

# Facts about sex work & violence in Namibia.



**SEX WORKERS IN NAMIBIA FACE UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF VIOLENCE, STIGMA, DISCRIMINATION AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. IT PUTS THEM IN SITUATIONS THAT MAKE THEM CONSIDERABLY MORE VULNERABLE TO HIV/AIDS. SUPPORTIVE LAWS AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES, CARE AND SUPPORT ARE NEEDED TO SECURE THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF SEX WORKERS.**

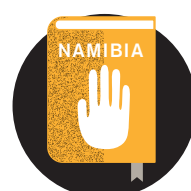
## What the law says:

It is illegal to solicit clients, to sell sex in a public space and keep a brothel. Bylaws on public disorder and loitering are used to prosecute sex workers.



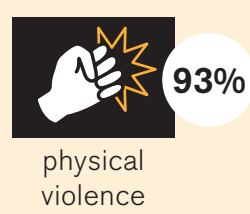
## Criminalisation:

Sex workers who operate in settings where prostitution is criminalised face increased risk of violence, police abuse and lack of access to health care and the justice system.



# 94% of the sex workers in Namibia experienced violence in the past year

### Sorts of violence

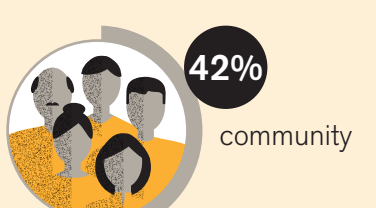
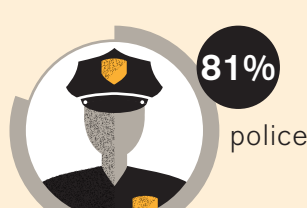
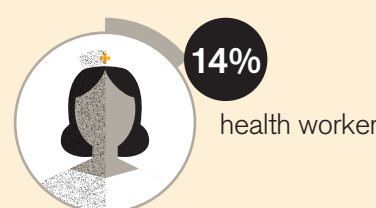
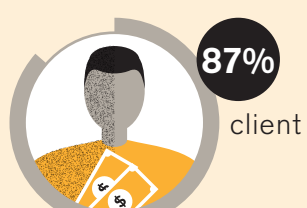


### Risk factors



*“He picked me up, but he didn’t have money. So after the sex he dumped me naked at the Game Reserve. I had to make myself a skirt and top from a plastic bag and walk back all the way to town.”*

### Who are the perpetrators?



*“If you want me to let you go, if you want me to help, you first have to have sex with me.”*

# 81% of the sex workers experienced violence by the police upon arrest in the past year

### What type of violence are we talking about?



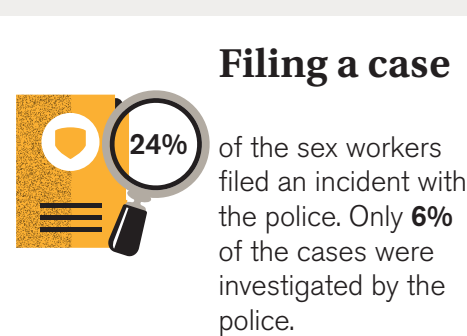
### Hard facts

To prevent arrest, **74%** of the sex workers had **sex with a police officer** and **76%** **paid bribes** to the police.

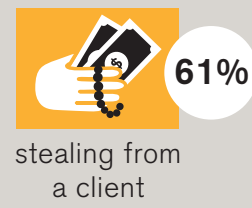


### Arrest

**65%** of the sex workers were **arrested** last year. On average they were arrested twice and most of them were detained for **24 hours** per arrest.



### Reasons for arrest



### The relationship with the police is double-sided

*“Sometimes you have police friends. You meet in a club and he likes you or he can be a client. When you’re in trouble you can call him for assistance.”*

## There is a strong correlation between HIV and violence

**In other words: sex workers who face violence are at higher risk of hiv infection and/or sex workers who are hiv positive face higher risk of violence.**

### HIV prevalence

56% is HIV negative



19% is HIV positive

11% does not want to disclose status

14% has never been tested

### At the clinic



90%

of the sex workers has been yelled at and/or stigmatised by a health worker in the past twelve months.

### Access to regular HIV medication

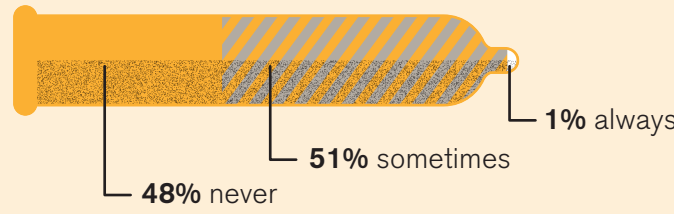
Of those who indicated to be HIV positive:

68% receives regular treatment



32% gets no regular treatment

### Condom use while selling sex:



*“I can’t go to the health clinic because of the stigma I face there. If I’m having problems or an STI I go to my traditional healer.”*

## Recommendations:

- 1 Decriminalise sex work and adopt supportive laws, policies and legislation for sex workers
- 2 Train and sensitise police and foster police accountability
- 3 Protect, support and empower sex workers

### Hands Off! Reduction of violence against sex workers

The Hands Off! programme, coordinated by Aids Fonds, works on the reduction of violence against sex workers in Southern Africa through prevention, care and support. The programme works with sex worker-led groups, law enforcement, health and support services, legal centres and NGOs working on human rights.

### Rights not Rescue Trust

Rights not Rescue Trust Namibia is a sex worker-led organisation, which promotes access to health, rights, education and safety for sex workers in Namibia. The organisation is based in Windhoek.

Read the full report or more about Hands Off! at [www.aidsfonds.nl/handsoff](http://www.aidsfonds.nl/handsoff)

