



## Community members hide poachers

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The minister of environment and tourism, Pohamba Shifeta, this week held a public discussion about rhino and elephant poaching at Ongwediva. It was highlighted that perpetrators of such crimes are part of Namibian society and are sometimes hidden by members of the community. The discussion was part of an information-sharing session by the ministry at the Ongwediva Trade Fair in the Oshana Region.

The discussion was joined by Prosecutor-General Martha Imalwa, Nampol's Deputy Inspector-General for Operations, Major-General James Tjivikua, the director of Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation, John Kasaona, and the chairperson of the Sheeya Shuushona Conservancy, Hilda Haipinge.

According to Shifeta the discussion highlighted the important issues relating to wildlife crimes, in particular poaching of protected species. He said the discussion was aimed at raising public awareness of illegal hunting and wildlife trade and the progress made in addressing these problems.

Shifeta said it emerged from the dialogue that collaboration is crucial to efficiently and effectively combat wildlife crimes while ensuring law enforcement, justice and that the rule of law is upheld.

"It became clear that not only should there be collaboration between related institutions but also the civil society is required to play a major role in this regard," he said. The public was assured that fear of identifying poachers should not be a factor because witnesses will be protected.

The economic implications of poaching were also highlighted.

Recent statistics provided by the ministry showed that 125 rhinos and 49 elephants were killed last year. So far this year, poachers have killed 37 rhinos and 31 elephants.

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(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/assets/members-hide-poachers2016-09-010.jpg>)

DISCUSS: The Ministry of Environment and Tourism this week held discussions on poaching at the Ongwediva Trade Fair. Photo: FACEBOOK