



Republic of Namibia

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM

Press Release

(For Immediate Release)

26 November 2022

Editors and Journalists

Re: Namibia to Intensify Festive Season Law Enforcement Against Wildlife Crime

The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) and its partners in wildlife protection and law enforcement will step up efforts against wildlife crime in the country during this year's festive season. In the past, we have observed that poachers take advantage of the festive season to undertake criminal activities of poaching rhinos, pangolins, elephants and other species.

With the surge of poaching in 2014, numerous interventions have been put in place across the country, under the leadership of the MEFT to fight wildlife crime. Wildlife crime threatens not only the survival of the species but the reputation of the country's conservation, socio-economic and tourism development. Namibia's growing tourism sector is hugely dependent of wildlife.

Even though we continue to record successes in our fight against wildlife crime, poaching of high valued species remains a concern. In 2022 to date, we have a recorded 63 rhinos poached in the country consisting of 41 black rhinos and 22 white rhinos. This year's poaching cases include 15 rhinos poached on custodianship farms, another 22 on private farms and 26 in the Etosha National Park. In previous years, Namibia has recorded 44 rhinos poached in 2021, 42 in 2020, 57 in 2019, 83 in 2018 and 55 in 2017.

The rhino poaching situation requires the involvement of all stakeholders especially members of the public in reporting suspected perpetrators to the authorities. The perpetrators of these crimes are within our society, and therefore we should report suspicious activities to the authorities. We must as a nation stand against the illegal plundering of our resources by rejecting and condemning wildlife crimes in our beautiful country.

Elephant poaching figures on the other hand continues to descend with only four (4) poached this year. In previous years, Namibia recorded 10 elephants poached in 2021, 12 in 2020, 13 in 2019, 27 in 2018 and 50 in 2017.

We appreciate the work that our anti-poaching units across the country, comprising of the MEFT, Namibian Police Force, Namibia Defense Force and conservancies are doing. We salute the work of the Prosecutor General's Office, Blue Rhino Task Force, Non-Governmental Organizations, farmers, private sector, development partners and members of the public for the corporation and collaboration in this fight.

Important to also mention is that, our collaborative law enforcement efforts have led to the arrest of 106 suspects of which 44 were arrested for crimes related to rhino poaching and 62 for crimes related to elephant poaching. It is disturbing to note that the highest number of 93 suspects arrested are Namibian citizens who in our view should be at the forefront of the fight against poaching. Other suspects include 8 from Angola and 5 from Zambia. We are happy to note that at least 9 people were convicted, 7 for elephant poaching related cases and 2 for rhino poaching related cases.

This festive season, our anti-poaching teams will not relent as may be expected; to the contrary, more personnel and officers will be dedicated to conduct patrols and law enforcement. Those intending to take chance must be warned that this festive season will be business unusual.

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