

Ivory ban will boost illegal trade – Shifeta

News - National | 2018-01-05

Page no: 1



by Ndanki Kahiurika



ENVIRONMENT minister Pohamba Shifeta yesterday said the Chinese government's ban on trade in ivory will only make the black market for rhino horns and elephant tusks more lucrative.

Shifeta said this after China's ban on ivory trading, announced last year, took effect on New Year's Day.

Asia, particularly China, has been reported as the biggest market for elephant tusks and rhino horns, which are popular for traditional medicinal purposes and the carving of icons.

Al Jazeera reported that the ivory ban is considered a step in the right direction in conserving rhinos and elephants.

Shifeta, however, said the ban would only increase the price of ivory, and cause the black market to boom.

"What we want to see is stricter measures taken with regards to security and the monitoring of illegal ivory and rhino horn trading.

Our fear now is that this would only make the black market more lucrative. This is not a solution. It was not a question of banning legal trade, but curbing illegal trading," the minister stressed.

He added that government has an ivory stockpile which could be sold on the international market, and the proceeds

ploughed back into the country's conservation efforts, but expressed concern that this might now be jeopardised.

"Criminals will now get more money, and those who used to buy ivory legally will be encouraged to get it elsewhere; unless loopholes used to get the ivory and rhino horns into the market are closed," he said.

The Namibian Professional Hunting Association (Napha) was quoted by international media as stating that the ban will not address the poaching of rhinos and elephants, but nonetheless called for the ban to be widened to include other endangered species.

Comments 1 - 1 of 1

[view all](#)

- Wow! I know that Namibian politicians are obliged to toe the party line on every possible occasion, and indeed they have been parroting the same, tired old cliches about wildlife ever since Independence, but isn't it a bit risky to make a claim that will so easily be disproved?

Poaching and illegal trade are highly likely to drop as a result of the ivory ban in China, and we already know that prices in China have fallen by half, while cases of smuggling have dropped by 80% since the ban was announced in 2016. Nobody knows how far they will continue to fall but the one thing we do know is that illegal trade will NOT increase as a result of China's actions.

But no doubt he will be back in a few months' time to insist that he was right and that news of decreased illegal trade is all "fake news". It was ever thus in Namibia, sadly. Ignore the reality and stick to the party line, no matter what. - Michael Robinson | 2018-01-06 [21877]