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2022-06-21 [Albertina Nakale](#)

Environment minister Pohamba Shifeta has redeployed retired police commander Ndahangwapo Kashihakumwa to lead anti-poaching efforts in the Etosha National Park.

The national park has been hard-hit by poachers in recent weeks, including the discovery of 11 rhino carcasses.

According to Shifeta, Kashihakumwa, who currently heads the anti-poaching unit, based in Windhoek, has been deployed with immediate effect as a security adjustment.

“We will not relent in ensuring maximum protection of our iconic species in the flagship Etosha National Park and indeed elsewhere in the country,” Shifeta declared yesterday.

“To ensure our security adjustments and strategies are implemented without fail, we have, among other measures, redeployed retired commissioner Ndahangwapo Kashihakumwa, head of the Wildlife Protection Unit, to the Etosha National Park with immediate effect.” Since his appointment in 2017, Kashihakumwa has been based in Windhoek at the ministry as the head of the anti-poaching unit.

Kashihakumwa was not available for comment when contacted yesterday.

The unit is responsible for protecting wildlife, mainly rhinos and elephants from poachers, and promoting the enforcement of wildlife laws within the country and with neighbouring states.

It also aims to enhance the effective prevention of wildlife crime and national wildlife protection legislation in Namibia, among others.

Shifeta updated that since the discovery of the carcasses, the ministry has moved to make security adjustments and to close any loopholes in the Etosha National Park to ensure that such incidences do not occur again.

“Due to the safety and security of our animals, we are not able to give specific details on this,” Shifeta said.

The ministry of environment has recorded an alarming number of rhino carcasses in Etosha from the beginning of this month.

Eleven black rhinos have been poached in the last two weeks in the park.

In total, 22 rhino carcasses were discovered in January. Shifeta, however, warned those attempting to involve themselves in wildlife crimes, particularly poaching, that “we will leave no stone unturned to apprehend them and to bring them to justice”.

Shifeta last week reported that between 14-16th June 2022, a joint anti-poaching unit managed to track and apprehend two suspects out of a group of five who attempted to hunt rhinos in the Etosha National Park.

“The five suspects were seen in the park by a joint anti-poaching unit that was tracking a rhino. The suspects fled when approached by the anti-poaching unit, and two suspects were subsequently arrested. Investigations are at an advanced stage to apprehend the remaining three suspects, whose identities are known to the authorities,” Shifeta, who visited the park last weekend, said.

In another recent incident, on 15 June 2022, the minister said a suspected poacher was injured and arrested by ministry officials, comprising of wildlife protection services and park staff, in the Mahango Core area of the Bwabwata National Park.

According to Shifeta, park staff, who were on regular patrol, laid an ambush after they discovered a fresh carcass of a giraffe in a snare wire and hanging biltong.

After some time, he said, two male suspects approached the snared animal before fleeing the scene upon realising they were being ambushed.

“The official fired warning shots for suspects to stop but to no avail. In the process, one of the suspects was shot in the leg and apprehended, while the other suspect managed to flee to Botswana,” he noted.

The injured suspect was identified as a 40-year-old male Botswana national, and he is now receiving medical attention at a Rundu hospital.

He will be charged for contravening the Nature Conservation Ordinance No. 4 of 1975, for illegally hunting a specially protected game species, for illegal entry into the park, and illegal entry into Namibia.

Investigations continue in the matter as well as to establish the identity and apprehension of the second suspect.

He called upon patriotic Namibians to stand with the authorities in not only condemning these barbaric actions but also reporting any suspected poaching or any other crimes committed against our wildlife.

“Our resolve, as the citizens of this country, must be clear; we do not tolerate poaching and the illegal plundering of our natural resources. Our natural resources must be preserved and utilised for the benefit of all of us,” Shifeta vowed.

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