



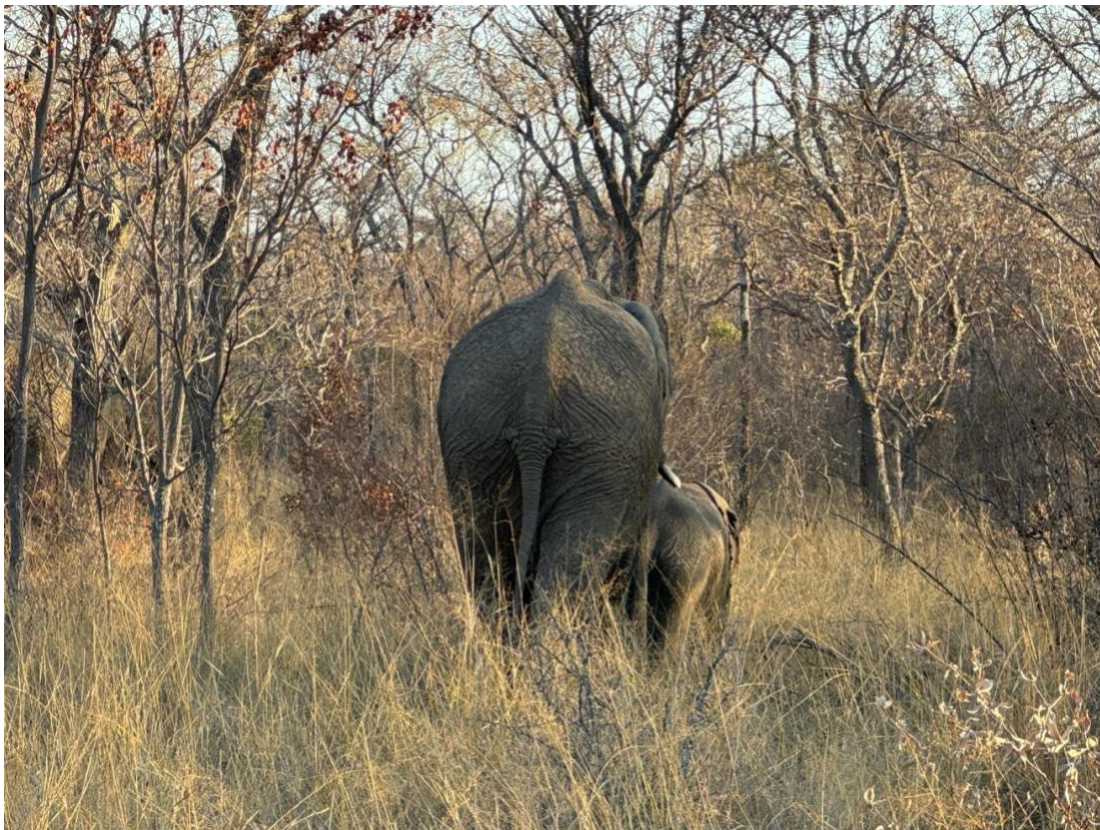
Friday 30th August 2024

STATEMENT ON NAMIBIA'S UNCONSCIONABLE PLAN TO KILL 83 ELEPHANTS

The [Pro Elephant Network](#) (PREN) consists of a significant global community of diverse individuals and organizations directly involved with wild and captive African and Asian Elephants.

The PREN network encompasses vast expertise, including, but not limited to, the fields of science, health, conservation, welfare and well-being, veterinary care, economics, community leadership, indigenous knowledge, social justice and the law.

The 44th Ordinary Southern African Development Community (SADC) Summit of Heads of State and Government was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, on the 17th of August 2024. The Summit, including heads of states from 16 nations, urged Member States to implement the SADC Regional Humanitarian Appeal to the El Nino induced drought and floods which are negatively impacting food security in the region. This drought has also already killed hundreds of elephants in the SADC region.



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Hot on the heels of World Elephant Day, Namibia announced that it plans to hunt and kill 723 wild animals, including 83 elephants, and to distribute the meat to people because of the severe drought. PREN argues that Namibia's plans are counterintuitive and set a very dangerous precedent.

The elephants to be killed include:

- 30 from the Zambezi region (10 from Salambala, Lusese, Nakabolelwa, and Kabbe, 10 from the North Complex of Mudumu and 10 from the South Complex of Mudumu).
- 12 from Kamanjab and Fransfontein areas in the Kunene region
- 10 from Ruacana, Tsandi and Okahao in Omusati region
- 8 from Grootfontein in the Otjozodjupa region
- 7 from the Kavango West Region in the areas of Tondoro, Musese, Maha, Nzize, Agro tour farms and Mangetti Cattle Ranch
- 5 from Omatjete in the Erongo Region
- 4 from Kalkveld
- 3 from EkuloLyanazi, Okasheshete, Uukanga, Ondomb, Tomykunzi and Onoolongo in the Oshana Region
- 2 from Onanke and Cham Cham in the Oshikoto region
- 2 from Kavango East region.

