

NEWS

## Man Acquitted Of Illegal Possession Of Elephant Tusks



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ACQUITTED: Kangootui Kangootui

***“I was arrested on the way to the police station,” Kangootui***

A 37-year-old man of Toteng village was on Friday last week acquitted and discharged of unlawful possession of elephant tusks.

It was alleged that on August 20th, Kangootui Kangootui was found in possession of two elephant tusks weighing 16.8kg valued at P27,513.55 wrapped in old blankets along Kunyere River.

According Magistrate Keneilwe Kgoadi, the state has failed to prove their case beyond reasonable doubt.

“The state, having failed to lead evidence of possession of the elephant tusks by the accused and failed to lead evidence that he had no certificate or subsequently failed to register the tusks within seven days, the court consequently grants the accused person the application of no case to answer and retains the verdict of not guilty and acquits the accused person of unlawful possession of elephant tusks” ruled Kgoadi.

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During trial, Kangootui never denied being found in possession of the said tusks, however, his defence was that he picked the two tusks from the bush and at the time of his arrest he was on his way to Maun Police Station to hand them over to the police.

It was his testimony that when he found the said tusks, he called a certain police officer in Maun and informed him about the tusks and further directed him to where he was and was shocked when the police arrested him for illegal possession of elephant tusks.

Speaking to Okavango Voice outside court, Kangootui breathed a sigh of relief.

“This case has cost me emotionally and financially; I am glad that it has finally come to an end. I am saddened that our country made laws for us and when we uphold them, we end up getting in trouble. I stay in an environment populated with elephants and I am well aware that I should inform the police or wildlife officers if I find a corpse or even tusks but I reported and ended up in court,” said Kangootui, adding that he is glad that the magistrate judged the matter fairly based on the evidence brought before court.

Kangootui’s younger brother, Timoteous Kangootui, who was accompanying him to all his court appearances and trial, highlighted that the matter had caused emotional distress in their family because they knew their brother was only trying to be a responsible citizen.

This case has instilled fear in us, especially when you take into account that we co-exist with elephants,” he lamented.