

ELECTRICITY

Windhoek connects 8,000 households to electricity, targets 1,300 more

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FNB Namibia appoints Bolle Hans as Head of Public Sector Banking

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THE

BRIEF

News Worth Knowing



Namibia repays N\$3.9bn IMF emergency loan

THURSDAY 30 APRIL 2026

MAIN STORY



Namibia repays N\$3.9bn IMF emergency loan

Namibia has fully repaid its N\$3.9 billion emergency loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), bringing its participation in the Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI) programme to an end.

According to the Ministry of Finance Spokesperson Wilson Shikongo, the final repayment was made on 15 April 2026, reducing the outstanding balance to zero and formally closing the facility approved in April

Crucial Dates

- **Bank of Namibia Monetary Policy announcement dates:**
 - * 17 June 2026
 - * 12 August 2026
 - * 29 October 2026
 - * 10 December 2026
- **Namibia Oil and Gas Conference 18–21 August 2026 in Windhoek**

The last payment was made on 15 April 2026. To this effect, the IMF RFI has now been fully repaid.

2021.

“The last payment was made on 15 April 2026. To this effect, the IMF RFI has now been fully repaid,” told The Brief.

The loan, equivalent to Special Drawing Rights (SDR) 23 million, or about N\$3.9 billion at the time of approval, was secured at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic to stabilise the economy and support urgent public spending.

The funds were used to address fiscal financing pressures as Namibia faced a widening budget deficit, declining export revenues and increased strain on its external accounts.

At the time, Finance Minister Ipumbu Shiimi said the facility was critical in enabling the government to respond to the health crisis, including procuring vaccines and supporting the national vaccination rollout, while cushioning the broader economic impact.

The RFI, which provides emergency support to IMF member states facing balance of payments challenges, was extended to several middle-income countries during the pandemic.

Namibia’s drawdown marked its first access to IMF financing. Unlike traditional

IMF programmes, the RFI carried no policy conditionalities and was offered on relatively favourable terms, including a five-year repayment period and an interest rate of about 1.1%.

More than 80 countries accessed similar emergency funding during the COVID-19 crisis.

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Windhoek connects 8,000 households to electricity, targets 1,300 more



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Borehole Drilling

Sinomine Tsumeb Smelter (Pty) Ltd. invites registered, competent and experienced individuals or companies to tender for the provision of Borehole Drilling Services.

Details of the Tender

Tender availability: From Tuesday, 5th May 2026
Tender documents can be obtained by e-mailing procurement.sts@sinomine.na

Cost per set: No levy

Closing date for submission: Friday, 29th May 2026

Submission requirements are defined in the tender documents and the closing date for submission is final, no extensions will be granted. Technical information, bid clarifications and any enquiries pertaining to this tender can be requested at procurement.sts@sinomine.na

All tender proposals must be submitted via e-mail to:
procurement.sts@sinomine.na

No other method of submission will be accepted

Sinomine Tsumeb Smelter employs an equal opportunity policy. Tenders will be awarded through a competitive bidding process which is transparent and open to all individuals or companies that meets the set criteria. Any person(s) or company that qualify as per the tender's evaluation criteria, may bid.

The Mayor of the Municipal Council of Windhoek, Sakarias Uunona, says about 8,000 households have been connected to the electricity grid under the city's electrification programme, with a further 1,300 households targeted in the 2025/2026 financial year at a cost of N\$33 million.

The programme, implemented since 2018 in partnership with central government through the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development and the Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy, focuses on informal and peri-urban settlements

experiencing rapid urbanisation.

“To date, approximately 8,000 households have been connected to the electricity grid, a clear demonstration of what can be achieved through strong partnerships and a shared vision. In the 2025/2026 financial year, construction work commenced to electrify approximately 1,300 households at an estimated cost of N\$33 million,” Uunona said.

Household allocations for the current phase include 492 in Tobias Hainyeko

Constituency, 275 in Windhoek Rural Constituency, 260 in Moses //Garoëb Constituency and 281 in Khomasdal Constituency.

“Since 2018, the Municipal Council of Windhoek, with support from central government through the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development and the Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy, has implemented a targeted electrification programme for informal and peri-urban settlements,” Uunona said.

Windhoek Electrification: Powering the Informal and Peri-Urban Frontier

Since 2018, the Municipal Council of Windhoek has partnered with central government ministries to electrify informal and peri-urban settlements. This targeted program focuses on rapid urbanization areas to improve service delivery, safety, and economic opportunity through grid connections and infrastructure.

