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20 August 2021 | [Nature & Environment](#)

Three suspected rhino poachers arrested near Otavi



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Otjiwarongo / Windhoek (Nampa / es / cr) - Three men suspected of being rhinoceros poachers were arrested on Tuesday afternoon near Otavi in the Otjozondjupa region.

According to police spokeswoman for the Otjozondjupa region, Inspector Maureen Mbeha, a hunting rifle with a telescope and a silencer was found in a small car that the trio was driving on a gravel road north of Otavi. Eight live ammunition, a panga and a knife were also found, Mbeha said.

"We had advance information about these suspects and we were able to intervene before they carried out their alleged poaching on a commercial game farm in the Otavi district," she said. The suspects, aged 32, 41 and 51, appeared before the Otavi Magistrate Court yesterday for possession of illegal ammunition and a hunting rifle without a valid license.

Furthermore, fewer than eight percent of suspects arrested were convicted in the past year in connection with crimes against wild animals and plants. 23 of 304 suspects arrested last year for crimes against rhinos, elephants and pangolins have been convicted so far. A total of 1,055 suspects in connection with wildlife crimes were arrested from the beginning of last year to July 31 of this year.

Of those arrested, 151 suspects are in pre-trial detention, while 112 have been released on bail. In addition, 23 suspects have been convicted, while ten have been acquitted, three have gone into hiding, two have been released and one case has been withdrawn. Two suspects also died.

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