

Namibia: Uproar over mine at rhino sanctuary

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Kamanjab - The Swartbooi Traditional Authority at Fransfontein is up in arms over planned mining involving Chinese nationals in cahoots with Namibians who have been offered shares in a 'sensitive' area of the //Huab Conservancy, which teems with rhino, once the mine is operational.



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According to Deputy Kaptein Essegel /Uirab of the Swartbooi Traditional Authority, Chinese nationals numbering between three and five have reportedly been spotted in a sensitive area that is zoned by //Huab Conservancy, which is exclusively for the protection of endangered rhinos.

"This area is zoned for rhinos for their safety and such wildlife was moved to the area a few years ago. Tourists visit this area for that purpose and the conservancy does not allow disturbance either from mining or hunting," /Uirab said.

New Era has withheld the name of the farm because of concern over the safety of the rhinos.

/Uirab says due to the sensitivity of the area no heavy machinery and explosions from dynamite are allowed in the area.

Chinese nationals have been visiting the area since late last year while their Namibian partners have even pitched some tents.

"Rhinos are living there but devious things are happening, as one traditional authority member has even partnered with the Chinese and they are there," maintained /Uirab.

He said one traditional authority signed some documents allowing him and his partners to mine an unknown mineral in the highly sensitive area that shelters rhinos.

Once mining starts, the Chinese have reportedly offered five percent of profits to //Huab Conservancy, while the Swartbooi Traditional Authority will receive 10 percent.

Source: *New Era*

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