



Rhino slaughter continues

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It appears as though the poaching of Namibia's rhino continues unabated in the country with seven new cases announced.

Police have expressed concern about the illegal activities practiced by communities living in areas surrounding national parks as seven more rhino carcasses were discovered in the Etosha National Park during November.

The recent discovery pushes the total of poached rhinos in Namibia to 47 this year, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism confirmed in a statement.

Investigations on the recent discovery are underway involving the Namibian police and the environment ministry.

With regard to elephants, the ministry said 69 elephants have been poached this year mainly in the Zambezi and Kavango regions.

"Wildlife trafficking is becoming a million-dollar criminal enterprise that has expanded to more than just a conservation concern," the ministry said.

According to the ministry, the increased involvement of organised crime in poaching and wildlife trafficking promotes corruption, threatens peace, strengthens illicit trade routes and destabilises economies and communities that depend on wildlife for their livelihoods.

Meanwhile Major-General James Tjivikua, the deputy inspector-general for operations at the police said joint efforts by the police and communities living in the areas adjacent to national parks are of paramount importance in order to combat soaring incidents of poaching.

Tjivikua said while Namibia has the largest black rhino population in the world, the country is faced with the daunting task of arresting a growing number of poachers who come from villages neighbouring the national parks. He urged the communities living in the areas adjacent to Etosha to collaborate with law enforcement agencies and the ministry to provide information about the poachers and their "heinous" activities.

According to Tjivikua, the police have recorded specific violations of the law and crimes perpetrated by would-be farmers and local residents of areas adjacent to the Etosha National Park.

He said these crimes include poaching, trespassing in the park, grazing animals in the park, cutting of the Etosha boundary fence which constitutes malicious damage to state property.

According to him, numerous complaints and illegal activities emanate from the Uutsathima, Omuthambomawe, Olumelengwa, Ombonde and Onamatanga, villages. Other villages also include west of Onagombati, Otjetjekwa, Otjivero, Okatjange, Okomizena and cattle posts between settlements and the boundary fence of the park.

The ministry further urged anyone with information that could lead to the arrest of poachers to contact the police or the ministry and reminded the public that a reward of N\$60 000 is available for information on poaching.

It also condemned all activities of rhino and elephant poaching and called upon those involved to refrain from such activities immediately or risk facing the full wrath of the



(<https://d3rp5jat0m3eyn.cloudfront.net/asset/slaughter-continues2016-11-250.jpg>)

SLAUGHTER: Seven poached rhino carcasses were discovered during November in the Etosha National Park. Photo: NWR

law.

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