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Botswana, Namibia launch joint elephant poaching investigation: official

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An elephant is seen in the Chobe River in northwest Botswana's Kasane, May 10, 2021. (Photo by Tshekiso Tebalo/Xinhua)

Botswana and Namibia have embarked on a joint investigation into the increased incidents of elephant poaching in the northern part of Botswana.

GABORONE, Dec. 31 (Xinhua) -- Botswana and Namibia have embarked on a joint investigation into the increased incidents of elephant poaching in the northern part of Botswana.

"The country (Botswana) experienced a surge in elephant poaching incidents during November and December 2023," Lesego Kgomanyane, the spokesperson for Botswana's Ministry of Environment and Tourism, told Xinhua over the telephone, noting that the development has shone the light on the apparent increase in poaching of elephants in northern Botswana.



This photo taken on Feb. 8, 2023 shows a desert elephant walking at the Hoanib River drainage in northern Namibia.(Xinhua/Chen Cheng)

At least four separate incidents involving arrests of poaching groups smuggling elephant tusks were made in Namibia within ten days of mid-November this year, and at least 68 elephant tusks weighing almost a tonne were seized in Namibia's eastern area of the Zambezi region, which borders Botswana and Zambia, she said. According to Kgomanyane, preliminary investigations into the incidents have established that most of the tusks came from the elephants recently poached in Botswana.

Kgomanyane said some of the arrests occurred as a result of a tipoff that Namibia's Zambezi Region is being used as a transit route to smuggle tusks of poached elephants from Botswana to Zambia.

Major General Goitseone Mothapo of the Botswana Defense Forces (BDF) is leading the anti-poaching brigade from

Botswana, who are working closely with their Namibian counterparts.

Mothapo told Xinhua that 25 carcasses of recently poached adult bull elephants were identified in Botswana's Linyanti Game Reserve, north of Botswana, between October and November. The enforcement agencies from both Botswana and Namibia are still verifying the proportion of tusks from poached animals with those that died due to natural causes. Meanwhile, both the governments of Botswana and Namibia have significantly increased the number of patrol teams in the northern part of Botswana and information sharing between the two neighboring nations. ■