



## IPPR Activity Report January 1 – June 30 2021



Institute for Public Policy Research  
House of Democracy,  
70-72 Frans Indongo St,  
PO Box 6566, Windhoek, Namibia.  
Tel: +264 61 240514  
[info@ippr.org.na](mailto:info@ippr.org.na)  
[www.ippr.org.na](http://www.ippr.org.na)

## Highlights:

### *General*

- As of June 2021, the IPPR had three institutional staff funded by the Hanns Seidel Foundation (Executive Director (full-time), Administrator (part-time), and Office Assistant (part-time)) and 13 part-time research associates working on various projects.
- The IPPR was again recognised as being in the top 50 think tanks in sub-Saharan Africa in the University of Pennsylvania's global think tank rankings. The IPPR remained at 36th in the 2020 rankings released in early 2021. The IPPR is the only Namibian institution listed on the sub-Saharan African index. The IPPR moved up two places on the rankings of the think tanks with the best integrity and quality assurance policies in the world - from 55th to 53rd.
- The IPPR was invited to join the steering committee of the EU-funded Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) programme. The IPPR Executive Director spoke about the state of civil society at EPDN's first event at parliament on 2 June 2021.
- The Hanns Seidel Foundation signed new Memorandum of Understandings with the IPPR for institutional support in 2021 and for project support covering Namibia Fact Check, Procurement Tracker, the Quarterly Economic Review, and the annual Public Enterprise Index as well as papers on open contracting, the UN Convention against Corruption, decentralisation, and tourism.
- The IPPR signed a contract with the Embassy of Finland for the renewal of its Democracy Report project which will now run from 1 June to the end of 2022.
- The IPPR also started work on a new project funded by Global Partners Digital - 'Mainstreaming Human Rights in Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Policymaking Processes' - which will run until September 2022
- DW Akademie extended its funding for Namibia Fact Check until the end of 2021 - with the prospect of further funding for 2022.
- The IPPR signed a contract with the UNCAC Coalition in Vienna, Austria to produce a parallel civil society monitoring report on Namibia's implementation of the UN Convention Against Corruption by October 31 2021.
- The IPPR's following on social media continued to grow. On Facebook, the number of followers grew from 6 890 at the end of 2020 to 7 281 by 30 June. The IPPR's Twitter account had 14 700 followers by June 30, up from 13,907 followers

at the end of 2020. On Facebook, the Namibia Fact Check account had 2 760 followers by 30 June, while the Namibia Fact Check Twitter account had 2 050 followers by the same date.

- On 19 June, the First Lady praised the IPPR's fact-checking efforts on COVID-19 during an interview on NBC TV, saying: "I'm very impressed with civil society organisations like the IPPR ... who are aggressively pushing out the right information on COVID, on vaccines, on treatment. And I think more CSOs ... must do exactly that."

### *Events & Activities*

- The IPPR convened and facilitated a pre-budget civil society consultation on 4 February 2021 with the Minister of Finance, Nipumbu Shiimi. The online meeting was attended by 27 civil society representatives and 7 officials from the Ministry of Finance and National Planning Commission.
- During the 4 February consultation the IPPR and several other CSO representatives re-emphasised a previous call for VAT to be removed from sanitary pads. On March 17, when the 2021/22 budget was tabled the Minister said in his speech: "Following on our extensive consultation with the civil society and thanks to the facilitation by the Institute of Public Policy Research, I wish to announce that the supply of sanitary pads will be VAT zero-rated to enhance affordability by the girl child. I urge suppliers and retailers to pass on this relief to consumers once enacted."
- On 10 February the IPPR launched the Namibian chapter of the report 'The Struggle for the Realisation of the Right to Freedom of Expression in Southern Africa' via an online webinar. The IPPR contributed the chapter to the report which was published by the African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms Coalition.
- The IPPR conducted a panel of experts discussion online as part of its research for the annual Civil Society Sustainability Index on 17 February.
- The IPPR held a consultation meeting on 4 March with the Office of the Auditor General, the Ministry of Finance, and other stakeholders to discuss how greater public engagement could improve fiscal transparency.
- On March 16, the Executive Director was the presenter for a webinar on 'The Impact of Corruption on Social Protection' organised by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

- The Executive Director took part in a consultation meeting on the Namibia Equitable Economic Empowerment Bill on 17 March - organised by the Namibian Investment and Promotion Development Board.
- Following the successful pre-budget consultation, the IPPR was asked by the Ministry of Finance to organise on CSO consultation on the setting up of a Sovereign Wealth Fund, which is one of the proposed actions in the Harambee Prosperity Plan II. The consultation on 22 April, organised in partnership with Civic +264, was attended by 25 civil society representatives as well as senior Ministry of Finance staff.
- On 20 May, the Executive Director addressed the UNCAC Coalition Regional Meeting for Sub-Saharan Africa on the issue of whistleblower protection.
- On 26 May, the IPPR, under the banner of Namibia Fact Check, organised a briefing meeting on Debunking Vaccination Myths with Dr. Armid Azedeh. The briefing was broadcast via Facebook live and had 128 views.
- The IPPR completed its research for a new International Budget Partnership report, Managing Covid Funds: A Global Scorecard of Accountability, which was launched in Washington DC on 23 May.
- The IPPR signed a joint statement by concerned Namibian human rights defenders and CSOs condemning a harmful and homophobic statement issued by the SWAPO Party Youth League (SPYL) on 19 May 2021.
- On 18 June, the Executive Director was a panellist on The Conversation (a weekly podcast by The Namibian) with Dr Bernard Haufiku, which was viewed by 14 000 people. The topic was the National Response to COVID-19.
- The IPPR was the only Namibian organisation to co-sign a statement from Amnesty International on the vaccine situation in southern Africa that was issued on 23 June to coincide with the SADC Heads of State summit.

