

# Africa Sustainable Conservation News

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**AFRICA WILDLIFE AND CONSERVATION NEWS, EAST AFRICA, ELEPHANTS, FIGHTING WILDLIFE CRIME**

## Kenya – two arrested with tusks in Meru



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**Nation (Kenya)**

## Two suspected poachers arrested in Meru park

Thursday, April 29, 2021



Mr Gideon Kebati, senior warden at the Meru National Park, displays the tusks seized. Courtesy

By Gitonga Marete

Two suspects have been arrested at the Meru National Park for being in possession of five elephant tusks weighing 28 kilos with a street value of Sh2.8 million.

Mr Gideon Kebati, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) senior warden at the park said they pursued the suspects after a tip off by members of public at Kathithine area in Tharaka North sub county where they were arrested.

“Our officers have been working on this information and finally caught up with them in the area known to be a hotspot for poaching. The undercover officers arrested them while in possession of the tusks,” said Mr Kebati.

The suspects, who Mr Kebati said were being processed and will be arraigned in court as soon as investigations are complete, are Nicholas Kibara from Kathithine and Julius Musili Mutemi from Mpeketoni area in Igembe North, Meru County.

## Instructed by a convict

The suspects told investigators that they transported the tusks from Lower Imenti forest last week after being instructed by a convict, Mr Josephat Muthengi who is serving a five-year jail term.

Mr Muthengi was jailed by a court in Marimanti, Tharaka-Nithi county early this year after being found guilty of dealing in ivory.

“Before he was jailed he had buried the tusks in the forest. During one of the visits at the prison by the suspects, the convict gave them instructions on where to retrieve the ivory and even made arrangements with a boda boda operator who would ferry the tusks,” Mr Kebati said.

It was during the transportation that a member of the public got suspicious of the load and informed the police, the officer added.

Before being jailed, Mr Muthengi was believed to have coordinated poaching activities in the area.

“The prisoner is the mastermind of the deal and the fact that he can coordinate such an activity means he still has a network. We are on top of things and we will ensure we get those behind the criminal network,” Mr Kebati said

“We will also hold talks with the prison commander with a view to establish what other links he has,” he added.

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◀ IVORY ◀ IVORY DEALER ◀ KWS ◀ POACHERS ARRESTED MERU NATIONAL PARK



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