



## Two Etosha poachers nabbed

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Two men, aged 32 and 40, were arrested by members of Namibian police's anti-poaching unit in Etosha.

They were found in possession of unlicensed firearms. The police reacted to a tip-off from a member of the public who said the men were planning an incursion into the park.

The police said they had not yet determined whether the two men were linked to previous rhino poaching cases, but one of the suspects is linked to an elephant poaching case outside Etosha that took place during May this year.

According to the head of operations of the Oshana police and also the current Silver Commander of the anti-poaching unit, Deputy Commissioner Karel Theron, the suspects were arrested in the area of Onamatanga in the wee hours of Saturday morning.

"I received information from members of the public some weeks ago about these two suspects and I sent members of my team to investigate.

"We were then informed that the suspects were planning a poaching incursion in the park Saturday morning. "We decided to do a pre-emptive strike and when we paid them a visit early Saturday morning, we found them sleeping. They were however prepared to go. We found a 303 rifle with 16 rounds of ammunition and R4 automatic rifle with 18 rounds of ammunition hidden in a suitcase." He said.

Theron continued that the suspects were detained at the Okahao police station and are expected to appear at the Okahao Magistrate's Court on Monday on charges of possessing unlicensed firearms and ammunitions. "The R4 is a very dangerous automatic rifle and is only licensed for use by government agencies. Security firms can only get licenses for these rifles if they are customised to a manual setting only. The investigators are going to trace its origin as investigation continues," he added.

This was the arrest by the anti-poaching unit after the first Etosha anti-poaching unit completed its three-month duty in August last year.

The duty is on a rotational basis with the position of gold commander shared among the police regional commanders from Oshana, Oshikoto, Kunene, Omusati and Otjozondjupa. Currently Otjozondjupa Regional Commander Armas Shivute is the Gold Commander.

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(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/assets/etosha-poachers-nabbed2016-07-250.jpg>)

RED-HANDED: The two suspects were arrested and their illegal firearms were confiscated after a botched attempt to poach in Etosha National Park. Photo: ILENI NANDJATO