

# South African winter fire season update: Fire fighters from the Working on Fire–Kishugu Joint Venture in full swing

**W**ith the Winter Fire Season in full swing, the Working on Fire–Kishugu Joint Venture has been tirelessly battling wildfires across all provinces where they operate. Their efforts have been critical in suppressing fires, thus saving lives and protecting the environment.

As of 17 July 2023, Working on Fire teams has been actively collaborating with partners, landowners, and stakeholders, assisting in the suppression of a total of 491 fires, since June 2023, the traditional start of the South African winter wildfire season.

In the month of June 2023, Kishugu Aviation aircraft provided aerial fire support at 20 fires and made 184 water drops with its helicopters and fixed wing water bombers.

Among the provinces, Mpumalanga was the busiest, recording a total of 58 fires, followed closely by Limpopo with 57 fires and KwaZulu-Natal with 52. Free State accounted for 43 fires, while the Eastern Cape dealt with 40 incidents. Gauteng assisted in 36 fires and the North West recorded 30. Notably, the Western Cape did not report any fires during this period as they were out of their fire season, which is the Summer Fire Season. Nevertheless, their teams remain vigilant and prepared to offer assistance in case of any wildfire emergencies.

The Working on Fire Programme's dedication to Integrated Fire Management Services (IFMS) has been an essential aspect of their approach. Besides fire fighting, their focus on fire prevention, early detection and fire awareness education is instrumental in reducing the occurrence of wildfires and educating communities on fire safety measures.

The Working on Fire Programme is an Expanded Public Works Programme funded by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. It is implemented by the WoF-Kishugu Joint Venture and the Programme will be celebrating another milestone of being in existence for 20 years in September 2023. ▲