Progress & Future Expansion

8,000

Households Connected

Achievement reached through partnerships between the municipality and central government since 2018.

Targeted in 2025/2026

1,300

Targeted

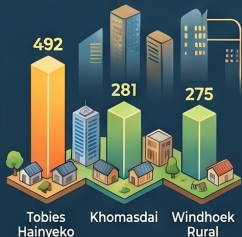
A N\$33 million investment planned for the next phase of household connections.



Need-Based Allocation

Infrastructure investment is prioritized for areas with the greatest service delivery gaps.

1,300 Targeted Household Allocations for 2025/2026



Beyond Household Power

15

High-Mast Lights

Installations designed to improve public safety and support local economic activity.



Skills Development & Mentorship

Graduate electrical engineers receive on-site training under the guidance of experienced professionals.



Inclusive Urban Development

The program forms a core part of Windhoek's strategy to expand basic services.



To date, approximately 8,000 households have been connected to the electricity grid, a clear demonstration of what can be achieved through strong partnerships and a shared vision.

He said the allocation model is designed to direct infrastructure investment to areas with the greatest need, while supporting broader goals of inclusive urban development and improved service delivery.

Additional infrastructure is being rolled out alongside household connections, including a high-mast lighting programme

covering 15 installations across informal and peri-urban areas to improve safety and support economic activity.

Uunona said 10 high-mast lights under the second phase have been installed, while five from the initial phase have been erected, with three already energised and two awaiting final connection.

The municipality is also incorporating skills development into the programme through the appointment of graduate electrical engineers, who are receiving on-site training under supervision.

“The Municipal Council of Windhoek has appointed Namibian graduate electrical engineers who will be trained during the execution of these projects under the mentorship of experienced engineers,” Uunona said.

He added that the electrification programme forms part of a broader strategy to expand access to basic services and support long-term urban development.

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Bank of Namibia projects inflation to average 3.7% in 2026

The Bank of Namibia projects annual inflation to average 3.7% in 2026 and 3.4% in 2027, reflecting a moderate upward revision for 2026 in its latest forecast report released in April.

The central bank said domestic annual headline inflation slowed to 2.1% in March

2026, down 0.3 percentage points from the previous month, with housing, food and alcohol among the main contributors to the decline.

“Domestic annual headline inflation decreased to 2.1% in March 2026, translating into a 0.3 percentage point

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decrease from the previous month. The biggest contributors towards the decrease in the annual inflation rate were Housing (1.1 percentage points), followed by Food and non-alcoholic beverages and Alcoholic beverages and tobacco, contributing 0.4 and 0.3 percentage points respectively,” the central bank said.

In the short term, inflation is expected to trend upwards, rising to 2.9% in April, 3.0% in May and 3.1% in June 2026.

The medium-term outlook points to a gradual increase in inflation during the

second quarter of 2026, driven largely by expectations of higher global oil prices.

“Through the medium term, the quarterly inflation forecast is projected to increase in the second quarter of 2026 mainly on the assumption of a higher oil price outlook. Overall, the baseline estimates suggest that headline inflation will average 3.7% and 3.4% in 2026 and 2027 respectively, reflecting an upward revision of 0.2 percentage points for 2026, while that of 2027 remains unchanged,” the bank said.

The Bank of Namibia said component-level projections indicate upward trends across most categories, including food, housing, transport and recreation, while communication remains in negative territory and education is expected to remain stable over the forecast period.

Looking ahead, the central bank said real GDP growth is expected to recover over the medium term, although at a slower pace than previously projected.

Growth is now forecast at 2.6% for 2026 and 2.9% for 2027, representing a downward revision from the December 2025 outlook.

“Downside risks to the growth outlook include the ongoing war in the Middle East, protracted supply chain disruptions and water supply challenges, especially for uranium mining activities,” the bank said.



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Please forward application to the email: belinda.potgieter@sinomine.na

Closing date: **Friday, 08 May 2026, At 16h00**

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted, applicants, who are not contacted within two weeks after the closing date, should consider their application unsuccessful.

The recruitment process will be administered as prescribed by Namibian Affirmative Action Act.
Women and person with disability are encouraged to apply.

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It's one thing to be looked at, and another to be seen

By Junias Erasmus

In life, many people spend a lot of time trying to be noticed. They want attention, recognition, and approval from others.

In today's world, this desire has become even stronger because of social media, public image, and the pressure to constantly prove one's worth.

