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Informanté

Ivory smugglers arrested in Rundu

Niël Terblanché

THE Blue Rhino Task Team arrested two men in Rundu at the start of the weekend after they were caught red handed with four elephant tusks in their possession.

The joint task force conducted a special operation in the town on the banks of the Kavango River on Friday and made the discovery of the wildlife contraband in the Tuhingireni Location of Rundu around 22:00.

The suspects are both Namibians and were taken to the Rundu police station where a case of possession and dealing in controlled wildlife products was registered against them. Both suspects has been detained in the police holding cells since.

According to a report about the arrest that was issued by the spokesperson of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Romeo Muyunda the four elephant tusks were found in the black VW Polo. The Blue Rhino Task Team also impounded the vehicle and it was taken to the Rundu police station.

The suspects are set to make their first appearance on the charges in the Rundu Magistrate's Court later today.

Picture for illustrative purposes only

Detectives stall has to investigate the origin of the elephant tusks to determine if it stems from any recent poaching incidents in Namibia.

Muyunda said in the incident report that it should be reiterated that wildlife crime in Namibia is becoming a risky activity for the perpetrators.

“Perpetrators are warned to refrain from illicit activities or risk being arrested. The MET and the Protected Resources Division of the Namibian Police will continue to intensify their efforts to combat this type of crime and its related activities.”

He said the arrest of the two suspects in Rundu is one of many already undertaken by a very determined combined task force.

“Our people must reject this type of crime because the risk is too high and it is not worth sacrificing their freedom for it.”

Muyunda said the MET appeals to the public to report any form of wildlife crime to the authorities.

“As patriotic citizens, it’s time to shun poaching and related wildlife crimes. Our wildlife is a valuable resource to the people of the country considering its contribution to tourism development, employment creation and income and revenue generation. Poaching threatens all this.”

Muyunda revealed that information that may lead to the arrest of perpetrators of poaching of wildlife and other related crimes pay out certain rewards.

