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NEWS

BDF patrol team exchanges fire with poachers (Botswana)

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By Thamani Shabani, The Botswana Daily News

Five suspected elephant poachers escaped following fire exchange with the members of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) anti-poaching team in the Shaile area of the Chobe National Park on March 16 afternoon.

Assistant Superintendent Kenneth Chipisani who is the officer-In charge at the Narcotics, fauna and flora Investigations department in Kasane said no soldier in the BDF patrol team was hurt in the shoot out.

He explained that on Monday at around 4pm, members of the BDF anti-poaching patrolling team who were at Shaile had a sudden confrontation with the poachers and there was serious exchange of fire before the poachers escaped. “Unfortunately, all the five poachers managed to escape. Again fortunately, none of our soldiers was injured,” he said.

Assistant Superintendent Chipisani explained that they suspected that the poachers were from neighbouring countries of Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

He said from the evidence the police gathered, the poachers had planned to camp because they had in their possession, mattresses, cooking pots, salt, mealie meal, sugar, cooking oil and clothes which they threw away during the pandemonium.

Assistant Superintendent Chipisani warned that the Botswana government had declared war on poachers and that most of them will not return alive if poaching continues.

He explained that investigations into the incident were ongoing adding that this was the first incident to occur in his area of jurisdiction since the beginning of the year.

The Shaile incident follows a recent incident in which a BDF soldier and a poacher died during an exchange of fire at Chiefs Island in the Okavango Delta.

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