



Clarity on reporting “Victoria Falls invaded by bed bugs”

Africa’s Eden is a not-for-profit company domiciled in Botswana, representing the tourism ecosystem in Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Our growing collaboration of more than four hundred members promotes the region in a positive and informative light. Africa’s Eden believes in the strength of working together to show that we can competitively vie with the rest of the world as a **premier tourism destination**.

We have recently reviewed reporting and comments regarding a reported outbreak of bed bugs in Victoria Falls residential districts.

The report initiated in the Zimbabwe-based Chronicle newspaper on 19th April stated that “the Victoria Falls City Council is urging residents ... to be on high alert of the presence of bed bugs in all areas of residence”. The outbreak was **specific to high-density residential areas of the Chinotimba suburb**.

The South African-based Sunday Times and Namibian-based Hanyani News Online followed with a similar story with a by-line referring to Victoria Falls as the “biggest tourist city” on 24th April.

Africa’s Eden and its members based in Victoria Falls would like to highlight the importance of differentiating reports pertaining to infestations in residential areas and that of its tourism facilities. To date, **no infestation or outbreak has been reported in any accommodation facility**. It is also notable that the Victoria Falls City Council has responded rapidly to the challenge by offering to disinfect affected residential areas free of charge and has coupled this action with a **public awareness campaign** to prevent further spread.

Accommodation facilities in Victoria Falls stringently follow several cleanliness processes to prevent bed bugs from infesting their premises. These processes may include:

1. Regular cleaning and vacuuming of all rooms, including mattresses, carpets, and upholstery.
2. Regular inspections of rooms to identify any signs of bed bug infestation, like blood spots or clusters of dark spots on bedding.
3. Washing all linens, including sheets, pillowcases, and blankets, in hot water and drying at high heat settings to kill any bed bugs and their eggs.

4. Using bed bug-proof mattress and pillow encasements to prevent bed bugs from infesting these areas.
5. Training staff on identifying and reporting any bed bug sightings or signs of infestation.
6. Implementing strict sanitation and hygiene protocols to reduce clutter and remove potential hiding places for bed bugs.
7. Educating guests on the importance of being vigilant against bed bugs and providing information on inspecting luggage and clothing for signs of bed bugs before checking into their rooms.

Africa's Eden is confident that by following these cleanliness processes, accommodation facilities can minimize the risk of bed bug infestations and create a safer and more pleasant guest experience. We continue to welcome high numbers of guests to our products with positive guest feedback.

End

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