



## China, Nam to take hands on poaching

### Proposal has been drawn up

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A proposal has been made for Chinese and Namibian authorities to cooperate in eliminating poaching and cracking syndicates that operate in both countries.

The news has been welcomed following the announcement that 14 rhinos have been poached in Namibia this year, making it almost one animal each week.

According to Chinese charge d'affaires Li Nan the Chinese embassy to Namibia has made a joint proposal to both countries for collaborative efforts in curbing poaching.

"We need joint efforts to fight criminals and deter poachers," said Li.

According to him the countries must still decide whether they are interested in collaborating.

Li stressed that wildlife protection is very important to China and this is also clearly expressed among Chinese nationals.

He pointed out that China this year totally banned all ivory products.

China has long been one of the world's biggest markets for ivory, but as of this year all trade in ivory and ivory products in the country is illegal.

"No ivory products are allowed to enter China anymore according to our new laws. Here in Namibia you can still purchase ivory, but not in China. That indicates China's strong stance on wildlife protection," said Li.

He added that lawbreakers are punished very seriously when it comes to wildlife protection.

"We will never provide protection to lawbreakers and have zero tolerance when it comes to this. If a Chinese national is involved in these crimes they must be subjected to the local law. We fully respect the law."

However Li said that an entire community of people cannot be painted with the same brush because of the crimes of a small group of individuals.

His remarks follows dozens of poaching cases and other illegal activities involving Chinese nationals over the past few years that have led to pervasive views that all Chinese nationals in Namibia are involved in poaching.

Li said the Chinese community in Namibia contribute to the economy. "They are good people. They pay taxes and they provide jobs."

According to the embassy's estimates there are only about 3 500 Chinese nationals living in Namibia. Li said that many Chinese left the country because of the economic crisis.

He continued to say that the Chinese embassy had embarked on a public awareness campaign to inform Chinese nationals about wildlife laws in Namibia.



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/assets/nam-to-take-hands-on-poaching2018-04-190.jpg>)

CRITICAL: A total of 14 rhinos have been poached in Namibia so far this year. Photo: ELLANIE SMIT

Li said that the embassy has also made donations to the environment ministry and created a wildlife fund in an effort to assist in the fight against poaching.

According to Li the embassy will donate items to the value of N\$14 million next month to the ministry which will assist with anti-poaching efforts. These items will include 30 bakkies and also tents for rangers.

He further said that the embassy was working together with the CEO of the Namibian Chamber of Environment, Dr Chris Brown, on projects which include rhino site inspections.

According to Li these site inspections were already planned for last year but due to unforeseen circumstances they would hopefully be concluded this year.

The spokesperson of the environment ministry, Romeo Muyunda, confirmed to Namibian Sun that a total of 14 rhinos and 23 elephants have been poached this year.

Last year 35 rhinos and 23 elephants were killed by poachers. In 2016 a total of 60 rhino were poached while in 95 rhino were poached in 2015 and 56 rhino in 2014.

In 2016 a total of 101 elephants were poached, while 49 elephants were poached in 2015 and 78 in 2014.

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