

Africa Sustainable Conservation News

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AFRICA WILDLIFE AND CONSERVATION NEWS, ELEPHANTS, FIGHTING WILDLIFE CRIME, SOUTHERN AFRICA

Zimbabwe – ivory and precious minerals seized

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Bulawayo 24

Police arrest 1,306 over precious minerals (Zimbabwe)

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Police this year arrested about 1 306 people for illegally dealing in precious minerals and elephant tusks, recovering millions of dollars' worth of contraband, a senior officer said on Saturday.

Speaking at a Christmas party for the Border Control Unit, Deputy Commissioner-General Godwin Matanga said the arrests were testimony of the force's commitment and dedication to offering proficient service to the public.

"The unit also monitored gold mines, custom mills and elution plants in conjunction with officials from the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development.

"This is in spite of operating on a shrinking resource base," he said.

Deputy Comm-Gen Matanga said the unit recovered 15 160 grammes of gold valued at US\$415 630,94 and 28 340,99 diamond carats valued at US\$3 728 674,22.

It also recovered copper weighing 32 405 tonnes worth US\$4 273 597,76 and 129 elephant tusks valued at US\$89 436,50. He said the Minerals Unit fortified Government's efforts to plug the siphoning of precious minerals through ports of entry at borders and airports.

He said the Zimbabwe Republic Police leadership was aware of the numerous impediments the unit was facing.

"It is, however, apparent that the challenges that threatened the viability of various operations are being relegated to the archives of history as several strides have been taken to address the socio-economic challenges that the country had been facing," Deputy Comm-Gen Matanga said.

Deputy Comm-Gen Matanga took a swipe at members of the police force who engaged in corrupt activities saying those caught will be dealt with ruthlessly.

"Corruption in whatever form can never be justified and will never be given any breathing and breeding space within the force," he said.

Members of the unit will be subjected to tests using a lie-detector to check their integrity twice a year. He said any officer who received any inducements or "rewards" for executing his or her duties would be deemed as having engaged in corruption.

Speaking at the same occasion, Officer Commanding the unit, Senior Assistant Commissioner Silent Pondo, said they were ready to deal with attendant challenges from Sount Africa's hosting of the 2010 Fifa Soccer World Cup, mainly stemming from the large numbers of people that would pass through Zimbabwe's port of entry and exit.

Snr Asst Comm Pondo commended members of the public for assisting them in their investigations.

Lessons for Today

Mineral smuggling and poaching are a threat to the security and economies of states in Africa.

Corruption and gold smuggling among other issues have crippled the country's efforts to leverage on its vast mineral resources.

In September, 2020, Minister of Home Affairs, Honourable Kazembe Kazembe revealed that Zimbabwe was losing at least US\$100 million worth of gold every month through international smuggling rings blaming it on "porous" borders. The revelation was made against the backdrop of a US\$12 billion mining economy by the year 2023.

On the 8th of September 2021 a 33-year-old man was arrested at OR Tambo International Airport in South Africa with smuggled gold worth \$11 million (US\$730 000)

◀ DIAMONDS ◀ GOLD ◀ IVORY SMUGGLING ◀ SMUGGLERS CAUGHT ◀ ZIMBABWE



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