



PRESS STATEMENT

OFFICE OF THE LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

STATEMENT OF CONDEMNATION BY THE LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION IN RESPECT OF THE 28 POACHED RHINOS IN NAMIBIA

3 April 2024

The Leader of the Official Opposition and President of the Popular Democratic Movement (PDM), Honourable McHenry Venaani has been greatly alarmed by the recent surge in rhino poaching incidents in the country. It has been reported in numerous media outlets that from January 2024 to date, a total of 28 rhinos have been poached, which represents a number dangerously close to the total number recorded last year, which totalled 39.

It is imperative to highlight that Namibia is home to a small population of rhinos, consisting of 6000 black rhinos and 15000 white rhinos, with close to 300 being poached over the past five years. These indicators suggest a rather bleak outlook for Namibia's rhino population, especially as the Minister of Environment and Tourism, Honourable Pohamba Shifeta expressed that rhinos have become an endangered species. The continued poaching of these majestic beasts not only undermines our conservation efforts, but also tarnishes our international reputation. The Honourable Venaani therefore calls upon the President of the Republic of Namibia, H.E. Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, to urgently take heed of these worrying indicators and address it with the urgency that it requires. Intelligence close to Honourable Venaani have sounded the alarm over the presence of cartel rings operation within the country's nature conservancies. These reportedly include Chinese nationals and senior law enforcement agents. These reports are deeply troubling and indicative of the pervasive corruption and graft that has permeated almost every aspect of society, under the ruling SWAPO party's administration.

Furthermore, it is even more troubling to note that despite the Ministry of Environment and Tourism's efforts to bolster the anti-poaching drive by procuring 13 horses at a reported cost of N\$ 130 000, poaching and illegal hunting continues to proliferate. The significant investment made by the government, with taxpayer money should yield tangible results. Accordingly, the inefficiency of government in dealing with this matter should be addressed by the Presidency with immediate effect. As a staunch supporter and advocate for environmental protection and conservation, the Honourable Venaani impresses upon President Mbumba to address these reprehensible acts of wildlife crime. The preservation of our environment and its ecosystem is paramount and requires decisive action to ensure the survival of our rhino population for generations to come. The Honourable Venaani stresses that measures should be taken to not only root out corruption within our law enforcement agencies, but also to hold them accountable as it is worrying that reports suggest that these very officials are complicit in facilitating these criminal activities. The erosion of our society by insider trading and illicit trading practices cannot be tolerated any longer. The Line Ministry cannot be tasked with addressing this matter as these acts are happening under their watches. Accordingly, the President must give a stern warning to the Minister and set substantive actions in place.

The Honourable Venaani stands committed in safeguarding Namibia's natural resources and believes the matter cannot continue unabated any longer.

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