



New anti-poaching measures for Etosha

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The new Minister of Environment and Tourism says he will prioritise anti-poaching initiatives, including extra security measures at the Etosha National Park, which has seen four cases of rhino poaching recently. In the latest poaching incident, the carcass of a young rhino bull was discovered at the Dolomite waterhole in Etosha this past Friday. The rhino's horns were still intact and it had been shot three times. Police are still investigating the case and there are currently no suspects. Speaking to Namibian Sun yesterday, Minister Pohamba Shifeta said after the latest incident in Etosha the ministry decided on measures that would be implemented to curb poaching in Etosha. Namibia last year recorded 24 cases of rhino poaching, of which three were in Etosha. The first rhino poaching in Etosha was discovered at the end of October last year. The

rhino carcass was found in the south-west of Etosha with 10 gunshot wounds and its horn had been removed. Two rhino carcasses were found with their horns removed in the vicinity of Ombika in November last year. Both had been shot. Shifeta said poaching incidents in Etosha have been mostly in the south-western and north-western areas of the park. According to him the measures to be introduced in Etosha will include an increased presence on the ground. "Other strategies cannot be divulged at this stage," he said. Shifeta added that the public would be informed on the measures at a later stage. He said one of his priorities would be to achieve a drastic reduction in poaching. He said he would also focus on educating the nation on poaching and the importance of wildlife conservation. Shifeta said as soon as the budget for 2015/16 financial year had been approved the anti-poaching unit would be finalised and set up. He said international poaching syndicates are targeting Southern Africa and rhinos have become very vulnerable. He says there might be collusion between poachers and local communities because poaching is such a lucrative business. "The more measures we put in place, the more difficult it will become to poach and the more valuable this commodity will become. This makes the temptation very high and even the community can succumb to be part of the poaching activities." He said even people with a high status might be tempted to become involved in poaching. "We will embark on a very serious campaign to combat poaching in Namibia. These people may have the advantage now, but that was due to a lack of resources. We want to be 10 steps ahead of the poachers." Shifeta stressed that it is important for the community to report any suspicious behaviour to the police. "These poachers can even pretend to be tourists and ask information from the community who unknowingly lead poachers to our animals." WINDHOEK
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