



Hage wants tougher sentences for poachers

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The highest office in the country has joined the outcry against the spate of poaching and plundering of wildlife resources currently experienced in the country.

President Hage Geingob, during the opening of the 2017 legal year, called upon parliament to send him the necessary amendments to the relevant laws to increase penalties so that he can sign them into law for the courts to enforce them.

"Let us rededicate ourselves to maintaining our conservation standards by ensuring those who violate our laws receive due process and get maximum sentences they deserve," Geingob said.

He emphasised that it is important that sentences imposed for these crimes should reflect the severity and danger such crimes pose to the nation's natural resources and highly acclaimed conservation efforts.

According to Geingob, the country values the conservation of our natural resources that is why they are included in the constitution.

Recently environment and tourism minister Pohamba Shifeta revealed the latest statistics pertaining to wildlife crime.

A total of 266 cases of wildlife crime have been registered in Namibia since the beginning of last year, and 231 suspects have been arrested.

The majority of those arrested are Namibians, statistics indicate, while contrary to popular belief the majority of foreigners involved in poaching are Zambians and Angolans.

Last year 260 poaching cases were reported involving the illegal hunting of elephants and rhinos and the possession of elephant tusks and rhino horns.

These consisted of 105 cases of illegal hunting of rhinos, 44 of illegal possession of rhino horns, 74 of illegal hunting of elephants and 35 of illegal possession of elephant tusks.

This year six cases have been registered - one of illegal hunting of rhino, two of illegal possession of rhino horns, one of illegal hunting of elephants and two of illegal possession of elephant tusks.

Shifeta said 222 suspects were arrested for rhino and elephant poaching last year. Of these 83 were Namibians and 17 Zambians. Eight Chinese and 14 Angolans were arrested.

The nationality of 100 suspects could not be ascertained. Shifeta said the number of foreigners arrested in these crimes could, therefore, be much higher.

FRED GOEIJEMAN



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/assets/wants-tougher-sentences-for-poachers2017-02-090.jpg>)

ANTI-POACHING: President Hage Geingob.

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