013 Delimitation Report Ahead of the Local and Regional Elections**

This week the President, in a Government Gazette, is expected to confirm the date for the 2015 Local Authority and Regional Council elections. However, the 2013 Delimitation Report, which made a number of key boundary changes that fundamentally affect these elections, has never been released to the public.

The IPPR, through its Election Watch project, is respectfully calling on President Hage Geingob to authorise the publication of the 2013 Delimitation Report as soon as possible. The public discussion of such reports is a normal practice in a democracy to ensure there has been no manipulation of boundaries to favour particular parties or candidates (otherwise known as gerrymandering) ahead of an election. This call is being made on September 28 - International Right to Know Day.

Former President Hifikepunye Pohamba announced on 8 August 2013 that a number of key changes would be made to constituency and regional boundaries based on the recommendations of the Fourth Delimitation Commission. These decisions included the creation of 14 new constituencies, the splitting of the Kavango region into two, and the renaming of several constituencies and regions. At the time, President Pohamba said the changes were part and parcel of the exercise of democracy in Namibia.

On September 3 2013, the ACTION Coalition, which comprises several groups campaigning for access to information legislation in Namibia, requested President Pohamba to release the report's contents as it was clearly in the public interest to have the reasons for changing boundaries placed in the public domain.

Delimitation is a fundamental part of the democratic process in that it is inextricably linked to the election of representative local, regional and national authorities. The delimitation process was a public one, with citizens being called upon to make submissions both directly to the Commission and at public meetings. Hence, it is only logical that the final report of the Commission be a public document. The contents of this report are also highly relevant for the impending elections - since for the first time voters will be electing representatives from two Kavango regions and for 121 constituencies countrywide - 14 more than in 2010.



During his current visit to the US and the UN General Assembly, President Geingob has spoken repeatedly of leadership being about transparency and accountability. In 2013 the Office of the President advised the IPPR that the release of the delimitation report is the prerogative of the President.

The laws setting out the mandate of the Delimitation Commission – Section 104 of the Constitution and Section 5 of the Regional Councils Act – do not make reference to the manner in which the Commission’s findings should be released. According to the Office of the President, the report falls under the terms of the 1947 Commissions Act, which gives the President the responsibility for releasing reports produced by Presidential Commissions.

Without an access to information law, it is not possible to demand the publication of such documents. With this in mind we are respectfully requesting the President to release the report of the Fourth Delimitation Commission. If for some reason, some of the contents of the report are deemed sensitive then a redacted version could be released.

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