Many people want to be looked at. They want others to see their success, their beauty, their achievements, or their lifestyle.

However, there is an important difference between being looked at and being truly seen. To be looked at simply means people notice your presence. They may observe your appearance, your title, your possessions, or your public image.

People may admire your clothes, your job position, your social media posts, or the way you present yourself. But often, this attention is surface level. It focuses on what is visible and external.

To be seen, on the other hand, is much deeper. It means someone recognises your true value beyond appearances. They understand your character, your struggles, your efforts, your dreams, and your purpose.

Being seen is about being understood, respected, and appreciated for who you truly are. Many people are looked at every day but still feel invisible. They may receive compliments, attention, and even public recognition, yet feel deeply misunderstood. Why? Because attention does not automatically create connection. Visibility



Many people want to be looked at. They want others to see their success, their beauty, their achievements, or their lifestyle.

is not the same as value.

A person may be popular but lonely. They may be surrounded by people but still feel unseen. This is because human beings desire more than attention, they desire meaningful recognition.

Everyone wants to feel that their presence matters and that who they are is understood. This lesson is especially important for young people and professionals. In a highly competitive world, it is easy to become obsessed with appearances. Many people spend energy trying to impress others rather than investing in personal growth. They focus on being visible instead of being valuable.

But lasting impact does not come from simply being noticed. It comes from substance. Your qualifications may make people look at you, but your competence makes them see you. Your appearance may attract attention, but your character earns respect. Your title may open doors, but your values determine whether you remain in the room.

This is why personal development matters. Instead of constantly asking, “How do I get people to notice me?” ask yourself, “What do I represent when people do notice me?”

True success is not built on temporary attention. It is built on authenticity, discipline, integrity, and purpose. When you invest in becoming a person of substance, you no longer need to chase attention.

Your value begins to speak for itself. Being seen also requires emotional intelligence. It involves learning to understand yourself and

others. Many people want to be understood, yet do not take time to understand those around them. To truly connect with others, one must practice empathy, listening, and emotional maturity.

In relationships, friendships, and workplaces, people appreciate those who make them feel seen. A good leader sees potential in others. A good friend notices when something is wrong. A caring family member pays attention beyond what is obvious. To see people is to acknowledge their humanity.

In a world full of noise and distraction, truly seeing others has become rare and powerful. It means slowing down enough to notice what is beneath the surface. It means valuing people not only for what they produce, but for who they are.

At the same time, you must also learn to see yourself clearly. Know your worth beyond public validation. Do not measure your value based on likes, followers, titles, or applause. Those things can attract attention, but they do not define identity. Your true worth lies in your principles, your growth, your resilience, and your ability to contribute meaningfully to the lives of others.

It is indeed one thing to be looked at, and another to be seen. Being looked at may satisfy the ego, but being seen nourishes the soul. So do not spend your life merely trying to attract eyes. Build a life, a character, and a purpose worthy of



The **Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN)** herewith invites our stakeholders and the public to a consultative public hearing on the **Notice of Intention to amend the Regulations Prescribing Licence Fees and Regulatory Levies: Communication Act (No. 8 of 2009)** published in Government Gazette No. 8894, under General Notice No. 265, dated 24 April 2026.

EVENT DETAILS:

Date : Tuesday, 05 May 2026
Time : 14h00 - 17h00
Venue : Droombos Vineyard Country Hotel

Participants are required to pre-register before the hearing via the link <https://qr.codes/MOUteQ> or by scanning the QR code.

We look forward to your valued contribution.



SCAN TO RSVP

In a world full of noise and distraction, truly seeing others has become rare and powerful.

meaningful recognition. Focus less on visibility and more on value. Because in the end, what matters most is not how many people looked at you, but how many truly saw you, understood you, and were positively impacted by your presence.

** Junias Erasmus is an Interdisciplinary Scholar,*

Philosopher, and Legal Researcher, with recognised expertise in Artificial Intelligence grounded in a Multidisciplinary foundation in Management Science. He is also a Motivational Speaker. This article is authored in his personal capacity. For enquiries, he may be contacted at Junias99@gmail.com.



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Namibia's financial assets surge as regulators warn of rising global risks

Total assets across Namibia's financial system expanded sharply in 2025, with banking sector assets rising to N\$188.2 billion and non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) surging to N\$552.8 billion, even as regulators warn of growing external risks.

The latest Financial Stability Report by the Bank of Namibia and the Namibia Financial Institutions Supervisory Authority shows a system that is holding firm, but increasingly exposed to global shocks.

