

## Rhino poacher gets seven years in prison

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by Staff Reporter



**A KUNENE resident convicted of poaching a rhinoceros and possessing the endangered animal's two horns was sentenced to an effective seven years' imprisonment and fined a total of N\$13 000 at the end of his trial in the Opuwo Magistrate's Court yesterday.**

Magistrate Lena Iyambo sentenced Tjetuura Uapungua Tjiumbua, who is in his early forties, to seven years' imprisonment on a charge of hunting of specially protected game, a fine of N\$10 000 or three years' imprisonment on a charge of possession of controlled wildlife products, a fine of N\$2 000 or a one-year prison term for the possession of a firearm without a licence, and a fine of N\$1 000 or six months in prison for the illegal possession of ammunition.

If Tjiumbua pays the fines he will have to serve a prison term of seven years. The term of imprisonment will increase to 11 and a half years if the fines are not paid.

Tjiumbua has spent the past year and nearly eight months in custody.

He was arrested in late December 2012 in connection with the poaching of a black rhino cow in the Sesfontein area in Kunene.

The cow had a calf when she was killed. Her calf also died a few days after the poaching of its mother.

Sources who attended the court proceedings at Opuwo yesterday said Magistrate Iyambo noted that tourism was a pillar of the local economy in Kunene, providing employment to many of the region's residents, and that rhinos are one of the main attractions that draw tourists to the region.

The poaching of rhinos could put employment and livelihoods in the region at risk, she noted.

It has been reported that Tjiumbua admitted that he had poached the rhino when he was questioned in connection with the killing of the animal. After making the admission he also led investigators to a place where he had hidden the two horns that he had removed from the poached rhino.

The court was told that Tjiumbua is married and is the father of three children.

Tjiumbua, who was convicted last month, was not represented by a defence lawyer during his trial. Obert Masendeke prosecuted.