



URGENT

MPUMALANGA TOURISM AND PARKS AGENCY (MTPA)

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CC: MINISTRY OF FORESTRY, FISHERY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

HONOURABLE MINISTER BARBARA CREECY

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17 February 2022

Dear Representatives,

ELEPHANT TSWALE: AN OPEN LETTER OF CONCERN

On the 30th of September 2022 the EMS Foundation, a founding member of the Pro Elephant Network (PREN), sent an urgent letter of concern, **Annexure I**, to the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency in South Africa about two captive elephants, namely Modjadji and Tswale.

Unfortunately, despite the serious nature of the contents of the communication, the organisation did not receive a response and as such a copy of the letter was forwarded to the acting CEO Mr Mduzuzi Vilakazi on the 16th November 2022.

PREN consists of a significant community of diverse individuals and organisations from around the world. PREN relies upon a broad body of expertise on wild and captive African and Asian elephants, including but not limited to the fields of science, health, conservation, welfare, economics, community leadership, social justice and legislation.

In November 2019 the EMS Foundation offered Modjadji and Tswale the opportunity of retirement and freedom in a secure natural area under the guidance of renowned elephant scientists and experts. The offer was ignored and instead, Modjadji and Tswale were kept in chains when not being utilised for elephant back safaris and human interactions. It was the chains that ultimately led to Modjadji suffering fatal injuries and her untimely tragic death in August 2022.

Modjadji's death, the third suspicious captive elephant death in Mpumalanga in 2022, prompted the EMS Foundation to conduct a considerable amount of research into the history of Modjadji and Tswale's capture from the wild almost two decades ago, the details of the training programme they were subjected to and the subsequent utilisation of both elephants in the tourism industry.

Tswale is currently being utilised for human interactions on a piece of land which is being advertised to be auctioned on the 23rd of February 2023.



Tswale. ©EMS Foundation 2023

The expert members of PREN request access to the following documents, in relation to the [Norms and Standards](#) for the management of captive elephants, without delay:

1. A copy of the official Report on the death of Modjadji.
2. A copy of the veterinarian report of the incident in which both Tswale and Modjadji were injured.
3. The current Elephant Management Plan for Tswale upon which the existing permit which expires in August 2023 was issued.
4. A detailed report of the panel of specialists and a copy of their evaluation of the aforementioned Elephant Management Plan.
5. A copy of the plans of the enclosure where Tswale is presently held including the shelter offered to him/her. If Tswale is free ranging an official Report describing the elephant-proof fence on the property described as Farm Lowhills JU 394.
6. A copy of the documents with the serial number of the microchips applied to the two elephants.
7. A copy of the resumes and accreditation of the two trained elephant handlers presently employed to handle Tswale.
8. A copy of the contingency plan for evacuation of members of the public in case of an emergency during the elephant interactions.
9. A copy of the public liability and insurance offered to members of the public who pay to interact with Tswale.

The undersigned members of PREN remain concerned for the well-being of Tswale and the safety of unsuspecting members of the public.

We hereby reiterate the offer made by the EMS Foundation for the retirement and freedom of Tswale in a secure natural area under the guidance of renowned elephant scientists and experts.

Yours Sincerely,



Stefania Falcon

PREN Coordinator

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SIGNING MEMBERS OF PREN

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Dr Brett Bard	Veterinarian, South Africa
Dr Jessica Bell Rizzolo	Postdoctoral Researcher, the Conservation Criminology Lab, Dep of Fisheries and Wildlife, Michigan State University

Janey Clegg	Committee Member, SPCA Mutare, Zimbabwe
Megan Carr	Founder, Rhinos in Africa
Lenin Chisaira	Founder, Advocates 4 Earth – Green Law Connect, Zimbabwe
Dr Betsy Coville	Exotic / Wildlife Animal Veterinarian
Dr Harvey Croze	DPhil (Oxon) Collaborating Researcher – Amboseli Trust for Elephants – Kenya
Nomusa Dube	Founder, Zimbabwe Elephant Foundation
David Ebert	Advocate, Founder Director of The Animal Defense Partnership – USA
Stefania Falcon	Co-Founder, Future 4 Wildlife – South Africa
Daniela Freyer	Co-Founder, Pro Wildlife, Germany
Michele Franko	Captive Elephant Caregiver and Advocate – USA
Chief Stephen Fritz	Indigenous Leader, South Peninsula Khoi Council – South Africa
Dr Toni Frohoff	Ethologist and Behavioral Biologist, Founder of TerraMar Research
Heike Henderson-Altenstein	Co-Founder, Future for Elephants e.V.
Iris Ho	Head of Policy - Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA)
Sangita Iyer	B.Sc., M.A., Founder of Voice for Asian Elephants Society, Nat Geo Explorer and Wildlife Filmmaker
David Kabambo	Founder Director of Peace for Conservation – Wildlife Management - Tanzania
Dr Paula Kahumbu	WildlifeDirect, Kenya
Professor Mohan Kharel	Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal
Nuria Maldonado	Ecologist, Environmental Science, Max Plank Institute
Duncan McNair	Lawyer, CEO of Save The Asian Elephants
Jim Karani	Advocate, Lawyers for Animal Protection in Africa – Kenya
Dr Winnie Kiiru	Founder, Conservation Kenya
Brigitte Kornetzky	President and Founder of Elefanten in Not - Switzerland / India
Professor Bob Jacobs	Neuroscience Researcher – Colorado College – USA
Lynne James	Independent, Elephant Conservation, Zimbabwe

Dr Mark Jones	Veterinarian, Born Free Foundation - UK
<i>Kahindi</i> Lekalhaile	Africa Network for Animal Welfare, Kenya
Dr Smaragda Louw	Director, Ban Animal Trading, South Africa
Linda Masudze	Advocate 4 Earth, Zimbabwe
Varda Mehrotra	Co-Founder, Samayu, A Just World – India
Dr Nurzhafarina Binti Othman	Founder: Seratu Aatai, Elephant Conservation and Research Coordinator at HUTAN-KOCP - Malaysia
Tina Papadopoulou	Biologist, Co-Founder of Friends of Bunka
Sharon Pincott	Elephant Behavioural Specialist, ex-Hwange, Zimbabwe
Michele Pickover	Director, EMS Foundation, South Africa
Bharati Ramachandran	CEO of the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations – India
Ian Redmond OBE	Founder, African Ele-Fund and Elefriends Campaign, Chairman of Ape Alliance and Co-founder of Rebalance Earth
Ingo Schmidinger	Elephant Husbandry – Co-Founder iScapes
Mark Stratton	Investigative Journalist, Founder of Friends of Bunka
Dr Liz Tyson	Animal Welfare Law, Programs Director - Born Free USA
Antoinette Van de Water	Director, Bring the Elephant Home, South Africa
Vasanthi Vadi	Trustee of the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations – India
Prof Dan Wylie	Rhodes University, South Africa