Banking sector assets grew by 5.1%, driven by lending, advances and investment securities, while the NBFI sector posted stronger growth of 16.6%, reflecting improved market conditions and investor activity.

"The Namibian financial system remained

stable, sound and resilient, with no major disruptions or disorderly functioning of key financial services despite the moderation in economic growth and ongoing geopolitical uncertainty," the report said.

Banks remain the backbone of stability, supported by strong capital buffers, liquidity and profitability, alongside improving asset quality.

"The banking sector remained well capitalised, profitable and liquid, with notable improvement in asset quality, supported by sufficient provisions and strong capital buffers, while stress test results confirmed the sector's ability to absorb shocks across a range of scenarios," the report said.

But the positive picture is not without pressure points.

Regulators flagged rising global risks,

including geopolitical tensions, volatile commodity prices and tightening financial conditions, all of which could test the system.

“Risks to the macroeconomic environment have increased due to heightened geopolitical tensions, volatile commodity prices and tighter global financial conditions, although most other risk indicators remained relatively stable,” the report said.

At a domestic level, some pressure is easing. Household debt growth slowed significantly, with annual indebtedness declining to 2.1% by the end of 2025, largely due to reduced activity in microlending.

“Annual household indebtedness declined to 2.1% by the end of 2025, driven by a contraction in the microlending segment, reflecting improved repayment trends and reduced pressure on household balance sheets,” the report said.

The NBFIs continue to benefit from improved conditions, including lower inflation, recovering regional equity markets and stronger domestic demand, which have supported savings and insurance uptake.

The property market has also remained resilient, with rising house prices and stable mortgage structures, while the national payments system continues to function without disruption.

Despite the current


stability, regulators are preparing for a more uncertain environment, with additional tools being introduced to strengthen oversight.

“The current macroprudential policy tools, alongside existing microprudential measures and enhanced financial sector surveillance, are considered sufficient for the prevailing environment, with additional frameworks such as the countercyclical capital buffer and loan-to-value tools being operationalised to enhance policy response capacity,” the report said.

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Telecom Namibia: A parastatal under siege

By Lot Ndamanomhata

For more than three decades, Telecom Namibia has been the backbone of the country's communications landscape.

Established in 1992 following the corporatisation of the Directorate of Posts and Telecommunications, the wholly government-owned parastatal was entrusted with connecting a vast, sparsely populated nation to the world.

Today, it stands at a crossroads — battered by a perfect storm of ageing infrastructure, catastrophic regional investment failures, broken billing systems, recurring vandalism and theft, a haemorrhage of skilled talent, and mounting questions about whether some of the damage done to the company has been more than accidental.

This article draws on over a decade of public record, financial data, regulatory findings, and senior leadership statements to piece together how one of Namibia's most strategically important parastatals arrived at this precarious moment — and what it will take to survive.

I. The Infrastructure Crisis: Decades of Deferred Investment

At the heart of Telecom Namibia's struggles lies an infrastructure crisis that has been building quietly for years. The company's core network — its copper cable grid, fibre backbone, base stations, and international links — dates in large part to the 1990s and early 2000s.

While the company invested N\$203 billion in infrastructure since 1992, the



“

Many people want to be looked at. They want others to see their success, their beauty, their achievements, or their lifestyle.

pace and continuity of that investment has been inconsistent, leaving critical nodes of the network vulnerable.

In 2023, Telecom Namibia CEO Dr. Stanley Shanapinda issued a stark public admission. He explained that legacy network failures, power outages, copper cable theft, and battery theft had become major contributors to service deterioration.

Windhoek, the highest-demand area in the country, was also identified as the site of the most intense vandalism — a city simultaneously most dependent on, and most destructive toward, the network that serves it.

"When a cable is cut or vandalized, it affects up to 2000 customers at a time, and it takes many man-hours or days to replace, only for it to be cut again two weeks later." — Dr. Stanley Shanapinda, CEO, Telecom Namibia, 2023

By April 2026, the situation had deteriorated further. A catastrophic two-day outage triggered by the failure of two high-capacity international links to South

Africa left customers across the country offline. The CEO again took personal accountability, describing the company's core routing infrastructure as due for urgent replacement.

He announced that South African connectivity routes had become increasingly prone to fibre breaks, power outages, and vandalism — underscoring how Telecom Namibia's challenges are not confined to its domestic network but are amplified by unreliable cross-border links.

