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MINISTRY OF HEALTH & WELLNESS
PRIVATE BAG 0038
GABORONE

Republic of Botswana

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To: All Media Houses

PRESS RELEASE

ANTHRAX OUTBREAK

The public is notified about the emergence of Anthrax infection in Namibia which has affected and caused death to more than 100 hippos. As a result, dead hippopotamus (hippos) carcasses floating in the Okavango River crossed into Botswana from Namibia.

Anthrax is an infection caused by bacteria, *Bacillus Anthracis*, usually transmitted from infected animals. It causes skin, lung and bowel disease. Most anthrax infections are deadly and occur when people touch contaminated animals and/or their products like wool, bone, hair, hide, as well as touching or consuming their carcasses. The infection occurs when the bacteria enters a cut on the skin.

Anthrax infection through the skin presents with a raised, itchy and bumpy skin resembling an insect bite that quickly develops into a painless sore with a black center and swelling.

The public is advised to strictly avoid any direct contact with hippopotamus carcasses and other sick animals. Furthermore, it is very dangerous and risky to touch, skin, cut, prepare/handle or eat hippopotamus meat or its by-products.

Whilst this incident has occurred in the North West District, all public health facilities in Botswana are ready to provide all the necessary health services for the management of Anthrax.

The Ministry of Health and Wellness in collaboration with Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food Security continues to monitor the situation, and will keep on updating the public.

For further information on Anthrax please visit the nearest health facility or call the Ministry of Health and Wellness Toll Free Number 0800 600 740 or 3632574/3632815/3632418.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Shenaaz El-Halabi'.

Shenaaz El-Halabi

PERMANENT SECRETARY

Vision: *A Model of Excellence in Quality Health Services.*
Values: *Botho, Equity, Timeliness, Customer Focus, Teamwork, Accountability.*

