



**STATEMENT BY
HER EXCELLENCY DR NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA ON THE WILDFIRES IN
ETOSHA NATIONAL PARK AND SURROUNDING AREAS,
DELIVERED BY THE
RIGHT HON DR TJITUNGA ELIJAH NGURARE,
PRIME MINISTER**

30 SEPTEMBER 2025

Hon. Speaker,

Hon. Members,

1.

I rise to deliver a statement on behalf of Her Excellency Dr. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, President of the Republic of Namibia, on the wildfire situation in the Etosha National Park and the surrounding areas.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia is duly informed of and continues to receive update reports on the wildfire that broke out on the evening of Monday, 22 September 2025, in the Etosha National Park and which was brought under control. Government is further informed that another fire started on 24 September 2025, which have spread into the communal areas of Omusati and Oshana Regions, particularly the Constituencies of Uuvudhiya, Otamanzi and Ruacana respectively. The Government remains greatly concerned about the devastating impact of this fire on the livelihood of the affected communities, the environment and the tourism industry. We will put measures in place to ensure that our response time and effectiveness in this regard is revised and enhanced.

2.

The scale and urgency of this matter have required Government to respond in an integrated and comprehensive manner. Our immediate priorities are to minimise damage to the Etosha National Park, safeguard its role in biodiversity conservation and tourism, and protect the livelihoods and property of farmers and rural communities.

Although the fire has caused significant damage to grazing land within the Park and the surrounding areas, I am relieved to report that no human casualty has been recorded to date. An on-the-ground assessment will soon be undertaken to determine the extent of wildlife losses as well as the cause of the fire. Given that the Etosha National Park is Namibia's number one tourist destination and a vital national heritage, Government is committed to doing everything possible to protect it from the devastating effects of wildfires.

In this regard, targeted, coordinated response interventions and preventive measures have been deployed. A total of three hundred and eleven (311) members of the Namibian Defence Force has been dispatched to the Etosha National Park to join one hundred and fifty (150) officials from the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism in fighting the fire. I am pleased to report that the situation inside the park has largely been brought under control, with most of the fire fronts contained.

3.

Outside the park, one hundred and thirty-six (136) NDF members are already deployed in Omusati and Oshana Regions, with an additional ninety (90) to be deployed today. They are working alongside forty-five (45) officials from the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism. Progress has been made, and I am thankful to report to this August House that all fires have been extinguished inside and outside the Park.

Some affected areas have been severely damaged, but as I speak the fires are no longer active and all areas are being closely monitored. As of 14:00 today the areas affected outside the Park are: Ombonde area and there are 45 NDF, MEFT members and community members dispatched to go and assist. Another fire is detected at Onoolongo and Onambadje, which is a small fire and is being monitored accordingly. In terms Etosha National Park, one active fire is observed and the team is dispatched to attend to it.

This August House is further informed that three (3) operational bases have been established by NDF in the Fire Fighting Operation in Etosha National Park and the Surrounding areas namely:

1. Omutambogwomawe

We have deployed 60 personnel who were already at the Namibian Army School of Artillery (NASA), Oluno. This operational Base will be responsible for Uutsathima, Onamatanga and the surrounding areas.

2. Amarika

There are 35 personnel already in place, covering the central area, which includes Okeeholongo, Onambandje, Okolumono, Akutsima, Ongolongele, litapa, and the surrounding areas.

3. Onoolongo

25 personnel from Air Force, who are tasked with operations in Uuvudhiya and the nearby areas. Additionally, we have 70 personnel on standby at 263 Battalion Headquarters, Oshakati ready to assist any Operational Base as needed. The operation is supported by three (3) trucks, two (2) Caspers and an administrative vehicle designated for resupply purposes. Additionally, we have a 15,000 litres water bowser sourced from Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform, Department Forestry of MEFT.

Government has mobilised resources from the Office of the Prime Minister; the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism; the Game Product Trust Fund; and various line Ministries, including Defence and Veterans Affairs, Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform, Finance, and Health and Social Services, as well as the Omusati and Oshana Regional Councils and the farming community around Etosha.

We have deployed aerial support, including helicopters, and have reinforced firebreaks through grading and cut-lines. Firefighting teams on the ground are being supplied with food, equipment, and medical support, including a mobile clinic for emergencies and exhaustion cases.

4.

The fight has not been without challenges. Strong winds, dry vegetation, and occasional vehicle breakdowns have complicated containment efforts. Nevertheless, the National Disaster Risk Management Committee continues to convene daily meetings to ensure effective coordination, provide necessary support, and update the nation. In parallel, the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism has established a situation room to supply real-time information on fire-fighting operations.

5.

Disasters strike when they are least expected, their velocity is hard to stop immediately, and the ghastly consequences beyond comprehension. But nature is always pregnant with such painful eventualities. It is in times of devastating disasters like these that one witness the seamless resilience of a nation, parking its political and social differences and bouncing back as one to confront head-on what threatens its national interest. Etosha National Park is one of those life-threatening blood arteries to our tourism industry. We can't afford to see it going up in flames. No resources should be spared to save such blood arteries.

I therefore wholeheartedly take off my hat for all those men and women in uniform, for all those civilians who have risked their precious lives since the fires broke out to be at the forefront of putting out those fires. Your efforts and personal sacrifices have not gone unnoticed. You deserve our boundless respect and honour. As Head of State, I thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

We equally commend the private sector, neighbouring farmers, surrounding communities, and Non-Governmental Organizations and Public Enterprises who have joined

Government in this effort. Their solidarity and resilience have strengthened our national response.

6.

I want to assure the Namibian people that Government will continue to do all within its power to bring these fires under control as a matter of priority. I urge the nation to remain calm and united as we confront this urgent matter together.

I thank you.