The company has now announced plans to invest more than N\$2.3 billion over coming years to upgrade its national telecommunications infrastructure, including expanding fibre-to-the-home services, strengthening the national fibre backbone, upgrading mobile networks from 3G to 4.5G, and preparing for 5G. A N\$405 million social loan from RMB Namibia has been secured to support this five-year strategy. But critics ask: why has it taken this long, and was the deterioration preventable?

II. The Angola and South Africa Debacle: N\$544 Million Down the Drain

Perhaps no episode in Telecom Namibia's history has been more damaging — or more controversial — than its ill-fated regional expansion

into Angola and South Africa in the mid-2000s. Around 2004, the parastatal made two significant investments that would haunt it for years: a 48% stake in Angola's Mundo Startel and a 12.5% stake in Neotel South Africa. The rationale was sound on paper. With growing telecommunications markets across Southern Africa, Telecom Namibia sought to establish a regional footprint, using these investments as stepping stones into other African markets. The company committed a total of N\$544 million — approximately US\$80 million at prevailing exchange rates — to the two ventures.

The results were devastating. By May 2011, Telecom Namibia had pumped N\$429 million into Neotel alone for its 12.5% stake, with no return. Mundo Startel's December 2010 financial results revealed losses of US\$290,000 before interest, tax, depreciation, and amortisation. Managing Director Frans Ndoroma was left to deliver a candid, if unflattering, assessment of the Angolan venture:

"While entering Angola was a good business case with good [expected] short-term returns, that market has proven difficult politically, culturally, regulatory and logistically. Our business plan has not run according to plan." —

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Frans Ndoroma, MD, Telecom Namibia, 2011

The consequences for the company's finances were severe. Cash reserves collapsed from N\$213 million in September 2006 to just N\$30 million by September 2007 — an 86% decline — primarily to fund these capital projects and regional ventures. With the company's cash cushion evaporated, its ability to invest in domestic infrastructure maintenance and modernisation was severely curtailed. The parallel neglect of the home network during this period laid groundwork for the infrastructure failures that would intensify in subsequent years.

The African telecom environment at the time was punishing. International operators from Asia and Europe were flooding the continent with capital and competitive pricing, displacing less-innovative, under-funded African operators. Telecom South Africa's Telkom had simultaneously lost hundreds of millions in Nigeria. Vodacom Group's Congolese venture was yet to turn a profit. Telecom Namibia was not alone in its misfortune, but it could ill afford the losses.

The most damning postscript came a full decade later. A July 2020 report by the Windhoek Observer confirmed that

Telecom Namibia had still not recovered the millions invested in the failed Mundo Startel deal — more than 16 years after the original investment was made. The Angola money, for all practical purposes, was gone. "More than 16 years on, Telecom Namibia is still to recoup its millions invested in the failed Mundo Startel deal." — Windhoek Observer, 9 July 2020

III. The Billing System Failure: When Technology Betrays Operations

While the investment failures drained Telecom Namibia's capital reserves, an equally corrosive problem was festering within the company's own walls: its billing and operational support systems had become catastrophically misaligned with the network they were supposed to serve. For years, Telecom Namibia operated a patchwork of siloed billing systems — separate platforms for fixed-line, mobile, data, and business services — that did not communicate effectively with each other or with the physical network infrastructure. This fragmentation created a range of problems: billing inaccuracies, poor customer experience, an inability to generate unified financial reporting, and a structural inability to respond quickly to

changing market conditions.

The company's own official communications acknowledged the scale of the problem. Telecom Namibia's legacy systems, it was admitted, made it difficult and expensive to meet current and future market needs and customer expectations. Systems operated in silos, making integration and the achievement of operational synergies effectively impossible.

"The implementation of a converged OSS/BSS system is the first in a line of systems and infrastructure projects to replace obsolete technologies and modernize Telecom Namibia's network." — Telecom Namibia official statement, 2023

The consequences of this systemic failure were not merely operational. Revenue leakage — the loss of billing income due to system gaps, errors, or inability to accurately capture usage — is a well-documented phenomenon in telecoms operating legacy billing platforms. For a company already under financial pressure from failed investments and declining landline revenues, every dollar of unbilled or incorrectly billed service represented compounded damage.

It was only in June 2023 that Telecom Namibia signed a N\$327 million contract with Spanish technology company SATEC to replace its legacy billing architecture with a single, cloud-native, converged OSS/BSS (Operations Support Systems/Business Support Systems) platform. A second major agreement followed in November 2023, with Huawei, for a N\$100 million fixed-mobile convergence core network. These were described as the first steps in a turnaround strategy under the company's Integrated Strategic Business Plan 2027. As late as April 2026, CEO Shanapinda was still describing OSS/BSS modernisation

as an accelerating priority meaning the replacement project remained incomplete more than two years after signing.

