

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM

STATEMENT BY HON. POHAMBA SHIFETA, MP AND MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE REVISED NATIONAL STRATEGY ON WILDLIFE PROTECTION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AND UPDATE ON POACHING AND HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

**04 FEBRUARY 2021
11H30**

WINDHOEK

Director of proceedings

Mr. Teofilus Nghitila, Executive Director of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism

Members of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me start by wishing you all a happy and healthy productive 2021.

Since the start of the current elephant and rhino poaching problem, government through the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism supported by the law enforcement and security agencies has put measures to address poaching in the country.

More resources have been allocated to fighting poaching; more government agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations, Private Sector, international development partners, communities and the general public have come on board to support our efforts to stop poaching.

In this regard, we continue to reverse the trends of poaching as we have once again recorded fewer cases of poaching in the country. In 2020, we recorded a total of thirty one (31) rhinos

poached compared to fifty two (52) in 2019, eighty one (81) in 2018, fifty five (55) in 2017, sixty six (66) in 2016 and ninety seven (97) in 2015.

Similarly, we recorded a total of eleven (11) elephants poached in 2020, thirteen (13) in 2019, twenty seven (27) in 2018, fifty (50) in 2017, one hundred and one (101) in 2016 and forty nine in 2015.

As for pangolin, eight (8) live animals have been seized in 2020 as well as five (5) full carcasses, fifty nine (59) skins, five (5) skin pieces and nine hundred and twenty four (924) scales.

Wildlife crime cases registered in 2020 are three hundred and eight (308). Of those, cases related to high value species are one hundred and eleven (111). The three hundred and eight (308) cases were recorded in the regions as follows:

Region	Number
Khomas	52
Zambezi	43
Kunene	37
Omusati	29

Kavango East	24
Otjozondjupa	24
Omaheke	20
Erongo	19
Oshikoto	19
Oshana	11
Other	30

Six hundred and fifty four (654) suspects were arrested in line with the cases registered in 2020. Of these cases, one hundred (100) are related to pangolin poaching and trafficking; sixty four (64) are related to elephant poaching and trafficking while one hundred and thirteen (113) are related to rhino poaching and trafficking. The six hundred and fifty four (654) suspects comprise of the following nationalities:

Nationality	Number
Namibian	597
Zambian	26
Angolan	22

Motswana	1
Zimbabwean	1
Unspecified	7

We also recorded thirty six suspects (36) arrested in line with older cases, that means cases registered before 2020. Number of wildlife cases finalized in courts are one hundred and four (104), while number of suspects found guilty of wildlife related charges are one hundred and sixty two (162) and number of suspects acquitted from wildlife related charges are sixteen (16). A total of one thousand five hundred and ninety five (1595) court hearings on wild crime cases were recorded.

As for firearms seized in 2020 we have a total of sixty eight (68) consisting of two (2) assault rifle, five (5) handgun, forty seven (47) rifles and fourteen (14) shotguns, while ammunition seized consist of one thousand three hundred and thirty three (1333) bullets and ninety five (95) shotshells. Forty eight (48) vehicles have also been impounded in relation to wildlife crimes.

You can clearly see from the statistics that we have been hard at work to curb out wildlife crime in the country and much success has been achieved. Active collaboration amongst all

stakeholders continues to effectively curb wildlife crime in Namibia.

A number of high level perpetrators of wildlife crimes were arrested in Namibia during 2020, particularly related to rhino poaching and trafficking. Arrests included kingpins, middlemen and various aiders and abettors, rather than only poachers.

I have instructed our technical team in the ministry to workout a form of amnesty for those involved in wildlife crimes but not yet arrested to voluntarily come out and hand themselves over to the authorities for possible protection from prosecution for wildlife crime committed or attempt thereon. This methods will be first tabled and worked on by the Technical Committee of Ministerial Committee on Wildlife Protection and Law Enforcement before it is submitted and approved the Ministerial Committee.

Director of proceedings,
Ladies and gentlemen

In order for us to do more and improve on our programmes and projects for wildlife protection and law enforcement, we have come up with a revised strategy that will serve as a policy document with a primary objective of establishing common

approaches to the protection and conservation of wildlife and to ensure the effective enforcement of laws governing wildlife resources. The new revised strategy is for the period of the next five years.

The strategy has programme areas and activities on how we will generally operate in terms of wildlife crime prevention and law enforcement, investigations and intelligence, legal framework and prosecutions, transboundary illicit trade, protection of rhinos within protected areas, protection of rhinos outside protected areas, protection of elephants, protection of pangolins, community safety and security, partner and stakeholder coordination, as well as awareness and communication.

I would like to applaud all the stakeholders who continue to support our efforts to eliminate poaching in the country. I congratulate the Ministry staff and security forces on the ground and their superiors at headquarters for their efforts and good job being done in the protection of our wildlife. It is not an easy task with the different weather conditions and the financial situation in the country.

Director of ceremonies,
Ladies and gentlemen

As for human wildlife conflict incidents recorded in 2020, eight hundred and thirteen (813) livestock consisting of four hundred and thirteen (413) cattle, twelve (12) donkeys, two hundred and thirty four (234) goats and one hundred and fifty four (154) sheep were killed by wild animals.

For crop damages, three thousands four hundred and fifty (3450) hectares were damaged by wild animals consisting of elephants with three thousand three hundred and forty six (3346) hectares, fifty five (55) hectares by buffaloes and forty nine (49) by hippos.

One (1) person was injured by a baboon, six (6) by buffaloes, one (1) by an elephant, one (1) by a hippo, three (3) by leopards, and two (2) by lions. Unfortunately we had two (2) lives lost, all caused by crocodiles. Five million forty six thousand and eight hundred and one Namibian dollars (N\$5,046,801) was paid out by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism through the Game Product Trust Fund to individuals, farmers and conservancies for livestock loss, crop damages, injuries to people and loss of life under the Human Wildlife Conflict Self Reliance Scheme.

Let me thank all the staff members of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism who are involved in assisting communities and farmers in reducing human wildlife conflict. I

equally thank our personnel involved from NDF, NAMPOL, NCIS, Prosecution authority and a combined team of intelligence services Blue Rhino and Anti poaching Unit's different subunits (Intelligence services and Dog unit,).

Lastly but not least, I would like to thank all members of Ministerial Committee on Wildlife Protection and Law Enforcement.

I urge you to do more with the little resources at your disposal.

I thank you all.