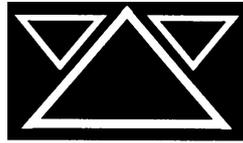


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## LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE

Recipient of the UNICEF Maurice Pate Human Rights Award – 1997  
JP Karuaihe Human Rights Excellence Award – 2008, 2010, 2014 and 2016 and Social Responsibility Award – 2013

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### **LAC holds training for legal fraternity on wildlife crime**

**11/09/2018**

Last week, the Legal Assistance Centre held a training workshop on wildlife crime for 16 local/regional prosecutors, magistrates, MET park wardens and investigators from Nampol. The training was held in Divundu, Kavango East Region, facilitated by the Legal Assistance Centre, Advocate Daniel Small, two project officers from TRAFFIC Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network and a private investigator.

This is the second training in a series of three workshops funded by USAID, aimed to cover the regions in Namibia mostly affected by wildlife crime. At the four-day training, law enforcement officers, magistrates and prosecutors came together to receive uniform training and discuss a targeted area of crime.

The workshop focused on anti-poaching and wildlife crimes as they relate to the participants' everyday jobs as police, magistrates or prosecutors and created an opportunity to bring three prongs of the anti-poaching and wildlife crime process together and foster discussion and idea-sharing. Prosecutors, magistrates, and police officers came together to learn more about the legislation and realities surrounding wildlife crimes in the context of their daily jobs, and are now able to bring ideas back to their teams. They also faced the grim realities of rhino poaching and were reminded of the importance of working as a team to combat such atrocities.

Deputy Chief Magistrate Claudia Claasen highlighted the importance of the workshop by saying: "It was time to see wildlife crime not as isolated crime. Our wildlife must be seen as "national resources" and the courts must guard and function as gatekeepers of these resources. The state and the legal system can't afford a laid back approach, as these crimes are forging the national treasury of income. It is time to take action and fight wildlife crime. I urge participants to take We need to take wildlife crime more serious, and reiterate, that wildlife crime shall be considered as serious as murder and rape etc. The recently amended penalty clauses dealing with wildlife crime, as introduced by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism serve this purpose too, and hence, wildlife crime will be taken more serious from now onwards."

Images attached: Image 1) participants of the training workshop with facilitators and LAC staff; Image 2) Deputy Chief Magistrate Claudia Classen with LAC's Willem Odendaal

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