



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM

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OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

(PRESS STATEMENT)

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UPDATE OF WILDFIRE IN ETOSHA NATIONAL PARK

The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) wishes to inform the public about the ongoing wildfire incidents affecting Etosha National Park (ENP) and nearby communities in the Omusati and Oshana Regions. In collaboration with the Namibian Defence Force (NDF), Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL), regional councils, local communities, and private partners, the Ministry continues to coordinate extensive efforts to contain and manage the fires.

The wildfires, which began on 22 September 2025 in the south-western part of the park due to suspected charcoal production activities on bordering commercial farms, have since spread to the western, central, and southern zones of ENP. The most affected areas include Dolomite (north and south), Okatutu, Renostervlei, Jackalswater, Halali, and the area between Olifantbad and Halali.

Fires have also extended beyond ENP into communal areas in the Omusati and Oshana Regions, severely affecting grazing land and wildlife habitats. Several villages have been impacted, including Omutambo-gomawe, Okambango, Okerine, Onghunya, Osagalwa, Omalika, and Ovenduka, among others.

At least nine antelopes casualties have been sighted in fire-affected areas, while a pangolin was successfully rescued. The ecological damage inside ENP is extensive, with an estimated 775,163 hectares, approximately 34 percent of the park, burned. Outside ENP, 171,098 hectares of land have been affected, including 156,315 hectares north of the park and 14,783 hectares to the south.

About 60 MEFT staff, and more than 20 neighboring farmers and community members are currently on the ground. Forestry teams from Outapi, Tsandi, Engombe, and Ongwediva have been deployed, alongside NDF (Oshakati) and Regional Council teams. Community members are actively involved in Okakango, Amarika, Ovenduka, and Onkani.

As of today, 27 September 2025, an additional 40 soldiers, a water tanker and two helicopters have been deployed to further strengthen firefighting operations. NDF is also mobilizing a significant number of additional personnel expected to be deployed by tomorrow.

Currently, two fire trucks, six fire engine machines, five fire blowers, two Land Cruisers with water tanks, and one water truck from the Oshana Regional Council are in use. The Ministry sincerely appreciates the contributions from the private sector, which has provided both manpower and firefighting equipment to support operations inside ENP. Their timely assistance has been instrumental in reinforcing containment efforts.

Strong winds and dry vegetation are causing the fire to spread rapidly. The wildfire crisis in Etosha National Park and surrounding areas poses a significant threat to Namibia's biodiversity, local livelihoods, and critical infrastructure. MEFT, together with all partners, remains committed to minimizing the impact of these fires.

The Ministry strongly cautions all tourists, visitors, and communities in or near affected areas to exercise extreme caution. Individuals are urged not to drive toward or attempt to cross areas where wildfires are active. Fire spreads quickly and can change direction suddenly due to strong winds, putting lives at serious risk. Everyone is therefore advised to follow instructions from park authorities, law enforcement, and firefighting teams.

MEFT will continue to provide updates as the situation develops and urges the public to remain vigilant, practice responsible fire use, and cooperate with firefighting teams in affected regions.



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Indileni N. Daniel (MP)
Minister