



Climate Justice Charter Movement Supports the Release of Lammie, Ramadiba and Mopane from Johannesburg Zoo

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The Climate Justice Charter Movement stands in full solidarity with the EMS Foundation and others in their court application to have Lammie, Ramadiba and Mopane released from the Johannesburg Zoo and moved to a place where they can heal, roam and live with dignity. These three elephants should not remain in captivity.

The struggle to release Lammie, Ramadiba and Mopane is about more than the future of three elephants. It is about the kind of society we are becoming in the middle of a worsening climate, ecological and poly-crisis. The climate crisis is already disrupting the conditions that make life possible. Droughts, heatwaves, fires, recent floods across the country, habitat loss and biodiversity collapse are placing enormous pressure on human and non-human life. In such a moment, we cannot continue to treat other beings as objects for display, entertainment or municipal ownership. Elephants are sentient, intelligent and social beings. They remember, grieve, bond, communicate and move across landscapes as part of complex ecological and social worlds. To confine such beings to a zoo enclosure is to deny the fullness of who they are.

The Climate Justice Charter, launched in 2020 after a six-year bottom-up grassroots process, calls on South Africa to end the capitalist war against nature. It affirms that humans are part of the wider web of life, not rulers standing above it. Our approach to the rights of nature as part of systemic alternatives for transformative change, demands that we widen our understanding of justice. It asks what justice means not only for people, but also for rivers, forests, animals, soils, oceans and all the life-supporting systems that make our own survival possible. We recognise that all living beings and ecosystems have intrinsic value and must be able to exist, persist and regenerate their vital cycles. From this perspective, Lammie, Ramadiba and Mopane are not exhibits. They are not property. They are not assets to be managed for public attraction. They are living beings with their own needs, relationships, histories and right to flourish. In this case, justice means release.

The Climate Justice Charter Movement's commitment to decoloniality, Ubuntu, conviviality and intergenerational justice requires us to reject systems of domination over nature. It requires us to build relationships of care, reciprocity and responsibility with the more than human world.

Therefore, in solidarity with the EMS Foundation, the Climate Justice Charter Movement calls on the Gauteng High Court to order the release and relocation of Lammie, Ramadiba and Mopane to an appropriate elephant rehabilitation and rewilding facility.

ENDS

For more information on the CJCM:

Email: cjcm@mweb.co.za

Web: <https://cjcm.org.za/>