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CORRESPONDENT
Ruvuma

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Resurgent poaching kills seven jumbos this month

SEVEN elephants whose trophies fetch 35m/ each have been killed in two separate incidents in Ruvuma Region, with authorities describing those incidents as a new wave of poaching.



REGIONAL POLICE COMMANDER JOSEPH KONYO.

Regional police commander Joseph Konyo made this observation in a briefing about how police the region in the region lately seized nine complete elephant tusks and eight pieces all weighing 64.4kg.

The first poaching incident occurred on May at Hanga monastery area in Namtumbo District where the police retrieved five ivory tusks weighing 44kg, priced at 104m/, he said, noting that the suspects in the incident managed to escape.

The second incident occurred on May 10 at around 2pm in Milonde-Kiuma village in Tunduru District, where police officers seized four whole elephant tusks and eight pieces weighing 20.4kg, cited as worth 138.6m/-.

Three suspects were arrested, who the police chief said are Said Awadi (25), Hassan Judge (36) and Zachalia Gafi (22). They are under police custody and will be sent to court to face charges, he said. The seizure of tusks shows loss of vital resources, a great loss to the tourism sector and future generations, the RPC declared.

Abraham Jullu, the conservation commander for the south-eastern zone of the Tanzania Wildlife Authority (TAWA), said the agency was working closely with the police to conduct patrols in the fight against poaching.

Search and patrol missions will be intensified to catch all those bent on destroying the country's wildlife and national resources, he stated, pointing out that the country's elephant population shrank from 110,000 in 2009 to barely 43,000 in 2014, on the basis of a 2015 wildlife census report.

However, the government has recently affirmed that the numbers were rebounding after a fifth phase crackdown dismantled organised criminal networks conducting industrial scale poaching.



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