



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

Private Bag 13306
Windhoek

Tel. no. 061 – 284 2840
Fax. No. 061 – 22 99 36

OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

PRESS RELEASE

13 MARCH 2018

NAMIBIA REMAINS SAFE FOR TOURISTS DESPITE THE SHOOTING INCIDENT IN BWABWATA

After the unfortunate shooting incident on the 26 February 2018, in the Bwabwata National Park, involving two German tourists, the Ministry would like to assure the global community, in particular our welcome visitors that Namibia remains safe for tourists.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism immediately after the shooting, launched an assessment of the incident.

The two tourists were driving in their Toyota Double Cab Hilux with registration number B114AYV in the Bwabwata National Park with necessary entry permits. While in the Buffalo Core Area of the Bwabwata National Park, the two tourists were approached by the members of the anti-poaching unit who asked them to stop with the intention to search the vehicles as the tourists were on a road used exclusively for wildlife management purposes only and not open for tourists and visitors to the park. The tourists could not stop as they thought or presumed that the officers are persons that want to rob them. The two officers were dressed in their official t-shirts and uniform trousers. The tourists proceeded driving and it was at the time when warning shots were fired in the air but still they proceeded driving.

Since the vehicle could not stop, unfortunately one shot was fired at the canopy of the vehicle hitting the rear window of the canopy that caused damages to the window and causing a slight dent on the outer roof of the vehicle. No person was injured in this shooting.

It is unfortunate that this incident happened and it is not our wish to see and experience incidents of this nature in our National Parks and anywhere else in the country. As the Ministry responsible for tourism development and visitors to National Parks in the country, we regret that this unfortunate incident occurred in the Bwabwata National Park and will put measures in place to prevent similar incidents from occurring.

A meeting between the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and the security forces in the Bwabwata National Park was already convened on the 05 March 2018 to discuss measures that need to be put in place to prevent similar incidents. Follow up consultations between wildlife protection and law enforcement stakeholders will also be convened on the 15 March 2018 in the Bwabwata National Park. A further meeting of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism will be held on the 16 March 2017 led by the Director of Wildlife and National Parks on the immediate implementation of the agreed measures to be put in place.

Our National Parks, and Bwabwata National Park in particular, remain very safe to visit and visitors and tourists should go there and enjoy seeing the high numbers of large mammals and bird species that are naturally rare.

Wildlife crime in Namibia has reached a new quality of violence and an enhanced frequency of incidents. Well organized gangs enter vulnerable areas, crime syndicates organize the trafficking of horns and tusks through complex networks, leading to foreign markets.

In order to bring the current syndicate based wildlife crime under control and to stop poaching, the Government through the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has increased the presence of members of the anti-poaching unit in certain National Parks and other conservation areas. In this regard, we have members of the Namibian Police Force and the Namibian Defense Force working with the officials of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism in wildlife crime prevention and law enforcement in the Bwabwata National Park.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia recognizes the importance of tourism in contributing to the country's economic growth, employment creation, rural development, poverty reduction, investments and foreign exchange earnings. Government will therefore uphold and promote a good reputation and image of the country in terms of tourist attraction and investment.


Romeo Muyunda
MET Spokesperson

