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The self-proclaimed prophet Jackson Babi during a previous appearance in the high court in Windhoek. PHOTO ARCHIVE

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'PROPHET' GUILTY OF POACHING

Ella Smith

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Ellanie Smit

The self-proclaimed prophet Jackson Babi was found guilty on 12 charges related to rhino poaching in the Gobabis Magistrate's Court on Friday. Babi faces at least ten years in prison. In total, he was found guilty and sentenced for 19 crimes and must pay fines worth N\$370,000. Should he not pay the fines, further imprisonment will be added to his sentence.

Babi's conviction was announced by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism through his spokesperson, Mr. Romeo Muyundu, welcome.

PROTECTED WILDLIFE

Muyundu explained that Babi has the option to pay the fines in some of the convictions.

"It has yet to be determined whether he will pay or not. On four charges there is a direct prison sentence in addition to a fine."

According to him, Babi was sentenced for hunting specially protected game, alternatively conspiracy to hunt specially protected game (charge 1) with a fine of N\$100,000 or two years imprisonment and three years direct imprisonment. On counts 3 and 4 relating to theft, he was sentenced to two years in prison each.

For charges five and six relating to the supply of ammunition and its possession, he was sentenced to a fine of N\$5,000 or a year's imprisonment. He was also disqualified from owning a weapon for four years. Babi was fined N\$30,000 or two years in prison for defaults relating to charges 11, 12 and 18.

According to Muyunda, count 11 relates to racketeering, while 12 and 18 relate to charges of money laundering.

"Under charge 17 for possession of controlled wildlife products, he was fined N\$50,000 or three years in prison if he did not pay. For charge 19 for attempting to commit a corrupt practice, the sentence was a fine of N\$20,000 or imprisonment should he fail to pay the fine."

Babi can appeal against the court ruling within 14 days.

"The ministry welcomes the verdict because we feel it represents the nature of the crimes committed. It is our hope that this serves as a deterrent to others committing similar crimes."

Babi is linked to at least three separate cases of poaching that were joined for his trial that began in August in Gobabis. –republicein@republicein.com.na