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- NUMEROUS ARRESTS FOR RHINO POACHING



All too often, rhinos are victims of poaching. Photo: Catherine Moser

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NUMEROUS ARRESTS FOR RHINO POACHING

Catherine Moser

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Windhoek (km) - The Namibian Ministry of the Environment (MEFT) has made public that a total of eight suspects were arrested last weekend for two cases of rhino poaching. Accordingly, on April 6, two suspects illegally entered the Etosha National Park and poached rhinos. According to MEFT, they were then arrested in a mobile roadside checkpoint on the Tsumeb-Otavi road. Two fresh rhinos were found in her possession and confiscated by authorities led by the Blue Rhino Task Team. The suspects are said to be a Namibian and an Angolan, who have already been denied bail and whose case has been postponed to July 7. Upon further investigation, authorities in Etosha found a fresh rhino carcass, a 375 caliber rifle, a silencer and 29 rounds. Two other old rhino corpses were also found, which also indicate poaching, but do not appear to be connected to the two suspects.

In another separate case, two suspects were arrested in a police operation on April 7 on the Outjo-Otavi road after a pair of rhino horns were found in their possession. Further investigations led to the arrest of four other suspects who belonged to the anti-poaching team at a private farm in the Outjo area and who are said to have provided the horns, according to MEFT. All six suspects in the case are Namibians, one of them a woman.

According to MEFT, investigations are still ongoing in both cases. The ministry commended the authorities' work in these arrests. "The work of the law enforcement agencies involved in these arrests is commendable and deserves our recognition. We encourage them to continue in the same spirit to ensure those who plunder our resources for their selfish gain are brought to justice," said spokesman Romeo Muyunda. "We again appeal to the public to reject and condemn poaching in our society by reporting suspected incidents to the police or the Ministry of Environment."