



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM**

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**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PRESS RELEASE
(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)**

06 March 2022

Subject: 22 auctioned elephants exported to UAE in a private transaction

As an intervention to the increasing cases of human wildlife conflict, particularly those involving elephants, the Ministry has to date auctioned and supplied 37 elephants to the successful bidders.

On Friday, 05 March 2022, the 22 elephants captured from Kamanjab commercial farming area in the Kunene region and supplied to G.H Odendaal as one of the successful bidders were exported to the United Arab Emirates in a private transaction. The elephants arrived in UAE early Saturday morning and are reported to be doing well except for one cow which is seemingly weak. We want to clarify that all the auctioned elephants were sold to Namibian Bidders; the export of elephants, out of Namibia was not the Ministry's decision.

Furthermore, once the successful bidders have ownership of the elephants, there are within their rights to utilize them in anyway provided it is done within confinement of our domestic and international laws. With the export of the 22 elephants, no international or domestic laws were violated either by the importing state or by exporting state. All relevant permits, including CITES permits were obtained/issued in line with article III of the Convention.

Namibia respects the rule of law without the need for any compromise. The Ministry has since received condemnation and criticism for our decisions to auction some elephants from areas that are prone to human/elephant conflicts. We understand the roles of animal rights groups and other wildlife organization, however, the decisions the Ministry takes regarding wildlife are part of the bigger picture of growing conservation in the country and

are in line with the our mandate as provided for in article 95 (j) of the Namibian constitution.

The Ministry has a huge responsibility and the pressure that comes with managing human wildlife conflict in a way that balances the rights of the people and the need for conservation. Most of our critics, fail to recognize that Namibia's conservation has been a success because people have accepted to co-exist with animals. However, this co-existence is currently threatened by the ever-increasing cases of human wildlife conflict. We would not want to imagine what could happen when people no longer accept sharing living space with wild animals.

Instead of condemning us, animal rights groups, which are in any case based in countries without wild animals must be grateful to countries like Namibia that takes practical decisions to further enhance conservation.

From 2019 to 2021, the country recorded 960 cases of crop damages of which 923 were caused by elephants. The majority of people in communal areas depend on small crop farming for their survival where any disruption affects them severely. Unfortunately, we also lost four people within the same period because of elephants and the Ministry has paid N\$13.9 million since in offset losses to those affected.

We wish reiterate further that, the primary objective of the Ministry with the auction is to reduce the numbers of elephants in those areas in order to give relief to the affected communities. The funds generated on the other hand will be invested in conserving our wildlife particularly in the management of human wildlife conflict and not necessarily to be pocketed by individuals as insinuated by our critics. The Game Product Trust Fund's accounts where the proceeds are deposited is audited against financial mismanagement.

Finally, we call upon those who have alternative solutions to minimizing or managing human wildlife conflict to make proposals to the Ministry for consideration. We have noticed, during the auction process of counter offers made not in line with the auction requirements. Human wildlife conflict is continuous; the Ministry remains open for consultations



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