



firm but fair

Informanté

Two arrested for protected plant species

Maria David

TWO men were on Saturday arrested after being found in possession of protected plant species at Okahandja.

The duo, a Namibian and Chinese national were found with four *Adenia pechuelii* (elephant foot) plants; 15x *Cyphostema* plants; eight *Commiphora* plants; five plastics containing *Welwitschia* seeds and 12x plastics with different unidentified seeds.

Ministry of Environment spokesperson Romeo Muyunda stated that this came after Ministry officials followed up on a video in which the two suspects were seen collecting protected plants reportedly in the area of Usakos.

"A team was dispatched immediately to investigate the incident," he said.

He added that preliminary investigations in the area confirmed the incident; however, the suspects could not be found.

Muyunda stated that the two were only later seen at Okahandja, driving a black 7-seater vehicle by members of the ministry who were returning back to Windhoek.

"The officials followed the suspects without them knowing to a flat in Okahandja and at the same time alerted the Blue Rhino Task Team (BRTT)," he said.

Muyunda added that the BRTT reacted and the suspects were duly arrested.

According to the Namibia Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1975, no person other than the lawful holder of a permit granted by the minister shall at any time pick or transport any protected plant.

Any person who contravenes or fails to comply with any condition, requirement or restriction of a permit granted thereunder shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period of not less than one month and not exceeding twelve months or to both such fine and such imprisonment.