



## Two more rhinos poached at Palmwag

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Two more rhinos have been killed in the Kunene Region, bringing to five the number of rhinos poached in Namibia so far this year. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism has described the spate of poaching in the country as barbaric and says the country is ready to confront anybody caught poaching and that they will face the full wrath of the law. This comes while a group of about 60 people yesterday gathered at the Zoo Park in Windhoek to protest against bail being granted to three Chinese men who were caught in March this year with 14 rhino horns in their luggage. The protesters also urged the government to introduce stiffer sentences for rhino poachers. The latest poaching incident occurred on Saturday in the Palmwag Constituency and by yesterday afternoon a team of police and ministry officials were still on the scene investigating the incident. The



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/asse>)

permanent secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Simeon Negumbo, said yesterday that the carcasses of one calf and one cow were discovered at Palmwag on Saturday. The two rhinos were found with their horns removed. Nampol Deputy Commissioner Israel Hango, who heads the Crime Investigation Coordination Unit in the Kunene Region, confirmed the poaching and said no arrests had been made. This incident comes barely a month after another rhino carcass was found in the same area. Negumbo said the ministry is disturbed by the continuous trend of poaching and as a result has put numerous measures in place to contain the spate of poaching. "We condemn such ill-intentioned activities or illegal plundering of wildlife." Meanwhile the bail hearing of the three Chinese nationals continued yesterday with final submissions that were made. Li Xiaoliang, Li Zhibing and Pu Xuexin were charged with possessing and exporting controlled wildlife products. Defence lawyer Olivier Lino said it is safe to consider bail for the three accused while the case is pending before court. He said pre-trial detention should only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and that the court should feel compelled to grant bail and refuse it only in extreme circumstances. "They are entitled to be released on bail. They will not interfere with investigations, evidence or witnesses." State Prosecutor Anthony Wilson, on the other hand, submitted that this is a very serious case involving rhino horns valued at N\$2.3 million and a leopard skin worth N\$500 000. He said it would be unsafe for the three accused to be granted bail. "If the accused abscond there will be no justice. They will not stand their trail, they have no ties or address in Namibia." Wilson said the bail application should be dismissed. The case was postponed until today for a decision on bail. WINDHOEK ELLANIE SMIT