

NEWS

Cross Border Syndicates Implicated in surge in Rhino Poaching

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BY VITALIO ANGULA

WHILE Africa is seeing a drop in the rate of rhinoceros poaching, Namibian wildlife authorities say they are seeing a surge in rhino killings in the southern African nation. Conservationists say poachers seeking rhino horns for Asian markets are targeting Namibia's commercial farms.

Save the Rhino Trust CEO Simson Uri Khob said there are reports that syndicates of rhino poachers from South Africa are operating in Namibia. He said poaching cases are rising, especially in Etosha National Park and commercial farms.

"It's a problem," Khob said. "The only thing I can say is we have to take more hands with the communities [that are] in the areas and do more awareness."

Salmon Vermaak, who heads an anti-poaching group called Namibia Wildlife Protection, said the group has received two rhino poaching reports in the last four months, the first such cases since the organization began operating in the area eight years ago.

"We pick up tracks of prospective poachers on the farms we look after," Vermaak said. "The figures from the Ministry of Forestry show what the increases are. There are definitely syndicates operating between here and South Africa."

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