

# Crime, Corruption Worse Than It Seems

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**THE RECENT arrest of a police officer who allowed a Chinese man to pass through our airport security system with a suitcase of rhino horns once again brings to the fore the mischief and illicit dealings between poachers and law enforcement agents.**

This story bears the hallmarks of a systematic poaching network that is bigger than one police officer and one Chinese smuggler, who was sent from China as a foot soldier to fetch rhino horns through an illicit network by people who are at the top of the poaching hierarchy.

It is clear that poaching is becoming an insidious scourge that threatens the well-being and serenity of our tourism industry. Corrupt and criminal government officials, who are colluding with poachers are perpetuating the cancer and consequently reversing our gains in conservation.

The police officer who was tasked with the responsibility of enforcing the law, grossly neglected his duties and flagrantly ignored a vivid footage of rhino horns detected by the airport scanners and was arrested on charges of defeating and obstructing the course of justice.

It is shocking and almost mind-boggling that the same police officer was granted bail at the backdrop of an increase in poaching cases and despite the real fear that he could frustrate and interfere with evidence and police investigations.

How many times did the same officer turn a blind eye to contraband passing through our airport security system for money, material gifts or whatever the motivation was? Granting bail to poachers and those who aid and abet poaching sends out a wrong message to potential poachers. We will not win the fight against poaching with such complacent attitudes.

The Kora music awards scam was a successful transaction. This rhino horn transaction went horribly wrong in Johannesburg, resulting in the arrest of two people, who are however small fish in the poaching network. Who else is involved in the US\$6,6 million merchandise that was destined for China? This story is deep and has a horrible stench of corruption.

We are dealing with phosphate mining dealers, underground diamond dealers and rhino horn dealers...

As Namibians, it is time we wake up from our deep slumber and reclaim this country from the hands of corrupt and criminal elements. Systematic and normalised corruption must fall to the ground.

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By email