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ENVIRONMENT (/ENVIRONMENT)

URGENT MEETING CALLED TO DISCUSS STEEP RISE IN RHINO POACHING

Ministry urges public, stakeholders to fight against poaching

Overall, 19 black rhinos and nine white rhinos have been poached so far this year.

Ellanie Smit

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The environment ministry has called for an urgent high-level meeting with security clusters after 28 rhinos were poached in Namibia this year, with 19 of them killed in Etosha National Park.

Romeo Muyunda, spokesperson for the environment ministry, described the situation as deeply concerning.

He said of the 19 rhinos poached in Etosha, 10 were discovered during dehorning operations.

“Poaching in Etosha is particularly concerning because this is our flagship park and has a high concentration of rhino conservation and other high-value species, making it a major attraction for tourists.”

Based on the current situation and the urgency of the matter, an assessment is being undertaken in Etosha to establish the full extent of the problem, Muyunda said.

Poaching alarm

Muyunda also confirmed recent reports that four rhinos were poached on a private farm in the Otjozondjupa Region.

This brings the total number of rhinos poached on private farms in the country this year to five.

Additionally, three rhinos were poached on a rhino custodianship farm and one in the Kunene Region.

Overall, 19 black rhinos and nine white rhinos have been poached.

“The country has not recorded any poaching of elephants in 2024,” he added.

Last year ended with one of the highest rhino poaching figures recorded in almost a decade.

A total of 77 rhinos were poached in 2022, compared to 45 rhinos killed in 2021 for their horns.

Last year’s figure is the third highest recorded since 2013, only surpassed by the 97 rhinos poached in 2015 and the 84 killed by poachers in 2018.

Help needed

The ministry has called on all stakeholders and the public to “join the ministry in this difficult fight against poaching of high-value species.”

Muyunda said the ministry remains committed to fighting poaching at all costs to ensure they achieve their obligation of protecting wildlife to benefit current and future generations.

“This discovery calls for collective action by all of us. We condemn the barbaric actions of those involved and urge anyone who may assist us in apprehending the suspects to come forth.”



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