

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
CHAIRPERSON, DR PAMELA TOWELA SAMBO, ON THE HUMAN  
RIGHTS COMPLAINTS RECEIVED AND ADDRESSED DURING THE  
YEAR 2024 ON 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025, GRAND PALACE HOTEL,  
LUSAKA**

- The Vice-Chairperson and Commissioners of the Human Rights Commission
- The Director-General and Senior Management of the Human Rights Commission
- Members of the Press

I wish to welcome you all to this end of 2024 Press Briefing on the Human Rights Commission core mandate of receiving and investigating complaints of human rights violations and abuses.

I will also take this opportunity to share the transformative developments that have taken place relating to the structure and mandate of the Commission, which will certainly have a significant bearing on the work of the Commission in 2025 and beyond.

While it is not realistic to project a precise number of complaints of human rights violations and abuses at the beginning of the year, the Commission indicates an estimate of the minimum number of complaints targeted for resolution every year.

In the year 2024, the Commission had targeted to investigate a minimum total number of 720 complaints of human rights violations and abuses as opposed to the target of 600 complaints that was estimated for the year 2023. This means that the Commission had set for itself, a higher target for 2024 than for 2023. The percentage increment of targeted cases for 2024 compared to 2023 was 20%. This approach was taken in order to enhance the resolution rate of human rights concerns within the Commission.

By the end of 2024, the Commission had received about 2,200 complaints over a wide range of human rights violations and abuses. Out of these cases, 1,700 complaints were against State Actors, mainly Law Enforcement Agencies, representing 77% of complaints of alleged human rights violations by State Actors. A total of 500 complaints representing 23% were against Non-State Actors such as employers in the private sector.

The majority of complaints of alleged human rights violations against State Actors related to over-detention, prolonged pre-trial detention and maladministration of justice. The majority of human rights complaints against Non-State Actors related to Labour and Employment related rights.

For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2024, the Commission successfully investigated and resolved a total of 1,300 complaints, representing 59% of the 2,200 complaints received.

A total number of 160 complaints were referred to other institutions such as the Police Public Complaints Commission and the Labour Commissioner that had direct jurisdiction to deal with such cases while 86 cases were either not admitted or discontinued owing to lack of jurisdiction, insufficient evidence.

A total number of 654 cases, representing 29% of the 2,200 complaints received are still undergoing investigations

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

During the year 2024, the mandate and powers of the Commission were enhanced through the repeal of the Human Rights Commission Act No 39 of 1996, which was replaced with the newly enacted Human Rights Commission Act No. 4 of 2024.

Further, the Commission has been granted quasi-judicial powers under the Access Information Act, No. 24 of 2023 which empowers the Commission to receive, hear and determine appeals against decisions of information holders.

I am glad to inform the nation through the media that during the year under review, the Commission working together with the Ministry of Information and Media, Ministry of Justice and the Judiciary, and in consultation with various stakeholders, completed the development of Guidelines for the better carrying out of the access to information mandate in line with section 38 of the ATI Act.

The Commission will publish these Guidelines as soon as they are formally adopted. The publication will be made in the Government Gazette and in at least one daily newspaper of general circulation in the country or any other electronic media that the Commission may determine in accordance with section 38(3) of the ATI Act.

The Commission is aware that the Judiciary is finalising the Rules while the Ministry of Information and Media is working on the Regulations in accordance with sections 39 and 40 of the ATI Act. Once the Guidelines, the Rules and the Regulations have been issued, the implementation of the ATI Act will be better guided and fully operationalized for the Commission to provide oversight mandate.

In a related capacity building of the Commission, the Government has granted Treasury Authority to the Commission to employ 16 additional members of staff in order to enhance its oversight role on the implementation of the ATI Law. For this, the Commission is indebted to the Government.

In line with its advisory mandate, the Commission wishes to advise all information holders, which means public or private entities, to proactively publish information as a matter of an obligation as stipulated under section 3 of the Act in order to enhance the enjoyment of the right to access information in the country. The Commission wishes to take this opportunity to urge the Government and other stakeholders to address the challenges facing the justice delivery system in a more holistic and sustainable manner. This will ensure that focus is not only on selected cases of individuals, when in fact many of our ordinary citizens are facing deprivation of human rights and access to justice on account of historical systemic failures within the criminal justice delivery process in the country.

In conclusion, notwithstanding the highlighted historical challenges hampering effective delivery of justice, the Commission wishes to acknowledge the cordial collaboration and support it continues to receive from various institutions in the delivery of justice such as the National Prosecutions Authority and the Judiciary in redressing the human rights situation.

The Commission will continue with its internal reforms and restructuring in order to accelerate the execution of its constitutional and legislative mandate of promoting and protecting human rights and freedoms for all. In the long run, this will improve the human rights environment and governance in Zambia.

I thank you.