



MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM

**PRESS STATEMENT BY HON. INDILENI DANIEL, MP
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM**

**ON WILDFIRES IN ETOSHA NATIONAL PARK AND
SURROUNDING AREAS Y**

02 OCTOBER 2025, 10H00

WINDHOEK, KHOMAS REGION

Members of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

As previously communicated, the wildfire began on Monday, 22 September 2025, and is believed to have originated from charcoal production activities on a commercial farm bordering the south-western section of Etosha National Park.

Since the outbreak, the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism has mobilized all available resources to contain the fire. However, strong winds and an abundance of dry vegetation have made containment efforts extremely challenging. The fire spread rapidly within the park and to areas north of Etosha, affecting parts of the Omusati and Oshana Regions. Additionally, a separate fire was reported in the Ombika block of the park on 28 September 2025.

I have personally visited the affected areas, and the Secretary to the Cabinet has convened daily meetings of the National Disaster Risk Management Committee to coordinate our response. The Regional Governors of Omusati and Oshana have played a vital role, actively sharing information and mobilizing local resources to support firefighting efforts.

To date, approximately Eight hundred and fifty-three thousand nine hundred and forty-six **(853,946) hectares**, representing **38% of Etosha**

National Park, have been affected. With the fires inside the park now contained and extinguished, as of yesterday, 01 October 2025, we have deployed three veterinarians to assess and care for any injured wildlife.

Tragically, one elephant, six springboks, and three duikers have been confirmed dead to date. We are closely monitoring water points and key animal corridors for signs of distress, and we urge all visitors to report sightings of injured animals to park management for immediate response.

We are aware of circulating images, particularly of a burnt elephant, that cannot be linked to the confirmed casualty or tracked within the park. Our teams continue to investigate. I appeal to the public to share only verified information. While we welcome support and concern, spreading unverified or misleading content under the guise of care can cause unnecessary alarm and hinder our efforts.

Meanwhile, fires in surrounding areas, including Ombonde, Amarika, Onkaanka, Ekeeholong, Onambangie Yomilunga, and adjacent areas near Amarika in Omusati Region, which remained active as of yesterday, 01 October 2025, have now been successfully extinguished.

Outside Etosha National Park, a new active fire was discovered during the night in the Otoongo area, situated between the Okahao and Ruacana constituencies, remains active. A combined team from the

Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, the Namibian Defence Force (NDF), and local communities continues to work tirelessly to contain and extinguish the blaze.

An assessment is currently underway to determine the full extent of the damage, including wildlife casualties, as we continue to take stock of the situation. This process will take several days and will be verified by senior Ministry officials. As part of this, we are also reviewing the implementation of the **Fire Management Strategy for Protected Areas** to identify any gaps and consider necessary corrective actions.

While this strategy provides a framework for managing veld fires, its full execution requires significant investment in protective gear, firefighting equipment, and communication tools.

Let me take this opportunity to clarify: Etosha National Park has never been closed. It remains fully open to visitors and tourists. While there has been speculation suggesting otherwise, we have only issued advisories urging visitors to remain vigilant and take necessary safety precautions during their stay. These measures are in place to ensure the wellbeing of both guests and wildlife in light of recent fire activity.

Finally, I wish to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all Offices, Ministries, and Agencies, including the Namibian Defence Force and the Namibian Police Force, as well as Regional Councils, private sector

partners, community members, farmers, and all friends of Park who came from every corner of the country.

Your dedication, solidarity, and unwavering support have been instrumental in our progress and in the successful containment of the wildfire. This collective effort reflects the true spirit of unity and resilience that defines us as a nation

I thank you whole-heartedly!