



sa air force

Department:
Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

DATE: Wednesday, 31 July 2024

EMBARGO None

SUBJECT: LEOPARD ATTACK AT DRAKENSIG RESIDENTIAL AREA

The South African Air Force (SAAF) is aware of the recent attacks involving leopard attacks at Air Force Base (AFB) Hoedspruit during the weekend of 26-28 July 2024. We take these matters seriously and are committed to ensuring the safety of all personnel and families stationed at the base.

The safety and well-being of our members are our top priorities, and we are currently conducting a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding these incidents. We are collaborating with wildlife experts and local authorities to assess the situation and implement appropriate measures to mitigate future risks.

While we understand the concerns raised by this situation, we encourage all personnel to remain vigilant and adhere to safety protocols when engaging with the natural wildlife in the area. Further updates will be provided as more information becomes available. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we work to ensure a safe environment for everyone at AFB Hoedspruit.

In response to these incidents, Acting Officer Commanding AFB Hoedspruit, Col E. Gherbavaz, has mobilised the Base Environmental team to mitigate further risks. Immediate measures include summoning the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) to trace and monitor the leopard, contacting the Limpopo Department of Economic Development Environment and Tourism (LEDET) and other stakeholders to arrange for the leopard's safe removal. Additionally, communications have been sent out to residents, urging vigilance and avoiding solitary outdoor activities. Collaboration with Ingwe Leopard Research and wildlife veterinarians is ongoing to ensure the leopard is safely relocated to SAWONG, Phalaborwa. The welfare and safety of the Drakensig community remain the utmost priority as the SAAF works with wildlife experts to resolve this situation.

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