

DAILYNEWS NEWS

## Relocation of zoo's last elephant raises issues



*The last remaining elephant, Charley, at National Zoological Gardens in Pretoria. Picture: Supplied*

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**Durban — The Public Servants Association (PSA) said it was concerned about the recent decision to relocate the last remaining elephant, Charley, at Pretoria's National Zoological Gardens (NZG) to a private game lodge.**

The PSA said in a statement that it recognised the importance of providing the best possible environment for wildlife, but the intended relocation raised significant issues to address.



It said e ny  
pupils and community members who lacked the means to experience wildlife in  
their natural habitat, the NZG was an essential resource.

It said that elephants, in particular, played a critical role in this educational experience, offering visitors a unique opportunity to learn about them, their behaviours and the vital role they play in the ecosystem.

The removal of elephants from the NZG threatened to diminish the educational value that the institution provided to countless visitors. Without these iconic animals, the NZG's ability to inspire a love of wildlife and an understanding of conservation in the next generation would be significantly undermined, it said.

It said the relocation of this elephant may signal the start of a broader trend to remove animals from zoos altogether and that this possibility was alarming as it could lead to a significant reduction in the educational and cultural resources available to communities.

The PSA said: "Zoos have long played a crucial role in conservation education, offering accessible opportunities for people of all backgrounds to connect with wildlife. Removing key species from zoos could set a precedent that endangers the future of these institutions as centres for learning, conservation, and public engagement. Zoos, when properly managed and maintained, are vital to fostering an appreciation for wildlife and promoting conservation efforts."

The PSA said the elephant had been a major attraction, drawing visitors to the zoo and generating essential revenue that supported its operations and educational programmes.



“The impact on workers who have dedicated their lives to caring for these animals and educating the public cannot be understated. Job losses would not only harm these people but also weaken the broader community depending on the NZG for employment and economic activity.”

The PSA said they advocated for the upgrading of enclosures to meet and exceed required standards, ensuring that elephants and other animals at the NZG received the highest standard of care and welfare. The PSA further called for measures to protect the jobs of zoo workers, ensuring the relocation of animals did not lead to job losses.

The PSA said it believed that with the right investments and commitment, the NZG could continue to be a place where wildlife thrived, where the public could learn the importance of conservation, and where workers could rely on stable employment.

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