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SENTENCED: Self-proclaimed prophet Jackson Babi during an earlier court appearance at the Windhoek High Court. Photo: FILE

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DECADE-LONG JAIL TERM FOR 'PROPHET'

12 counts related to rhino poaching

In total, he has been found guilty on 19 counts and must pay fines amounting to N\$370 000, or face further jail time.

Ellanie Smit

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Self-proclaimed prophet Jackson Babi was sentenced on 12 counts related to rhino poaching in the Gobabis Magistrate's Court last Friday, and faces at least 10 years' direct imprisonment.

In total, he has been found guilty and sentenced on 19 counts and must pay fines amounting to N\$370 000 or face further jail time.

Environment ministry spokesperson Romeo Muyunda said the ministry welcomed the sentence.

He added that it is still unclear whether Babi will exercise the option to pay the fines. "That is still to be determined." On four counts, there is a direct imprisonment in addition to a fine, he said.

Counts detailed

Muyunda said Babi was sentenced for hunting special protected game, alternatively conspiracy to hunt specially protected game (count one), with a fine of N\$100 000 or two years' imprisonment, and three years' imprisonment.

He was also sentenced for the hunting of special protected game, alternatively conspiracy to hunt specially protected game (count two), with a fine of N\$100 000 or two years' imprisonment, and three years' direct imprisonment.

For count three and four, which relate to theft, Babi was sentenced to two years' imprisonment on each count.

He was also sentenced to a fine of N\$5 000 or a 12-month imprisonment with regards to counts five and six. Both of these charges involve the supplying of ammunitions and possession of ammunition.

The self-proclaimed prophet was also declared unfit to possess a firearm for four years.

Racketeering, money laundering

Furthermore, he was fined N\$30 000 or two years imprisonment in default payments for counts 11, 12 and 18.

According to Muyunda, count 11 relates to charges of racketeering, while counts 12 and 18 are with regards to money laundering.

“Under count 17 of possession of controlled wildlife products, Babi was fined N\$50 000 or three years’ imprisonment in default payment as well as a fine of N\$20 000 or imprisonment in default payment of count 19, which carried charges of attempting to commit a corrupt practice,” Muyunda said.

Babi reserves the right to appeal the judgment within 14 days.

“This judgment is pleasing to the ministry as we view it to be commensurate with the nature of offences committed. It is our hope that it will also serve as a deterrent to those with intention to commit similar crimes.”

Babi has been linked to at least three separate poaching cases that were consolidated into a single case for the purposes of the trial, which started in August.