

Omuthiya targets illegal firewood trade



The Ministry of Environment and Tourism, through the Directorate of Forestry at Onankali, has launched an operation to combat the illegal sale of firewood at Omuthiya and surrounding villages.

The initiative has already resulted in several confiscations of illegally harvested wood, Omuthiya Town Council spokesperson Martha Andreas said on Friday.

Directorate of Forestry officials also used the opportunity to inform wood vendors about the correct processes for harvesting, transporting, and selling firewood.

“Our people should know that permits are mandatory for all firewood-related activities,” Andreas emphasised.

She said individuals wishing to harvest firewood must first obtain a permit from the ministry, which requires a consent letter from their village headperson specifying the applicant’s name and the desired quantity in tonnes.

Two types of harvesting permits are available – commercial permits which cost N\$20, and ‘own use’ permits which cost N\$10, with an additional cost of N\$60 per tonne.

“The validity of these permits ranges from one to seven days, depending on the requested quantity,” she added.

Andreas further clarified that a separate transportation permit is required after harvesting, costing N\$20 for commercial use and N\$10 for own use.

Vendors intending to legally sell firewood must also apply for a selling permit, which costs N\$20 and is valid for one month. She urged all vendors to adhere to these legal procedures to avoid penalties and confiscations.

The ministry also stressed the importance of cooperation from traditional leaders, encouraging headmen and women to monitor and report any instances of illegal firewood harvesting.

Ministry spokesperson Ndeshipanda Hamunyela confirmed that a joint operation with the Directorate of Forestry and the police targeted illegal firewood activities, with a follow-up planned for Saturday.

“Prior awareness sessions were held with illegal harvesters, transporters, and vendors at Omuthiya and along the Onankali-Oshivelo road regarding permit requirements,” she said.

Hamunyela noted that despite these efforts, violations persist, primarily by non-Namibian household workers and cattle herders who harvest from communal and private land, sometimes without consent.

She reminded the public that all firewood vendors, except those selling packaged wood at shops, must possess valid marketing permits.

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