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Annual rhino calf stripped Stump removed

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Francoise Steynberg - A one-year-old rhino calf who was still drinking from her mother was poached on a game farm in the Gobabis district.

According to the co-owner of the farm, Mr. Walter Kinnear (29), the white rhino calf's horn stump "as long as a little finger", was removed by the poacher (s). "The calf has not even been weaned from her mother yet."

Kinnear and his father, also Walter (49), farm together.

He says their farm manager, Mr. Ernie Erasmus, made the gruesome discovery on Sunday afternoon when he spotted vultures and went to investigate.

Erasmus summoned Kinnear.

"I thought the calf died of natural causes and when I wanted to pick up her carcass, I realized she had been stripped," Kinnear told Republikein on Monday.

"We found a pattern on the scene."

According to the Namibian police's crime report, the rhino was poached between Saturday 17 October and Saturday 24 October.

Kinnear confirmed the Namibian police had come to the farm to investigate the matter and follow up on all clues.

According to the head of the formidable Blue Rhino task force, Comm. Barry de Klerk, his team and the unit for protected resources of Windhoek assist the local police with the investigation.

De Klerk confirmed to Republikein yesterday that no suspects have been arrested so far, but the investigation is continuing and is at a sensitive stage.

DEPARTMENT ANNUALLY

According to Kinnear, they dehorn all their rhinos annually as a protection measure amounting to about N \$ 18 000 per rhino.

"Even though we dehorn the rhinos, the poachers are so cruel to poach a heifer with a small horn stump," Kinnear said.

"We also have an anti-poaching unit on the farm that runs patrols and does night shifts" which is also a huge expense.

This is not the first time the Kinnears have been hit by rhino poachers. Just before Christmas in December 2016, a stud bull and a pregnant cow that was calving were stripped and their horns removed. A young bull and an eight-year-old heifer were injured, but the heifer died a month later due to her severe gunshot wounds.

Five suspects have been arrested in connection with the case. They are the former team doctor of the Brave Warriors, dr. Gerson Kandjii, en mnre. Domingo Justice Moma, Erwin Tjiteere, David Stephanus and a farm worker, mr. Zee Shekumba.

Kandjii is facing several charges of rhino poaching, as well as in connection with the robbery and murder case of a farm owner from Kalkrand, mr. Reinhard Schmidt, in February 2015.

Kandjii and co will appear in court again on November 20. He is still in custody.

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