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#JUSTIN: EIGHT ARRESTED FOR RHINO POACHING OVER EASTER

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At least eight suspects were arrested over the Easter Weekend for rhino poaching-related crimes in two separate incidents.

According to the spokesperson of the environment ministry Romeo Muyunda, two suspects were arrested on 6 April on the Tsumeb/Otavi road at a mobile roadblock for illegally entering the Etosha National Park to hunt rhinos.

Two fresh rhino horns were found in their possession and confiscated by the law enforcement agencies led by the Blue Rhino Task Team.

The suspects - a Namibian male Sakaria Johannes and an Angolan male Tomas Domingos - appeared in court on 11 April and were both denied bail. The case was postponed to 7 July.

Follow-up investigations in this case led to a discovery of a fresh carcass in Etosha, according to Muyunda.

He said that the investigators also recovered a 375 calibre rifle, a silencer and 29 live munitions.

Two more old carcasses were discovered in Etosha believed to have been poached.

“There is currently no indication linking the two old carcasses to the two suspects,” said Muyunda.

In a separate incident on 7 April, two suspects were arrested after they were found in possession of a pair of rhino horns in another operation by security forces on the Outjo/Otavi Road.

Further investigation led to the arrest of anti-poaching security personnel on a private farm in the Outjo district who are suspected to have supplied the horns.

The suspects are David Nakare, Makanga Johanness, Matema Thiyemo, Shampampi Ndjunga Kamanya Joseph Kandjimi and a female suspect, Magdalena Mavandje Mukuve. They are all Namibians.

Investigations in both cases continue.

The ministry is currently busy with an assessment of rhino poaching incidents for this year and will give an update next week.