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'Rhino carcasses linked to syndicate'

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Francoise Steynberg - Just before the alleged rhino poachers, Pastor Jackson Babi, 30, and the 25-year-old Mr. Frizans Dumeni, who appeared in the Windhoek Magistrate's Court yesterday morning for their bail application, informed a farmer that two more white rhino carcasses had been found on a farm in the Gobabis district.

"The cow was injured by poachers two months ago, but survived. She died on Monday because of her wounds. Her six-year-old bull calf's carcass was discovered last Saturday and his horns were removed," said the farmer.

"The cow lay down on Sunday and the vet, Dr. Kallie Nel, gave her a drip. It was a tear drop on the farm Monday when she died."

The farmer says the bull calf was the first rhino calf born on his farm.

"The cow also has a version (two and a half years old) that ran around like a madman when her mother was shot. Fortunately she was weaned and she is now walking with another rhino cow," said the farmer. .

The head of the Blue Rhino task team, comm. Barry de Klerk, was on the farm yesterday to investigate the incident.

The farmer says one cartridge tip was removed from the cow's leaf and two cartridge points and a cartridge cap were found at the calf's carcass and will be sent for forensic tests.

"It is suspected that it was the work of the same syndicate of eight suspects arrested last week because the caliber rifle is the same as the one used to shoot two rhinos on another farm in Gobabis district , "the farmer said.

"The gun is too small to shoot a rhino."

BABY AND WHERE

Babi and Dumeni's bail application took a turn in the Windhoek Magistrate's Court yesterday when Prosecutor Rowan van Wyk said Babi should appear in the Gobabis Magistrate's Court on Monday on a charge of rhino poaching.

Van Wyk said the results of the hunting rifle's ballistic and rhino horn DNA tests were awaited, as well as four statements and a photo file.

Magistrate Linus Samunzela has postponed the two accused's case until July 24 for further investigation. Both remain in custody.

Mr. Kadhila Amoomo defends Babi and Mr. Kalundu Kamwi for Dumeni.

They are charged with rhino poaching, horn smuggling and illegal possession of rhino horns, a firearm and ammunition after being arrested last week with six suspects in Windhoek and Otjiwarongo.

Two rhino horns, a hunting rifle and ammunition, were apparently found in Babi's house on erf 454 in Rheintfontein Street in the Kleine Kuppe neighborhood in Windhoek.

This follows two rhino carcasses, whose horns were removed, were discovered last week on a farm in the Gobabis district.

Outside the courtroom, Babi's members of his House of Joy Ministries again marched and tried to touch him.

A male fan punched a journalist in the Republican's sister newspaper, Namibian Sun, in her face and against the wall as she tried to take a picture of Babi.

The other accused are Messrs. Alberto Mbware and Joseph Matheus who appeared on Monday on charges of rhino poaching and money laundering on Gobabis.

They remain in custody until their next appearance on September 15.

The four who were arrested on Tuesday in Otjiwarongo when they allegedly wanted to sell two rhino horns to a secret police officer are Messrs. Enos Uutoni, Onesmus Haufiku, Vaaruka Musutua and Elias Nashivela. Nashivela is a former member of the Namibian military and Haufiku a police officer attached to the unit for the protection of many important persons (GDP) in Windhoek. They also remain in custody.

A total of 11 suspects were arrested last week according to the weekly wildlife crime report related to rhino poaching or horn smuggling.

Messrs. Sakaria Manasseh, Augustine Jonas and Limbu Maseka were arrested at Tsumeb on Friday with two rhino horns in their possession. Police seized a vehicle.

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