

## Poaching remains unabated

2022-11-28 **Albertina Nakale**



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The environment and tourism ministry says even though it continues to record successes in its fight against wildlife crime, poaching of highly valued species remains a concern.

Ministry spokesperson Romeo Muyunda over the weekend said 63 rhinos have been poached in the country this year alone. This includes 41 black rhinos and 22 white rhinos.

This year's poaching cases include 15 rhinos poached on custodianship farms, another 22 on private farms and 26 in the Etosha National Park. In previous years, Namibia recorded 44 rhinos poached in 2021, 42 in 2020, 57 in 2019, 83 in 2018 and 55 in 2017.

"The rhino poaching situation requires the involvement of all stakeholders especially members of the public in reporting suspected perpetrators to the authorities," Muyunda stressed.

"The perpetrators of these crimes are within our society, and therefore, we should report suspicious activities to the authorities. We must as a nation stand against the illegal plundering of our resources by rejecting and condemning wildlife crimes in our beautiful country."

He revealed such collaborative law enforcement efforts have led to the arrest of 106 suspects, of which 44 were nabbed for crimes related to rhino poaching and 62 for crimes related to elephant poaching.

However, he said, it is disturbing to note that of the 106 suspects, 93 are Namibians who are supposed to be at the forefront of combating poaching in the country.

Other suspects include eight Angolans and five Zambians. At least nine people were convicted. Seven of them were convicted for elephant poaching related cases and two for rhino poaching related cases.

He reported with the surge of poaching in 2014, numerous interventions have been put in place across the country, under the leadership of the ministry to fight wildlife crime.

“Wildlife crime threatens not only the survival of the species but the reputation of the country’s conservation, socio-economic and tourism development. Namibia’s growing tourism sector is hugely dependent on wildlife,” he said.

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