

Botswana shoots four poachers Investigation of strange elephant deaths

09 July 2020 | [Afrika](#)



1.



Francoise Steynberg - The Botswana Defense Force (BDF) shot dead four poachers in three separate incidents in the Okavango Delta.

According to a BDF media release, the incidents occurred over seven days between June 22 and 29, when gunfire was shot back and forth between the army and stoppers.

“The contact areas were at Mombo, Kurunxaraga and the Selina overflow in the Linyanti area. There is an alarming resurgence of rhino poaching in the Okavango Delta and poachers persevere with ruthless tactics with BDF members as target,” the statement states.

"As a professional force, BDF's anti-poaching units will continue to perform their task of protecting endangered species," says Col. Tebo Dikole, Botswana's army chief.

The Namibian Police Commander in the Zambezi Region, comm. Karl Theron, when asked by Republican that the poachers who were shot dead, are certainly not Namibians.

"Previously, Namibian poachers have been shot dead in the Linaynti area and the Botswana government usually informs us," he said.

Theron said due to the strong presence of Namibian law enforcement officers in the northeast to seize poachers, "we suspect they are now running to Botswana".

Hundreds of elephant carcasses

Meanwhile, Botswana's Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources, Nature Conservation and Tourism is trying to decipher the mystery deaths of hundreds of elephants in the Seronga area of the northern Okavango Delta.

According to a ministry statement, 356 elephant carcasses have been found since March, while conservation activists say more than 400 elephants have died in the area.

"The investigation into the unexplained elephant deaths is ongoing. Three laboratories in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Canada have been identified to analyze the samples of dead elephants," the statement reads.

"The teeth are removed and the elephant carcasses are destroyed near settlements where people live."

Assurance has been given that there is no evidence of elephant poaching so far, although the investigation into the deaths is ongoing.

No similar fatal losses among elephants have been reported in Namibia.

One suspicion is that the elephants were poisoned. Africa Geographic reports that 70% of carcasses were found near watering holes or pans and a dead horse was also seen near a watering hole.

"Living elephants near water sources were seen to be disoriented as if they had no control over their legs. One was seen walking in circles. "

No other carcasses were found in the area and vultures that ate the elephant carcasses also did not find anything. - francoise@republikein.com.na