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ENVIRONMENT v NATIONAL

Rhino-Poaching Still a Major Concern for Namibian Government

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By Lylie Happiness

Windhoek, March 04-Namibia boasts a healthy population of wildlife species, and its conservation efforts are held in high globally. However, recent poaching statistics reveal a troubling trend, with the country losing a total of 631 rhinos over the decade.

According to Romeo Muyunda, spokesperson for the Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Tourism, Namibia recorded 97 rhino poachings in 2015, 66 in 2016, 55 in 2017, 84 in 2018, 61 in 2019, 48 in 2020, 53 in 2021, 92 in 2022, 67 in 2023, and 8 in 2024. Additionally, Namibia recorded 10 elephants poached in 2021, 4 in 2022, 8 in 2023, and none so far in 2024.

These statistics were released on World Wildlife Day, commemorated on March 3 each year. This annual event serves as an opportunity to raise awareness and educate people about the crucial role wildlife species, both animals and plants, play in our lives.

Despite ongoing efforts by the ministry to curb poaching, the illegal activity persists. Muyunda emphasized that while there is domestic demand for ivory, horns, and pangolin scales in Namibia, citizens are enticed into participating in these crimes for smaller financial incentives, with the market primarily located in Asia.

Despite the alarming poaching figures, Muyunda noted that law enforcement and intelligence operations continue to focus on in apprehending wildlife crime suspects. In 2023 alone, the country registered 50 cases related to rhino and elephant poaching.

resulting in the arrest of 139 suspects. Additionally, law enforcement agencies confiscated 16 firearms and impounded 14 from the suspects, sending a clear message that those involved in these crimes will face the full force of Namibian ^

On the occasion of World Wildlife Day, the ministry urges Namibian citizens to remain vigilant and mindful of their actions considering both their immediate and long-term impacts on wildlife. It emphasizes the importance of protecting and preserve the country's rich biodiversity for future generations.-Namibia Daily News.

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