These numbers include 21 elephants in an area that is often traversed by a small isolated population of only 62 desert-adapted elephants.

Namibia's plan to kill elephants and other threatened wild animals is misguided and cruel. Elephants and other wild animals are not the cause of drought or human food insecurity. Killing elephants will not address food shortages and at best will only have a short term and minimal impact on a limited number of people, while setting a dangerous precedent. Elephants are not the cause of drought or human food insecurity and taking aim at elephants will not address the reasons for drought or improve food security.

Where is the environmental impact study to support this so-called cull? Where is the science to show how the numbers were reached and what age and sex is suggested to be culled per area? Namibia's pretext that it is because elephant numbers exceed available food and water supplies is not supported by scientific evidence. Instead, this move will have hugely damaging disruption and impact on elephant communities and in Namibia. PREN members also question the criteria upon which the decisions were taken by the Namibian government to trophy hunt the elephants that are listed in the official announcement by the Namibian government.

In its press release of 26th August, Namibia's Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism claims that the cull "*will assist in managing the current grazing pressure and water availability by reducing wildlife numbers in some parks and communal areas where we feel numbers exceed available grazing and water.*" However, the announcement has not been accompanied by an environmental impact study to support this so-called cull. The claims by MEFT are not supported by scientific evidence. Instead, the cull is likely to be hugely damaging and disruptive to elephant communities and those of other species in Namibia. PREN members also question the decision to allow safari outfitters to participate in the culls, raising concerns that trophy hunters will be offered the opportunity to target some of the elephants that are listed in the official announcement, and calling into question the true motivation behind the culls.

We note that some of the areas in which elephants are due to be culled are the same as those where a tender was advertised in December 2020, [for the capture and sale of a total of 170 elephants](#) with hunts sold to hunters ostensibly to control “damage-causing animals”.

At its core, this so-called cull is a populist political action that ignores ethics, science, conservation, and fails to adhere to and One Health and One Welfare principles, for short-term political gain.

According to a published [research article](#) titled *Strengthening Africa’s Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Systems Through Enhanced Policy Coherence and Co-ordinated Action*, Africa as a region, is particularly vulnerable and exposed to the negative impacts of climate change. The activities of elephants have been shown to help mitigate climate change through carbon sequestration. Killing elephants will only exacerbate the impacts of climate change and make the situation worse in the longer term.

Drought conditions in Namibia are exacerbated by climate change. Climate change and extreme weather are posing severe threats to humans and elephants. The removal of these elephants will have a negative impact on the resilience of the entire arid ecosystem and ultimately on vulnerable communities. Instead, the government of Namibia should be building resilience by fostering sustainable food systems and biodiversity regeneration through equitable and democratic climate justice practices, and by rethinking conservation paradigms. This is especially relevant given the increasing frequency of droughts and extreme weather events and the urgent need for solutions.

Protecting farmers by building resilience to climate change within the agricultural sector is therefore paramount to the food security agenda. Climate resilient food systems are the focus of a new [\\$2.3 billion](#) regional programme approved by the World Bank in June 2022, available to Eastern and Southern African countries in support of efforts to tackle the underlying structural challenges of food insecurity and address their vulnerability to unpredictable shocks.

PREN members question whether the SADC governments and Namibia have adequately prepared their farmers for climate change and extreme weather which are posing severe threats across Eastern and Southern Africa?

In addition, the hunting and killing of elephants, [especially single elephants](#) as indicated by the small take-off numbers, is particularly cruel. Elephants are highly intelligent social beings that live in [particularly large and complex social networks](#) with a highly organised structure involving strong family bonds that last a lifetime; these complex connections include vital relationships within family members, bond groups, coalitions and clans. The hunting of individual elephants results in stress and trauma for the targeted individuals and their wider family members, which can result in disruption of their complex social networks leading to increased conflict with people.

The removal of these 83 elephants will not mitigate human-elephant conflict, nor will it provide long-term relief for people or wildlife affected by the current drought.

PREN members call on the Namibian government to rescind its plan to kill 83 elephants and other wild animals, and instead to consider more effective and humane ways of tackling the current drought conditions affecting parts of the country.

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