The landline revenue trajectory illustrates the cumulative damage. Telecom Namibia, which holds the monopoly on landline access in Namibia, saw landline subscriptions decline by approximately 40% in a single year between 2021 and June 2022. The Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia's data confirmed that fixed voice revenues experienced a sustained downward trend as customers migrated to mobile and Voice-over-Internet-Protocol services. A billing system that could not flexibly package, price, or retain customers was poorly equipped to arrest this decline.

IV. The Human Capital Crisis: Investment in People, Lost to Retrenchments

Behind every network node, billing platform, and customer interaction is a trained human being. Telecom Namibia's workforce history reflects the broader dysfunction of the organisation — a cycle of investment in people, followed by financial pressure, retrenchments, and the irreplaceable loss of institutional knowledge.

At its peak, the company employed 1,300 people. The telecoms sector is technically demanding: engineers trained to manage fibre optic routes, VSAT terminal networks, and increasingly complex mobile core systems represent years of investment and accumulated expertise. When financial pressure precipitated retrenchments, it was not merely headcount that was lost — it was the operational memory of the organisation.

Reports from the New Era confirmed

that Telecom Namibia retrenchments were directly linked to falls in landline revenue, with the company forced to reduce its workforce as fixed-line income dried up. President Hifikepunye Pohamba had explicitly warned Telecom leadership as far back as 2007 not to resort to retrenchment as the answer to financial problems — a warning that went only partially heeded in subsequent years.

The pattern mirrors a broader African tech sector dynamic. Research on layoffs in Africa's IT industry has documented that retrenchments disproportionately affect experienced mid-career professionals and reduce the overall institutional competency of organisations. For a parastatal like Telecom Namibia — which cannot easily compete with the private sector on remuneration to attract replacement talent — each wave of retrenchments represented a permanent capability loss. By 2023, the new CEO had acknowledged the skills gap as a priority, committing to improve workforce skills and bring in interns from higher learning institutions. But rebuilding the institutional knowledge lost through years of retrenchments and attrition cannot be achieved in a single budget cycle.

The dissolution of the parent holding company, Namibia Post and Telecommunications Holdings (NPTH), in late 2024 added further human capital complexity. Twenty-four NPTH employees found themselves in legal limbo as Cabinet's decision to dismantle the entity left their futures uncertain, with no clear path to integration into subsidiary companies Telecom Namibia, NamPost, or MTC.

V. The Sabotage Question: Copper Theft, Cable Cutting — or Something More?

Of all the challenges facing Telecom Namibia, perhaps the most disturbing is the question of deliberate sabotage. Senior management has repeatedly used the word — and the evidence accumulated over several years is difficult to dismiss.

Copper cable theft is the most visible form of infrastructure sabotage. Driven by the high scrap value of copper, criminal networks have repeatedly targeted Telecom Namibia's underground cable infrastructure. The scale is extraordinary: a single incident can affect up to 2,000 customers, and replacement takes days — only for the new cable to be cut again within weeks. Windhoek has been identified as the worst-affected area, with manholes repeatedly targeted.

By November 2023, the company had escalated to the highest levels of engagement. Management publicly urged the public to report suspicious behaviour near Telecom Namibia manholes. The company engaged the Namibian Police (NamPol) to accelerate prevention efforts and began lobbying lawmakers to classify copper theft and infrastructure sabotage as a serious criminal offence, recognising that existing legal deterrents were inadequate.

"We again urge all to please report any suspicious behaviour regarding copper cable theft and the sabotage of our network, particularly around Telecom Namibia's manholes. We have engaged lawmakers to classify copper theft and sabotage as a serious offence to curb and eliminate the constant sabotage of our network." — Telecom Namibia Management, November 2023

The company's April 2026 outage brought fresh urgency to these concerns. CEO Shanapinda specifically flagged misinformation and threats directed at the company during the outage period,

warning that intimidation and incitement to harm were illegal. He noted that South African international routes had become prone not only to fibre breaks and power outages, but to vandalism — suggesting coordinated or systematic targeting of critical infrastructure.

