

OLIMBA MTIMA

Sex: Female

Date of Birth: November 2018

Origin: South Luangwa

Name Derivative: "Strong Spirited" in local language Nyanja



In November 2019, less than a week since their previous rescue, GRI and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) were called to respond to yet another tragic elephant orphaning. DNPW Rangers came across this tragic scene: a mother elephant agonisingly caught around the neck in a poacher's snare and bearing three life-threatening gunshot wounds. Standing under her chin, her 1-year-old calf stood in terror after the traumatic experience of being shot at and running for her life. Tragically, her mother was too injured to be saved and had to be put out of her suffering.

This traumatised little calf was darted with sedative and carefully moved to Chipembele Wildlife Education Trust, which have been a long-term first response for orphaned elephants and other wildlife in need. The GRI vet unit were onsite to help stabilise the calf as they coordinated the logistics to relocate her to the Lilayi Elephant Nursery. Having been with her mother up to the bitter end she was in good physical condition, but incredibly traumatised, frightened and confused.

Five days after her rescue, the DNPW Vet passed her fit to travel, and little Olimba Mtima was escorted to Mfuwe International Airport where Proflight Zambia had generously offered her some space on their passenger plane to Lusaka.

Once firmly on solid ground at the Nursery, Olimba happily followed a bottle of milk into her new stable. She drank everything she was offered, browsed on some fresh leaves and then, still chewing, laid herself down to sleep!