



No 'suit-and-tie man' for anti-poaching unit

The search for a wildlife warrior to lead the national anti-poaching unit is continuing.

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The search for a wildlife warrior to lead the national anti-poaching unit is continuing.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism is still searching for a suitable candidate to spearhead the country's anti-poaching unit and will consider headhunting a candidate should the right person for the job not be found. Environment Minister Pohamba Shifeta told Namibian Sun that the recruitment process started months ago but they have not found a suitable candidate.

In April the ministry announced that it was looking to hire someone to head the anti-poaching unit. It advertised a position of deputy director for wildlife protection services.

Shifeta said the ministry received many applications, some of which did not meet the requirements. Even those who were shortlisted fell short of the high expectations.

Shifeta yesterday stressed that he does not want an office type for the position.

"I was not part of the interview panel, but when I looked at those CVs it made me wonder if they would even be able to spend a week camping in the field. They would tell you 'yes I can' now, but later come with the excuses."

Shifeta said the ideal candidate would lead anti-poaching operations from the front, out in the bush.

"The top commander must be tough and able to lead the team."

He stressed that he wants someone who can motivate the rest of the unit and who understands the operations of international syndicates.

"Poaching is not a simple thing. This is about more than policing."

He said syndicates have connections outside Namibia and the unit leader must be able to come up with solutions to that.

"If we employ the wrong person now we will continue blaming them for the problems we are having."

The anti-poaching unit is envisaged to consist of about 500 people deployed throughout Namibia.

Shifeta said the recruitment of other positions in the unit was put on hold pending the appointment of a unit leader.

The Draft National Strategy on Wildlife Protection and Law Enforcement 2016 to 2020 highlighted that Namibia lacks at least half the resources needed to face a serious and escalating poaching threat. These include money, manpower and equipment. Namibia needs to deal with threats to its rhino and elephant populations and other wildlife species in the light of recent trends elsewhere in Africa, and particularly in neighbouring countries.

The strategy says poaching syndicates operating in Namibia involve foreigners linked to local middlemen who in turn employ local people as poachers.

"Wildlife crime in Namibia has reached a new quality of violence and an enhanced frequency of incidences. Well-organised gangs enter vulnerable areas, crime syndicates organise the trafficking of horns and tusks through complex networks leading to foreign markets," the document states.



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/asse-suit-and-tie-man-for-anti-poaching-unit2016-08-110.jpg>)

PROTECT: The Ministry of Environment and Tourism is still searching for a candidate to head the national anti-poaching unit.

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