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Informanté

Two arrested, planks and timber cutting machine confiscated

Maria David

TWO people have been arrested for illegal timber operations deep in the forest in the Kavango West region, with thousands of planks and a cutting machine confiscated.

The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism said more suspects are to be arrested.

This comes after a directorate of forestry patrol team came across the illegal operations.



CAUGHT: Two people were arrested for illegal timber activities. Photos: MEFT

Ministry spokesperson Romeo Muyunda stated about 4 000 timber pieces and a timber cutting machine have been confiscated, but the value of the timber has not been determined.

This is the second largest illegal timber activity reported within a month.

“Two suspects have been arrested and we looking for others. The ministry is requesting the public to provide information about suspected illegal timber operation,” he said.

Anyone found harvesting, transporting, marketing and exporting timber in the country risks legal action taken against them.

Muyunda added that those who intend to venture into this illegal operation are warned that the ministry will deal harshly with them including the potential to lose the items used in the commission of such crime.

Last month, a truck containing 1 500 unprocessed timber pieces intended for exportation to South Africa was seized by the ministry officials in Windhoek.

The planks were held and the transport permit was temporarily suspended, pending further investigations to establish where the timber came from and if it was legally acquired.

Muyunda stated that in 2018 the Ministry introduced a moratorium on timber harvesting, transportation, marketing and exporting.

“This has led to a major reduction in deforestation and illegal timber harvesting. The Ministry has also stepped up forest monitoring and inspection activities to prevent illegal operations,” he added.

He warned those committing or intending to undertake illegal activities to refrain and follow set out laws and procedures or risk being caught and face the full wrath of the law.

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