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## SUSPECTED POACHING LEAVES ZAMBEZI ELEPHANT DEAD

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The police in the Zambezi region have urged public assistance to trace a suspected poacher for arrest. The suspect allegedly fatally shot the elephant bull on Monday, 15 August, and the community members of Batubaja Village made the discovery.

It was further reported that the elephant was shot and died in Batubaja area. The incident is believed to have occurred at around 15h00 in the afternoon. No suspect has been arrested so far, and the investigation is at an advanced stage.

The crime investigation coordinator for the Zambezi region, deputy commissioner Kenneth Simbwaye told The Villager the police are still busy with their investigation. "The incident just happened on Monday, and we will make sure we bring the suspect to book."

Spokesperson for the environment, tourism and ministry Romeo Muyunda said the incident has been confirmed, and there is an ongoing investigation to establish the actual cause of the incident.

"The Namibian police are going to investigate the area of Batubaja. The elephant was left with three visible gunshot wounds, and the tusks are still intact, but we're waiting for a thorough investigation to see if it's an attempted poaching or just a retributive killing for human and wildlife conflict."

According to Muyunda, poaching in the Zambezi region in terms of elephants is very low. The number of cases of elephant poaching in the region in most cases is for meat consumption. "But poaching, in this case, hasn't yet been confirmed, and at this stage, it is uncertain whether the incident was truly poaching or just due to human and wildlife conflict," he said.

In 2010 and 2011, the number of elephants poached in isolated cases was four and six, respectively. In the Zambezi region, formerly known as Caprivi, officials noticed a growth in wildlife trafficking from around 2010.

In 2012 things took a turn for the worst, however, as around 78 elephants were poached by international smugglers in one year. By November 2013, official records showed that at least 20 elephants had been poached since the start of the year, and 35 suspects had been arrested.