

PRESS RELEASE

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Ministerial Response to Alleged Photography of Naked Minors by Tourist at Grashoek Living Museum

The Ministry has noted with deep concern the recent incident involving a British tourist arrested for allegedly fondling minors at the Grashoek Living Museum in Tsumkwe West area, Otjozondjupa region. The Ministry condemns this act and regards it as a violation of children's rights to privacy, dignity, and protection.

The act is not only deeply disrespectful to the cultural heritage of the San community, but it also constitutes a serious violation of Namibia's laws regarding the protection of minors and goes against the requisite ethical conduct while engaging with indigenous communities.

The Ministry stands by the protection and safeguarding of the children as articulated in Article 8 of the Namibian Constitution, dealing with "Respect for human dignity". It is unacceptable for any visitor, foreign or local, to exploit or objectify indigenous communities or their children for any purpose, including photography. Respect for human dignity and cultural sensitivity must be central to all tourism activities in our country.

We also urge tour operators, guides, and visitors to familiarize themselves with and adhere to responsible tourism guidelines, including ethical conduct when engaging with local communities.

Moreover, tourism in Namibia must serve to promote cultural understanding, mutual respect, and socio-economic development, not to exploit or objectify our indigenous communities. The Ministry would like to urge all Namibians to report such inhumane acts to relevant authorities, as such acts cannot be tolerated. We applaud the Namibian Police for the swift action in attending to the matter, and we are confident that the law will take its course.

The Ministry remains committed to upholding the rights and welfare of all communities and will continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure that tourism activities do not compromise the integrity of our people.

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