

[Home](#) / Poaching pastor appeals hefty sentence

## Poaching pastor appeals hefty sentence

2023-07-06 [Maria Amakali](#)



Self-proclaimed prophet and founder of the House of Joy Ministries Jackson Babi has turned to the High Court to appeal his 27 years imprisonment sentence for rhino poaching in Gobabis.

In his notice of appeal, filed in the Windhoek High Court on Monday, Babi (33) is claiming the sentence of 27 years imprisonment imposed on him by Gobabis Regional Court magistrate Eden Iyambo is shockingly inappropriate.

He claims Iyambo overemphasised the seriousness of the offences at the expense of the mitigating circumstances.

“The court also did not take into account the cumulative effect of the sentences when it imposed them on the appellant,” said Babi.

He said the court failed to take into consideration that all the charges stem from one incident. Thus, the sentences imposed ought to run concurrently.

According to Babi, Iyambo also failed to take into account the two years and three months he stayed in police custody before his conviction.

“The court unjustifiably emphasised irrelevant aggravating factors, stating greed was the reason for the commission of the offence without any evidence to the effect,” said Babi.

On 9 September 2022, the court convicted Babi on 11 charges – all related to illegally hunting protected animals. This was after the self-proclaimed prophet admitted guilt on all charges against him.

During sentencing, the court noted that Babi, who earned a salary of nearly N\$50 000 to N\$60 000 a month from his work as a preacher, singer and motivational speaker, was driven by greed in his commission of the crimes.

The court noted that it was not making Babi a scapegoat for all criminal activities related to rhino poaching but his activities were well thought out and carefully planned, hence a deterrent sentence will suffice.

Babi was arrested in May 2020 and formed part of the group that was found to be in possession of rhino horns at his residence in Kleine Kuppe in Windhoek on 26 and 27 May 2020.

According to police reports at the time, the group of eight men includes a police officer from the VIP protection directorate.

The alleged discovery of the horns, firearm and bullets also led to his arrest and that of his co-accused, Dumeni, and two other suspects Alberto Mbware and Joseph Matheus.

The rhino horns are linked to the poaching of two rhinos found dead and with their horns removed in the area of Gobabis in May 2020.

While in custody, Babi allegedly tried to bribe the investigating officer by offering him N\$13 000 to facilitate his release on bail.

Babi will appear in court on 16 August before Judge Hosea Angula.

- *mamakali@nepc.com.na*