The sabotage question extends beyond opportunistic copper theft. Critical infrastructure targeting whether for criminal profit, competitive advantage, or political motivation is a recognised threat in the African telecom landscape. Nigeria's National Communications Commission documented over 50,000 cases of destruction of fibre optic cables in just five years, with fibre infrastructure vandalism contributing to more than 30% of all reported network outage incidents. Namibia, with a smaller network and a single dominant fixed-line provider, is structurally more vulnerable to such attacks.

Whether Telecom Namibia's infrastructure attacks represent purely

opportunistic criminal activity, competitive sabotage, or something more organised remains under investigation. What is clear is that the company's response — increased security, police engagement, and legislative lobbying has not yet succeeded in breaking the cycle. Each outage costs millions in repairs, erodes customer trust, and forces the company to deploy scarce capital on restoration rather than expansion.

The combination of financial vulnerability created by the Angola and South Africa investment failures, the erosion of infrastructure through both neglect and vandalism, and the loss of skilled personnel creates an organisation that is systemically weakened and therefore more susceptible to each subsequent attack, technical or otherwise. Whether any of this deterioration was by design, by negligence, or by misfortune is a question that Namibian authorities and the Telecom Namibia board may need to examine with greater rigour than they have to date.



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VI. The Road Ahead: Reform, Resilience, or Continued Decline?

Telecom Namibia is not without hope. The company recorded a modest profit in 2021, with return on equity of 6.3%. Broadband subscriptions grew 14% in 2020. Data revenue is rising as Namibians embrace digital services. The OSS/BSS modernisation, fixed-mobile convergence investment, and the N\$2.3 billion infrastructure upgrade programme represent a serious attempt at institutional renewal.

But the structural challenges are profound. The company must simultaneously replace ageing infrastructure, complete a complex billing platform migration, rebuild technical talent, defend its network against persistent physical sabotage, and compete against a mobile-first market in which MTC holds 73% of all radio access network sites compared to Telecom Namibia's 24%.

The lessons of the Angola and South Africa ventures are clear: strategic expansion without adequate risk assessment, market intelligence, and financial buffers is catastrophic. The cash reserves that evaporated into those failed ventures were the same reserves that might have funded timely infrastructure upgrades and billing system modernisation — investments that, had they been made earlier, might have averted some of the crises that followed.

What Telecom Namibia requires now is not simply capital, though capital is urgently needed but a governance framework that ensures strategic decisions are rigorously tested, that human capital is valued as a strategic asset rather than a cost to be cut, that infrastructure investment is continuous rather than sporadic, and that physical sabotage of the national communications network is treated with the seriousness it deserves as an attack on critical national infrastructure.

For a country of Namibia's size and ambition, reliable telecommunications is not optional. It is the nervous system of economic development, education, healthcare, and governance. Telecom Namibia's survival and renewal is therefore not merely a corporate matter, it is a national imperative. It is our shared responsibility to restore Telecom Namibia to a strong, service-driven and financially sustainable institution, one that places people at the centre of its mandate. Unlike service providers that prioritise profit over access, Telecom Namibia must reaffirm its role in ensuring that essential services reach all citizens first, while remaining efficient, competitive, and profitable in a balanced and responsible way.

****Lot Ndamanomhata is from Ekoka. This article reflects his views and write entirely in his personal capacity.***

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FNB Namibia appoints Bolle Hans as Head of Public Sector Banking

FNB Namibia has appointed Bolle Hans as Head of Public Sector Banking within its commercial division, effective 1 May 2026, as the bank strengthens its focus on government and institutional clients.

Hans brings more than 31 years of banking experience across retail, corporate and private banking, all within the FirstRand Namibia Group. He is widely recognised for his relationships across the public and private sectors, as well as with non-governmental organisations and the broader business community.

FNB Namibia Commercial Chief Executive Officer Philip Chapman said the appointment forms part of a broader strategy to reposition the bank's commercial segment for growth.

“Public Sector Banking is a strategic priority for our business, and appointing dedicated leadership in this area is critical. Bolle brings strong sector insight, proven leadership and a clear focus on client impact, which will strengthen our ability to support public sector clients and the wider economy,” Chapman said.

Hans has previously played a central role in shaping public sector strategies within the FirstRand Group, working across both RMB and FNB. Most recently, he served in the ultra-high net worth private banking segment, where he was responsible for client growth and relationship management.

In his new role, he will oversee a portfolio that includes public sector institutions and non-governmental organisations, with a focus on strengthening client relationships, improving service delivery and identifying growth opportunities.

