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Meat poaching

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SLOW COURT PROCESSES ARE HURTING THE FIGHT AGAINST GAME POACHING

A mere 33% already convicted

Statistics show a total of 404 suspects were arrested last year in connection with poaching for meat, while 89 suspects were found guilty.

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Since 2015, more than 2,400 suspects have been arrested for poaching for the purpose of selling the meat.

In these cases, a mere 33% of suspects have already been found guilty, as the judiciary struggles to keep up with the disposal of cases.

Cases of game poaching for meat accounted for 46% of all wildlife crimes reported in 2022.

Last year, a total of 430 cases were reported, of which 200 were related to this game poaching.

Giraffes, buffaloes, zebras, antelopes and warthogs are game species poached for meat.

This according to the report on wildlife protection and law enforcement in Namibia for 2022, which said that many other animals are also poached for meat - such as birds, reptiles and other mammals.

HUGE INCREASE

There was a large increase in game poaching for meat - from the 94 cases reported in 2018 to 265 in 2019.

In 2020, 219 cases were reported, which dropped slightly to 209 the following year.

Statistics show a total of 404 suspects were arrested in this connection last year, while 89 suspects were found guilty.

"Annual arrests versus the current conviction rate indicate that the very high number of arrests has exceeded the judiciary's ability to process cases and convict offenders," the report says.

"Of the 2,442 suspects arrested since 2015, only 822 (33.7%) were found guilty by May 15."

MOTIVES

According to the report, people commit game poaching for two main reasons.

The first are poor people in rural areas who turn to it for a living, and secondly there are criminals who do it for commercial gain. Apparently it is not always easy to distinguish between the two.

"Regardless of the motives, poaching for meat is an enormous problem, which puts pressure on wildlife populations and on law enforcement and the judiciary, which must deal with various cases," the report states.

It further states that the market for meat from animals poached in Namibia is almost entirely locally based, in sharp contrast to markets for products of high value species which are mostly located in other countries.

The report further noted that Namibia is in a good position to influence demand to tackle the market for illegal meat.

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