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NEWS

Illegal Ivory Dealer Jailed For Two Years



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OFF TO JAIL: Garirayi

A sense of remorse and a convincing mitigation statement have saved a convicted ivory dealer from a lengthy jail term as he got off lightly with a reduced sentence.

Poul Garirayi would have been condemned to a mandatory 10-year maximum jail term and a hefty fine for the elephant tusks valued at P10 233.22 that he was found in possession of.

But his witty admission of guilt that saved the court's time and his mitigatory circumstances, compelled a Francistown Magistrate's Court to temper justice with mercy by giving the 49-year-old Zimbabwean man a lesser 2-year prison sentence that has been backdated to August 2021 when he was arrested.

Before he was sentenced, Garirayi pleaded with court for leniency as he said he was the sole breadwinner looking after his three children and his elderly mother.

“Looking at my age, I am vulnerable in the current prison condition as it is congested, so I fear that I might contract Covid-19. I am a first offender, I have never had any brushes with the law so I plead for your leniency, your worship,” he said.

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It was business unusual for Garirayi on the day of his arrest as he played right into the snare of police officers who were acting on a tip-off.

He had been looking for a buyer for his prized pieces when he met a motorist who agreed to transport him to a point of sale.

His dream for a quick buck quickly turned into a nightmare as, unbeknown to him, the motorist tipped the police off about the elephant tusks.

An operation was set up to arrest Garirayi and the police followed on the information and found him at Sunshine Plaza.

Before they could lift their fingers to search him, the startled Garirayi began to sing like a canary. He told the police he had in his possession the elephant tusks and that he had asked someone to transport him to the point of sale.

The police quickly searched him and they found five pieces of elephant tusks in the combi he was using.

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The tusks were taken to Botswana Bureau of Standards for weights and measurement and they weighed 5.4 kilograms, which was valued at P10 233.22.

Garirayi was also charged with entering Botswana through an ungazetted point of entry.

It was heard that sometime in 2010, exact dates not known to the prosecution, the accused person entered Botswana illegally.

For entering the country unlawfully, he was sentenced to one year in prison, taking into account the time he spent behind bars.

Both sentences are to run concurrently.