Reflecting on his appointment, Hans



said: “Each day presents an opportunity to make a meaningful difference in our clients’ businesses. I look forward to building on existing partnerships and collaborating with stakeholders to deliver impactful, sustainable solutions that support national development priorities.”

Chapman said Hans’s experience across both public and private sector banking would support stronger integration across the business.

“A delivery-focused leader with a strong service ethic, I am confident that Bolle’s extensive experience and deep understanding of both the public and private sector landscapes will further strengthen FNB Namibia’s impact and partnerships,” he said.

Hans holds executive development qualifications from the University of Stellenbosch Business School, including the Leadership Development Programme and Senior Management Development Programme, and is also an alumnus of the African Leadership Institute.



B360 Namibia launches initiative to improve job readiness among young Namibians

B360 Namibia has launched efforts to address youth unemployment by focusing on improving the work-readiness of young Namibians, amid growing concern over the gap between qualifications and employability.

The organisation is conducting a situation analysis to assess graduate employability and youth unemployment, with a focus on soft skills gaps, high school attrition rates and the time it takes graduates to find jobs.

Country Manager Nico Smit said the research will inform new programmes and

refine existing interventions, including the Career Starter Week (CSW).

“We are undertaking this situation analysis so that we can gain an informed view of the situation as it relates to youth unemployment in Namibia,” Smit said.

He said several persistent challenges continue to undermine young jobseekers.

“Often young people do not pay attention to detail and make errors that could have been easily avoided. They lack interview skills, often not being properly prepared and having done very little research for

the role and on the organisation. A further challenge is English language skills, both written and spoken, especially professional business communication. In many instances young graduates lack basic IT skills, not being proficient in MS Office and lacking word processing and IT skills,” he said.

B360 Namibia’s flagship programme, the Career Starter Week, is a five-day workshop designed to improve employability through practical training.

The programme, developed by B360 education partnerships, was first piloted at the Namibia University of Science and Technology in 2017.

More than 435 Namibians have participated in the workshop to date, with a further 70 completing the virtual Career Starter Course.

Smit said the workshop covers job applications, interview skills, teamwork, presentation skills, professional communication, time management, problem-solving, financial planning, professionalism, adaptability and entrepreneurship.

“The CSW takes a very practical and hands-on approach. Participants are challenged to engage with the material, think critically, practise and apply, and then propose a solution,” he said.

B360 Namibia plans to host its first independently organised CSW workshops in October 2026 in Windhoek, targeting unemployed university graduates.

“B360 Namibia will host two CSW workshops in October

2026. Two Swiss-based professionals will travel to Namibia for overall content delivery and we have already confirmed some Namibian professionals for participation in content delivery at this workshop,” Smit said.

The organisation said it also plans to expand the workshops beyond Windhoek, where demand is expected to be high.

In addition, B360 Namibia is developing a mentorship programme aimed at pairing final-year students and unemployed graduates with experienced professionals.

Through its training programmes and research, the organisation aims to improve employability and support young Namibians in transitioning into the labour market.

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Namibia rolls out national cyber incident guidelines

The Namibia Cyber Security Incident Response Team has launched the National Cybersecurity Incident Management Guidelines 2026, setting out how institutions should detect, report and respond to cyber threats as digital risks rise across the economy.

The guidelines were unveiled by NAM-CSIRT, which is housed within the Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia.

Acting CRAN Chief Executive Officer Elton Witbooi said Namibia can no longer take a fragmented approach to cybersecurity.

“Our cybersecurity landscape demands a proactive and coordinated approach. These guidelines are a vital step towards safeguarding our critical infrastructure and fostering trust in Namibia’s digital ecosystem,” he said.

The framework sets out processes for incident detection, reporting, analysis and response, and aligns with international standards such as ISO/IEC 27001 and the National Institute of Standards and Technology cybersecurity framework.

Witbooi said the focus is on risk-based strategies, improved skills and stronger awareness.

“Cybersecurity is not just a technical challenge but a strategic imperative for national security and economic stability,” he said.

Information and Communication Technology Minister Emma Theofelus said the guidelines are central to protecting Namibia’s digital economy.

“These guidelines exemplify our dedication to creating a safe digital space for all Namibians. It is crucial that all sectors align their efforts and adhere to



these standards to protect our citizens and vital services,” she said.

The launch comes as Namibia’s reliance on digital systems deepens across sectors, increasing exposure to cyber threats and raising the need for coordinated national responses.

NAM-CSIRT said the guidelines will be continuously reviewed to ensure Namibia keeps pace with evolving cyber risks.

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