



Poaching suspects appear in camera

29 May 2020 | Crime

ELLANIE SMIT

WINDHOEK

Four of the eight suspects arrested in connection with the alleged poaching of two rhino horns near Gobabis appeared in the Otjiwarongo Regional Court in camera yesterday.

Tourism ministry spokesperson Romeo Muyanda told Namibian Sun their names cannot be made public at this stage, as the investigations are still at a sensitive stage. The suspects may also be able to provide valuable information that could lead to further arrests. The four suspects, including a VIPP police officer attached to Windhoek, were arrested on Tuesday after two rhino carcasses were discovered on a farm near Gobabis by an employee.



(<https://d3rp5jat0m3eyn.cloudfront.net/asse-suspects-appear-in-camera2020-05-290.jpg>)

POACHING: Four suspects arrested in connection with rhino poaching appeared in the Otjiwarongo Regional Court in camera yesterday. PHOTO: FILE

The horns were removed from the rhinos. It is suspected that the rhinos were shot and killed with a hunting rifle.

Follow-up investigations led to Otjiwarongo where a covert operation was conducted and two horns were found in the possession of the four suspects when they tried to sell the illegal contraband to an uncover police officer.

Further investigations led to a pastor's house in Klein Windhoek, where another two rhino horns, a hunting rifle and ammunition were confiscated. Four suspects, including the pastor, were arrested. The pastor and one of his co-accused will appear in the Windhoek Magistrate's Court today, while the other two suspects will appear in the Gobabis Magistrate's Court. The rhino horns and the confiscated firearm are connected to the poaching, according to the police. Muyanda said all eight suspects will eventually be charged in Windhoek.

The charges they face include possession of controlled wildlife products, illegal hunting of protected species and the illegal trade of controlled wildlife products, as well as a charge under the Arms and Ammunition Act.