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ENVIRONMENT (OMGEWING)

28 RHINOS ALREADY POACHED THIS YEAR

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An urgent high-level meeting between the ministry of environment, forestry and tourism and security groups has been convened after 28 rhinos were poached in Namibia in the first three months of the year. Out of the 28 rhinos, 19 were poached in Etosha National Park. According to ministry spokesman Romeo Muyunda, ten of the 19 poached rhinos in the park were discovered during de-horning operations last month.

"The poaching in Etosha is of particular concern because it is our flagship park with a high concentration of rhino conservation and other high value species making it a major attraction for tourists," he said.

Given the urgency of the current situation in the park, an evaluation is currently being conducted to ascertain the full extent of the problem.

Muyunda also confirmed recent reports of four rhinos being poached on a private farm in the Otjozondjupa region. This brings the total number of rhinos poached on private farms this year to five. Also, three rhinos were poached on a rhino conservation farm and another in the Kunene region. In total, 19 black rhinos and nine white rhinos were poached. No incidents of poaching elephants have yet been reported this year. Last year concluded with the highest figures for rhino poaching reported in nearly a decade. A total of 77 rhinos were poached in 2022 compared to the 45 stripped for their horns in 2021. Last year's figure is the third highest recorded since 2013 and was only surpassed by 97 rhinos poached in 2015 and the 84 poached in 2018.

"It calls for collective action by all of us. We condemn the barbaric actions of those involved and call on any person to come forward who can help us apprehend them." - republikein@republikein.com.na

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