### *Publications*

- **Quarterly Economic Review (QER) Oct-Dec 2020** - The first Quarterly Economic Review of 2021 covered quarter 4 of 2020 (October-December 2020) and was published on the IPPR's website and social media on February 2 2021. The 15-page bulletin included a special focus on the main economic developments of 2020. 271 website views

- **The Right to Freedom of Expression in Namibia** - The IPPR contributed a chapter to the new report 'The Struggle for the Realisation of the Right to Freedom of Expression in Southern Africa'. The chapter focuses on impediments to freedom of expression in the Communications Act, the Protection of Information Act, and the Prevention and Combating of Terrorist and Proliferation Activities Act. The report is published by the African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms Coalition. The report was published on the IPPR website on February 7 2021. 248 website views
- **Procurement Tracker: The PSEMAS Conundrum** - The first Procurement Tracker bulletin of the year was published on May 5 2021. The 8-page bulletin looked at the delays in the awarding of the contract for the government medical aid scheme and whether 'state capture' was an issue. The bulletin also reported on the controversy around the Defence Ministry allocation of a contract for hand sanitizers and the proposed amendments to the Public Procurement Act. 119 website views
- **Quarterly Economic Review (QER) Jan-March 2021** - The second Quarterly Economic Review of 2020 covered quarter 1 of 2021 (January -March 2021) and was published on the IPPR's website and social media on May 10 2021. The 16-page bulletin included a special focus on the 2021/22 national budget as tabled on March 17 – looking at revenue, expenditure, tax proposals, debt and deficit. 153 website views

### **Namibia Fact Check:**

From the start of 2021 until June 30, Namibia Fact Check published 28 articles. Most of these articles focused on dispelling false information about COVID-19, COVID-19 vaccines and related issues. The articles are available at [www.namibiafactcheck.org.na](http://www.namibiafactcheck.org.na) Fact Check produced 8 podcasts on its Soundcloud channel - covering issues such as trends in COVID-19, the origins of Coronavirus, developments in disinformation, and debunking false claims about vaccines.

In addition, through a separate arrangement with The Namibian, Namibia Fact Check published a regular column on page 5 in the newspaper. By June 30 14 such columns had been published focussing on debunking various false claims about COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines that have been in circulation in Namibia.

In March, Namibia Fact Check ran two courses on social media verification - the first for civil society representatives and the second for journalists and bloggers.

Finally, the project produced various graphics, memes and short videos for social media that emphasised key health messages and provided summaries of the COVID-19 situation in the country.

## COVID impact:

The pandemic has had a greater impact on the IPPR in 2021 than in the previous year (when most activities could continue as planned and launch events were shifted online when appropriate). This year, the virus has negatively affected all the IPPR's research associates. Although only one researcher tested positive for COVID (and recovered after showing mild symptoms), others were affected by the illness and death of close family and friends - especially from June onwards when the 'third wave' hit in earnest. The closure of the office for all but essential activities from June has had the effect of limiting internal communication and delaying implementation far more noticeably than the 5-week lockdown did in 2020.

## Media Coverage:

January - June 2021

Overall, there were 130 media reports, interviews and citations in the first 6 months of the year. In 2020, 125 media citations were recorded. The increase is partly due to improved monitoring in 2021 enabled by the creation of the Office Assistant post.

MEDIA	No. of articles/reports
<b>Print/online:</b>	
The Namibian	33
New Era	13
Namibian Sun	7
Allgemeine Zeitung	8
Republikein	3
Namibia Economist	1
Other	4
<i>Sub-total</i>	<b>69</b>
<b>Television:</b>	
NBC TV	6
One Africa TV	4
<i>Sub-total</i>	<b>10</b>
<b>Radio:</b>	
Eagle FM	7
Future Media News	13
Kosmos	9
NBC National Radio	6
Community radio stations	13
Fresh FM	1
Power FM (South Africa)	1
Other	1
<i>Sub-total</i>	<b>51</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>130</b>

## **Remaining Activities For 2021:**

Two Quarterly Economic Review bulletins  
Three Procurement Tracker bulletins  
Review of Auditor General's role in Enhancing Fiscal Transparency  
Cybersecurity and human rights consultations and briefing papers  
Three Perspectives on Parliament bulletins  
Three Democracy Report briefing papers  
COVID-19 and human rights brief  
Public Enterprises rankings  
Open contracting briefing paper  
Decentralisation briefing paper  
Transparency in Fisheries briefing paper  
Electoral integrity book and electoral law review  
COVID-19 and gender brief  
Foreign Policy & Human Rights report  
Guide to the Namibian Economy  
Tourism revival briefing paper  
UNCAC Civil Society Parallel Report  
Civil Society Sustainability Index  
Namibia Fact Check reports plus podcasts, short videos, memes etc.

***Graham Hopwood***  
***IPPR Executive Director***

***19.07.21***