

MEDIA RELEASE - 2001/10/05

JUDGE NGOBENI APPOINTED TO LEAD INQUIRY INTO KRUGER NATIONAL PARK FIRE DISASTER

Judge D.D. Ngobeni, Senior Magistrate of Nelspruit has been appointed to lead an independent inquiry into the fire that devastated the Pretoriuskop area of the Kruger National Park last month, killing a total of twenty three people.

Nineteen of those killed came from the surrounding communities and had been contracted to cut grass in the park, four were park rangers who died trying to put out the fire. About 60 000 hectares of conservation land was also destroyed.

The Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Mr Mohammed Valli Moosa, asked the Chairman of the South African National Parks Board, Mr Murphy Morobe, to ensure that the cause of the fire was fully investigated.

According to Mr Morobe, Judge Ngobeni's appointment to lead the investigation is an excellent choice because of his judicial expertise and experience, and his familiarity with the region and its communities.

The investigation will include recommendations, as may be necessary, on steps that would need to be taken to prevent the recurrence of a disaster of this nature.

- Ends -

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