

Kenya: Nine Kenyan Suspects Linked to Notorious Liberian Ivory Smuggler

The Nation (Nairobi) (<http://www.nation.co.ke/>)

26 MAY 2021

By Brian Ocharo

New evidence supplied by the US government links two Kenyans implicated in Sh570 million ivory smuggling to notorious Liberian poacher and ivory trafficker Moazu Kromar.

Documents filed in a Mombasa court claim Kenyan businessman Abdulrahman Mahmoud Sheikh alias Said Juma Said and his son Sheikh Mahmoud Abdulrahman received instructions from Mr Kromar to facilitate ivory smuggling.

The Liberian poacher was extradited to the US in 2019, where he is facing ivory-trafficking charges.

Mr Mahmoud, his son and six other Kenyans are facing ivory smuggling charges in Mombasa.

"Intelligence discloses that Mr Kromar used to receive instructions from accomplices in Thailand and thereafter transmit the same to Mr Mahmoud alias Juma and his son Mr Abdulrahman," said Kilifi Assistant Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Jami Yamina.

Other suspects in the case are Mr Mahmoud Abdulrahman Sheikh, Kenya Revenue Authority employee Lucy Muthoni Kahoto, Mr Musa Jacob Lithare, Mr Samuel Mbote Mundia, Mr Salim Juma, Mr Abbas Issa Rashid and Mr Kenneth Mwangi Njuguna.

Mr Yamina has filed an application before the court to be allowed to use this new evidence to prosecute the case.

"It is necessary to receive the said information in the form of admissible evidence in a court of law in Kenya before it is relied upon," he said.

The new intelligence, the DPP explained, followed the successful extradition of Monsur Mohamed Surur alias Mansur to the US in relation to narcotics trafficking and illegal exportation of wildlife products from Kenya to the US.

The illegal trade, he further added, is carried out by a transnational criminal enterprise with operations in Kenya, Uganda and Central Africa.

"The lead investigation team has had opportunity to look at the intelligence so informally shared and is of the view and in agreement with the prosecution that it is new, credible, relevant and admissible evidence to the offence now before court and in the matter of engaging in organised crime against the accused persons," said Mr Yamina.

The information obtained from Mr Mansur links Mr Kromar aka Ayoba, aka Ayuoba aka Kampala man to 511 pieces of ivory that were destined for Laos but were seized in Thailand.

The DPP said further investigations had revealed communication between some of the accused and their associates, who are still at large.

The court heard the new evidence directly links Mr Kromar, the two accused persons and others not before court, including Jefwa Brothers, to a bill of lading relating to a tea-leaves container number FCIU5235796.

The container reportedly had 511 pieces of ivory, which are at the centre of the smuggling case filed in Mombasa.

"The same bill of lading shipped out tea leaves through the Mombasa port," said Mr Yamina.

According to the state, Jefwa Brothers have been on Interpol's Red list following warrants of arrest issued by a Mombasa court.

"Subsequently, the investigation team has requested for the said evidence. This has commenced efforts to convert the said intelligence into admissible evidence through the Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA). A request from Kenya to the US may provide the said evidence within 60 days, given that the authorities are willing to cooperate and have been made aware of the pendency of this case," said Mr Yamina.

The state explained that organised criminal networks facilitated the partially successful illegal exportation of the elephant's tusks from East and Central Africa to Asia.

"Through MLA requests between Kenya and United Kingdom of Thailand, the latter partly allowed our request that sought to identify the perpetrators and unearth the crime by conducting and providing a forensic analysis report of the seized pieces of ivory," Mr Yamina says.

The DPP said the US gathered the evidence in the course of their independent investigations into the offence committed against the country, but the evidence has become of interest to Kenya.

Mr Yamina said the new evidence could not have been supplied by the witnesses who have already testified.

"The said information, in the assessment of the lead investigators, points at newly discovered, compelling and admissible evidence relevant to this case as it contains facts that link the respondents to others, not before the court in an international criminal enterprise involved in either sourcing or financially supporting poaching of wildlife as seen in the planning, preparation, transportation and destination marketing of the seized ivory," said Mr Yamina.

According to the investigating officer, Mr James Githinji, a strong link has been noted between Thailand and the Singapore seizures, which shows both were organised by the same cartel.

The detective said a vehicle, registration number KSM 983, beneficially owned by Mr Lithare, was used to transport some 1,099 pieces of ivory to the port of Mombasa in 2012, which were later seized in Singapore and became subject of criminal case no 754/2013.

Documents show the same vehicle was used to transport 1,273 pieces of ivory in a matter still open for investigations under Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) inquiry number 48 of 2015.

Another vehicle, registration number KNY 944, which reportedly transported the 511 pieces of ivory to the Mombasa port, also beneficially belonged to Mr Lithare.

Court documents show the premises where tea leaves, tools and ivory chips were found was leased by Mr Mahmoud alias Juma, with further links to his two sons, while the rest of the accused allegedly served as knowledge aiders, enablers and abettors of the crime through their acts and omissions.

"Most of the accused persons have been adversely linked with similar offences executed in similar fashion in yet bigger seizures investigated by the DCI," Mr Githinji said.

The detective said their investigations were triggered by the discovery of a similar shipment destined for Singapore during the course of investigations into the ongoing case.

The DPP revealed Kenya had placed another request to the US on which the latter was willing to cooperate.

Read the **original article** (<https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/mombasa/nine-kenyan-suspects-linked-to-notorious-liberian-ivory-smuggler--3414354>) on **Nation** (<http://www.nation.co.ke>).

Copyright (<https://allafrica.com/misc/info/copyright.html>) © 2021 The Nation (<http://www.nation.co.ke/>). All rights reserved. Distributed by AllAfrica Global Media (allafrica.com (/)). To contact the copyright holder directly for corrections — or for permission to republish or make other authorized use of this material, click here. (<https://allafrica.com/view/publisher/editorial/editorial/id/00010260.html>)

AllAfrica is a voice of, by and about Africa - aggregating, producing and distributing 800 news and information items daily from over 130 African news organizations and our own reporters to an African and global public. We operate from Cape Town, Dakar, Abuja, Johannesburg, Nairobi and Washington DC.

© 2021 AllAfrica ([/misc/info/copyright.html](https://allafrica.com/misc/info/copyright.html))

AllAfrica - All the Time