



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

## MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

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### MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE REPORT

#### Suspected Food Poisoning at Kayova Village, Kavango East Region

*Windhoek*- On 27 May 2023, the Ministry of Health and Social Services was notified of an incident of suspected food poisoning at Kayova Village, Nyangana District in Kavango East. It is reported that eighteen (18) members of a household, ranging in age from (two) 2 to thirty-three (33) years consumed a poisonous/toxic porridge made with pearl millet mahangu flour and an added dried and pounded fermented sediment from home-made beverage/beer, locally known as *mundever*.

The affected seventeen (17) members of the household presented at Nyangana District Hospital, Kavango East on 27 May 2023, with signs and symptoms of food poisoning. Due to their critical illness, thirteen (13) people were referred to Rundu Intermediate Hospital.

Unfortunately, nine (9) persons demised. Two (2) of them passed away at Nyangana District Hospital and seven (7) at Rundu Intermediate Hospital. Those who succumbed are: a sixteen (16)-year-old male, a thirteen (13) year-old male, a twelve (12)-year-old female, a nine (9)-year-old male, three (3) six (6)-year-old females, a three (3)-year-old female and a two (2)-year-old male. At the time of this Press Release, eight (8) people remain hospitalized. Six (6) at Rundu Intermediate Hospital, of whom five (5) are reported to be in critical condition; and two (2) at Nyangana District Hospital, in a stable condition.

All the patients are being monitored closely. Additional blood samples were also taken for alcohol poisoning testing.

The Ministry of Health and Social Services has deployed a team of social workers to provide psychosocial support and counseling to the bereaved family. Officials from the Ministry will provide health education to members of the community on food

preparation practices and the dangers of mixing food with potentially contaminated materials.

The Ministry urges members of the public to take the following precautions to avoid food poisoning:

- Always wash pots and other cooking tools with clean water.
- Store food in a safe place to prevent access by rodents and other vermin.
- Households are urged to maintain general cleanliness and personal hygiene.
- Keep raw and cooked foods separate
- It is illegal to serve alcoholic products to children under the age of 18 years.
- Report any suspected food poisoning
- Seek medical attention immediately when suspecting food poisoning to health authorities.

The Ministry of Health and Social Services herewith conveys our deepest sympathy and condolences to the bereaved family.

Issued by:



**Ben Nangombe**  
**Executive Director**

