

Criminal Chinese tarnishing name – embassy

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THE Chinese embassy in Namibia said it will not allow a few of its nationals who have been arrested in connection with poaching to tarnish their country's image.

This week, police Inspector General Sebastian Ndeitunga accused some Chinese nationals of fuelling poaching and other criminal activities.

He also called for the closure of the Chinatown trading sites at Windhoek and Oshakati, saying they were being used for criminal activities.

Over the past two weeks alone, three Chinese nationals were arrested after they were found in possession of wildlife products.

Two were found with finished ivory products, and the other had US\$33 500 he could not account for, which he is suspected to have intended to take out of the country.

Another was caught in South Africa after 18 rhino horns suspected to have been from Namibia were found in his luggage.

Ye Zhiwei had flown from Namibia, and was on his way to Hong Kong when SA police arrested him at the OR Tambo International Airport. In a statement yesterday, the embassy said while they do not condone any illegal or criminal acts by Chinese nationals, they hope and trust that law enforcement officers will protect the legitimate rights and interests of other Chinese and their companies in Namibia.

The embassy said they are paying close attention to the criminal activities reported, and that they have a zero-tolerance attitude towards ivory smuggling and other illegal trading.

In addition, the embassy pointed out that the offenders are just few, and that the embassy will always require and educate their people in Namibia to comply with applicable laws and regulations.

In an interview with The Namibian yesterday, Ndeitunga said while there are some genuine Chinese business people, others come into the country with the sole purpose of committing crimes.

He said previous operations in the Chinatowns showed that immigration-related offences, fraud and the selling of counterfeit goods topped the list of misdemeanours.

“There is also a big market for the purchasing of stolen electrical appliances among these Chinese communities at the Chinatowns,” Ndeitunga said, adding that some use the conducive economic environment here, but do not contribute to the economy.

He, however, conceded that government does not have the necessary checks and balances to keep track of all foreign business people in the country. Most China shop owners state that they will open factories which will employ thousands of people, which enables them to get their visas, only for them to open a corner shop and employ one person, he added.

“These people end up not doing anything they said they would do in their applications. Home affairs needs to have a system to monitor these people, and see if they are really doing what they say they would do,” the police chief said.

Ndeitunga added that the Chinese community must understand that these criminal activities are painting a bad picture of all of them, and they must therefore report those who are engaged in illegal activities.