

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM



**STATEMENT BY HON. POHAMBA SHIFETA, MP
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM**

**ON INCIDENT OF POISONING OF THREE LIONS IN KUNENE
REGION**

**11 AUGUST 2016
WINDHOEK**

Since February 2016 a pride of five male lions (also known as the “Five Musketeers” from the film “Vanishing Kings: Lions of the Namib”) occupied the Okongwe area and have been attracted to the livestock at Tomakas village in the Gomatum River.

Officials of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism have been in the area together with the Purros Conservancy Lion Rangers and Integrated Rural Development for Nature Conservation (IRDNC) staff to prevent lions from killing livestock and translocate the lions to Skeleton Coast Park. They have also been assisted by Dr Philip Stander, a lion researcher in the area.

In the process of finding and translocating these lions by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, three lions were found dead and the cause have been found to be poison. Poisoning of wild animals without permission of the Minister of Environment and Tourism is illegal in terms of the Nature Conservation Ordinance, 1975 (4 of 1975).

A case has therefore been opened with the Namibian Police for illegal killing of protected game (three lions) in terms of section 27 of the said ordinance. In addition, setting poison for wild animals without the approval of the Minister in terms of section 61 have been added to the charges. Investigations are underway in this matter.

It must further be noted that the use of poison on one animal has further negative effects to our biodiversity as many animals like scavengers and vultures may feed at such carcass and die as well. This kind of behavior will therefore not be tolerated.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism has been working with communities in the area to prevent livestock kills by these lions. Bright lights, ultra-sound playbacks and fireworks

have been successfully used to deter lions from approaching the settlement, but the numbers of free-roaming livestock are too big and attracts the lions.

This Ministry of Environment and Tourism condemns this illegal activity of poisoning the lions and those involved will face the full wrath of the law.

End.