

Five Namibians arrested with rhino horn in Kunene

News - National | 2015-06-15

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Five Namibian men were arrested on Saturday afternoon in the Kunene Region after they were found with a freshly sawn off black rhinoceros horn and a rifle, allegedly used to shoot the rhino.

The five appeared before Magistrate Leena Iyambo at Opuwo on Monday afternoon.

Deputy Commissioner Edwin Kanguatjivi of the Namibian Police Force's (NamPol) Public Relations Division confirmed to Nampa on Monday that the suspects are between 22 and 34 years old.

They are Benjameni Shikongo, 22; Samuel Gideon, 30; Ndume Gerson, 34; Uatarakana Kature, 28; and Tjizemba Kambamba Maveriukuuni, 31.

The case was postponed to 24 July for further investigation.

The suspects remain in custody.

According to the police and other sources, the five were travelling from Sesfontein to Opuwo when they developed a flat tyre at a foot and mouth disease (FMD) checkpoint on the Warmquelle-Opuwo road.

Not changing the flat tyre led to them being stopped by a police officer, who then searched their vehicle.

NamPol discovered the horn hidden inside a spare wheel and a rifle inside the vehicle.

The suspects were arrested and prompted to take the police and Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) officials to the place where the rhino cow was shot and de-horned.

It was further established that the rhino cow had a calf, which was nowhere to be found near the carcass of its dead mother.

MET and the Save the Rhino Trust members are now searching for the calf, believed to be about two years old by air.

Wildlife experts indicated that they will relocate the calf to a safer area because it could easily fall prey to predators in the same area.

-Nampa

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