



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE FISHERIES WATER AND LAND REFORM

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MEDIA RELEASE (For Immediate Release)

MINISTRY COMMENDS NAMIBIAN NAVY FOR INTERCEPTING SUSPECTED ILLEGAL FISHING VESSEL

The Ministry wishes to congratulate the Namibian Navy for the successful interception of a foreign-flagged vessel suspected to have engaged in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities within Namibia's sovereign waters during routine patrol operations.

This milestone achievement demonstrates the unwavering commitment of the Namibian Defence Force (NDF), through the Namibian Navy, to safeguarding Namibia's marine resources and protecting the country's territorial integrity and economic interests.

The Ministry commends the professionalism, vigilance and dedication displayed by the Namibian Navy in carrying out its mandate. Such operations play a critical role in combating illegal fishing activities that threaten the sustainability of Namibia's fisheries resources, undermine conservation efforts and negatively affect the livelihoods of those dependent on the sector.

In recent years, the Ministry has observed the increasing presence of foreign fishing vessels operating near Namibia's northern maritime border, with some unlawfully intruding into Namibia's waters and engaging in illegal fishing activities. A number of these vessels have since been apprehended and prosecuted for criminal offences in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Namibia.

The Ministry is equally aware that illegal fishing activities are at times also committed by Namibian-flagged and licensed fishing vessels operating within Namibia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This is evidenced by several cases currently under investigation, and the Ministry remains committed to ensuring that all offenders are brought before the courts.

The Ministry therefore issues a stern warning to all participants in the fishing industry that non-compliance with fisheries laws and regulations will not be tolerated. Any violation of the country's legal provisions will be met with the full force of the law, regardless of whether the vessel is foreign or Namibian flagged and licensed.

The era of plundering Namibia's marine resources is over. The Government of the Republic of Namibia remains resolute in protecting the country's fisheries resources and ensuring their sustainable utilization for the benefit of current and future generations.

Namibia's marine resources remain a strategic national asset and a key contributor to economic growth, food security, employment creation and export earnings. The interception of vessels suspected of violating fisheries laws sends a strong message that Namibia remains resolute in enforcing its fisheries regulations and preserving marine resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Ministry further reiterates its commitment to continue strengthening collaboration with the Namibian Defence Force and other law enforcement agencies through coordinated operations, surveillance and monitoring efforts aimed at combating illegal fishing and ensuring sustainable utilization of marine resources.

It is on this basis that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform have been engaging the Ministry of Defence and Veterans affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs, Safety and Security (Particularly Namibian Police water wing) to formalise these collaborations with a Memorandum of Understanding on combatting IUU Fishing activities in our Exclusive Economic zone. The Ministry anticipates the official signing of this MoU between the three sister Ministries in the coming months, as consultations are in advance stages.

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