



## Honeymoon over for poachers - Shifeta

07 April 2015 | Environment

While several new cases of rhino poaching have been discovered in Namibia the new Minister of Environment and Tourism, Pohamba Shifeta, says he will not tolerate complacency from staff members, especially in areas where repeated poaching is happening. Five rhino carcasses were discovered about two weeks ago during a rhino dehorning exercise in the Kunene Region. Four of these rhinos had been poached, the ministry confirmed. The rhinos were presumably shot last year already and the carcasses were found in the area of Omatendeka. There have also been new reports of rhino poaching in the Etosha National Park which were still being investigated last week. "I order that the honeymoon of poachers should be stopped," Shifeta said. According to Shifeta the increasing scale and sophistication of poaching activities is a worrying trend and a very serious threat to the tourism sector in Namibia, its international reputation and the wider economy. Shifeta said during his tenure as minister he would show zero tolerance in dealing with poaching. The reduction and ultimately the elimination of poaching would be his priority. Shifeta said he was aware that some staff members have become too comfortable and complacent and are no longer innovative. "I will not hesitate to instruct staff members to be rotated to improve efficiency and effectiveness of patrols, especially in cases where there are repeated incidents of poaching," he said. According to Shifeta the anti-poaching unit will be proactive and aggressive to drive poaching out of Namibia. "We must urgently establish and operationalise our dedicated anti-poaching department. We must strengthen our cooperation with relevant partners including the army, police, communities on the ground and the media. We must go out of our way to mobilise adequate resources to address this threat as we cannot allow poaching to escalate in the country." Shifeta further said that the upgrading of the infrastructure in protected areas to a world-class standard is very important. According to him the Etosha National Park needs to be fenced properly, which would prevent poaching and reduce human-wildlife conflict. "Etosha is a key part of our national heritage and an asset which needs to be secured and protected," he said. Last year a total of 24 rhinos were poached in Namibia and the four new carcasses that were discovered brought the total to 28. This year there has only been one confirmed rhino poaching in Etosha National Park, while the other incident is still under investigation. WINDHOEK



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

ELLANIE SMIT