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1 790 arrested for poaching

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by [Eliaser Ndeyanale](#)



Pohamba Shifeta

MINISTER of environment, forestry and tourism Pohamba Shifeta says 1 790 suspected poachers were arrested between the end of 2018 and May 2020.

The minister disclosed this in the National Assembly on Thursday saying this is a reduction in the poaching of iconic animals such as rhinos and elephants.

He said arrests have doubled since the launch of the anti-poaching unit in 2016.

"Our appreciation goes to the joint operation of our security forces, NDF special forces, Nampol protection resources unit, the Namibia Central Intelligent Service and the ministry's anti-poaching unit.

"The Blue Rhino Task Team is after all wildlife criminal syndicates in Namibia.

"Most of these syndicates are known, and members of those syndicates not yet arrested is just a matter of the appropriate time and place. They will be arrested soon or later.

"Bravo to all our dedicated men and women in these units," he said.

Shifeta said poaching and the incidence of human-wildlife conflict continue to be major challenges facing the ministry.

The minister said wildlife and national parks are key to socio-economic development in Namibia's rural areas.

According to him, considerable efforts were made in the 2019/2020 financial year to maintain and upgrade the standard of infrastructure in national parks - particularly roads, fencing, water infrastructure as well as staff housing and park information stations.

Some examples of progress achieved, he said, include the electrification of a 20 km stretch of the Waterberg Plateau Park, which he said is significant for preventing the escape of buffaloes into the surrounding farmlands.

"A three-year action plan to construct and upgrade 712 km of the 824 km fence of the Etosha National Park boundary by our own staff members was launched and commenced in February 2020.

"Due to Covid-19 less than 10 km has been completed so far, but we expect work to commence again as soon as the situation normalises," he said.

In addition, park infrastructure involving staff houses, offices and tourism reception offices were constructed in Bwabwata National Park and the Tsau //khaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park, with the support of the German Development Bank (KfW).

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