

Column Corruption – A social disease • Part 121

# Reducing excessive executive power



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Namibia has an executive presidential system based on the United States of America's presidential system.

Our president has much more power than America's or South Africa's president. Such excessive power can be abused because "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts totally", as has been proven over centuries. Increasing executive power at the expense of legislative and judicial power is a global trend. Governments interfere increasingly in the individual rights of citizens in the name of national security to "protect" citizens from so-called conspiracies and terrorism. Conspiracies and terrorism is also a smokescreen to spy on citizens and to control their movements as is the case in the USA, China and Russia.

Reducing excessive executive power is critical to reduce opportunities for corruption. If citizen and voters'

support is swinging towards political parties that are politically committed to reduce corruption, a critical mass could be able to challenge the abuse of excessive executive power.

Such excessive powers in Namibia include the appointment of several high-ranking officials by the President, e.g. the Chief of the Defence Force and Police, the Attorney-General and Prosecutor-General, the Ombudsman, the Director-General of the Anti-Corruption Commission and National Planning Commission, all members of the Public Service Commission, all judges of the High and Supreme Court, all Regional Governors (previously elected by Regional Councils) and eight Members of Parliament.

## Centralisation vs decentralisation

Since Independence we have seen an increase in the centralisation

of power (and an increase in the domination of the legislative and judiciary by the executive) that is in stark contrast with the decentralisation policy and the required delegation of financial and administrative authority to the 14 regions.

All Presidential appointments should be parliamentary appointments to prevent abuse of power. Another constitutional change should be that after presidential commissions have submitted their reports to the President he/she must within a reasonable time, e.g. two months, release these for parliamentary and public consumption and assessment. The Constitution should be amended so that the President is not above the law during his/her term in office, but can be prosecuted for criminal offences as is the case in the Republic of South Africa.

The message should be clear: no person or institution should have absolute or excessive and/or unchecked powers that can be abused and/or condoned. Preventing opportunities for corruption is better than dealing with its destructive consequences. Creating an accountable executive system with checks and balances where no position and/or institution has absolute power is essential to prevent corruption.

## References

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