



## Shifeta pleased with rhino smugglers sentence

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The Minister of Environment and Tourism has applauded the Namibian courts for sending to jail four Chinese nationals arrested in 2014 for rhino horn smuggling.

The first three jailed smugglers are Li Zhibing, 53; Li Xiaoliang, 30; and 49-year-old Pu Xuexin, who were arrested at the Hosea Kutako International Airport on 24 March 2014 with 14 rhino horns worth more than N.dollars 2.3 million and a leopard skin valued at N\$50 000 stashed in their luggage.

The fourth is Wang Hui, 40, believed to be the kingpin in the rhino horn smuggling operation in Namibia.

All four were each sentenced to 14 years imprisonment by Windhoek Regional Magistrate Alexis Diergaardt in Katutura on Friday without an option to pay a fine.

"The Ministry of Environment and Tourism is extremely heartened by the cooperation of the law-enforcement agencies, the justice system and the media who worked very hard since this case was first reported and ensured it resulted in a successful conviction," said Minister Pohamba Shifeta in a media statement issued on Monday.

He said this kind of cooperation will go a long way in ensuring that Namibia's rhinos, elephants and other specially-protected wild animals are protected for the benefit of today's and future generations.

Shifeta also commended personnel at the South African National Forensic Laboratory that assisted the Namibian Police Force with Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) analysis and other related tests in determining the exact origin of the confiscated rhino horns.

The minister appealed to all Namibians to report to law-enforcement units people found poaching and those involved in illegal trafficking of controlled wildlife products.

"The Ministry of Environment and Tourism is looking forward to continue working with all stakeholders to ensure that all other pending cases involving rhino and elephant poaching are successfully concluded and wrong-doers suitably punished," noted Shifeta.