

## Rare rhino poaching a concern

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**A Namibian man, Tjetuura Tjiumbua (42), is alleged to have killed a black rhino in the Kunene region close to Khorixas, confirmed deputy commissioner, Edwin Kanguatjivi, head of Nampol's public relations division in Windhoek.**

Tjiumbua is suspected to have shot and killed the animal before removing the horns valued at N\$500 000. The calf which was with the dead rhino was also found dead at the scene.

If found guilty, Tjiumbua could face up to 20 years in prison or be fined N\$200 000.

He appeared in the Opuwo Magistrate's Court on December 27 and was denied bail. He is expected to reappear on January 10.

Black rhinos are rated critically endangered by many wildlife organisations and their horns can grow up to 50 cm.

It is still unknown if Tjiumbua might be linked to an international syndicate.

According to the acting permanent secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Diyando Kapinga 'it is true that poaching of Black rhino in Namibia is very rare as Namibia had clean poaching record/ cases for quite some times now.'

Other facts show that since 1994, the second black rhino poaching of a cow occurred in November 2011 in the Huab conservancy in Kunene Region. 'No suspect was arrested and the case has been under investigation,' said Kapinga.

Furthermore, the third incident occurred last year in December at the Palmwag concession area in Kunene Region.

'However, on the last poaching incident, the ministry is not at liberty to discuss this matter due to the investigation of to police,' Kapinga added. He said that the incidents are of great concern to the ministry.

This incident occurred shortly on the heels of the killing of least 30 elephants in Namibia last year. It also follows the recent South African rhino killings.

According to Simon Uri-khob, director of training and community outreach of the Save the Rhino Trust, the community should be applauded for their part in bringing the culprit to book. 'We were informed by a community member who saw the dead animal and we alerted the police. In less than 24 hours, the man was arrested,' said Urikhob. 'The people in the Kunene region regard these animals as their own and we would like to acknowledge their input,' said Uri-khob.

Despite popular belief that the poaching of rhino horns are linked to the Asian market, Nampol's Kanguatjivi said no other arrests have been made yet and that investigations are still ongoing.