

Kenya: Three Jailed 16 Years Each for Poaching of 187 Dikdiks

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By Lucy Mkanyika

A Voi court has sentenced three people found guilty of poaching 187 dikdiks in Tsavo East National Park to 16 years in prison each.

In the ruling made on Monday, the court also imposed a fine of Sh2.2 million.

Kaviha Charo, Katana Unda and Bugo Suluhu will serve their jail terms at Manyani Maximum Security Prison in Voi, Taita Taveta County.

The three were found with the game trophies at Akales in Galana Ranch, Kilifi Count and pleaded guilty on June 21 to three charges related to poaching wildlife.

They were charged with dealing with the carcasses of wildlife species, being in possession of wildlife trophies and conveying hunting apparatus in a protected area.

They were found in possession of game meat weighing 596kg. The wildlife trophies - 25 roasted heads of dikdiks, 187 dikdik carcasses, two gerenuk and three kori bustard bird carcasses - were found being ferried on five motorcycles.

The suspects were also found with hunting materials, including 10 hunting sirens, five machetes, 14 torches, assorted batteries and clothing.

The sentences

Voi Principal Magistrate Cecilia Kithinji sentenced them to 10 years' imprisonment for the first count, which attracted a fine of Sh1 million. Failure to pay the fine would result in imprisonment for one year.

The three got two years in jail for the second count, with a fine of Sh1 million. Failure to pay this fine would also result in imprisonment for one year.



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For the third count, the convicts will serve two year in prison and pay a fine of Sh200,000 each, or serve a six month imprisonment if unable to pay the amount.

The magistrate said the sentences will run concurrently.

Last week, the court had ordered the suspects' detention for one more week to establish Mr Suluhu's age.

The prosecution had told the court that his parents were to submit his birth certificate.

His parents had said he was 16 years old but an age assessment at Moi County Referral Hospital in Voi established he was 23..

Birth certificate

On Monday, prosecutor Lilian Moke told the court that the parents failed to send the birth certificate.

She also revealed that Baricho Primary School, where the accused claimed he studied, declined to write a report since he dropped out in 2018.

"Through the area assistant chief, we were able to establish that the third accused is 21 years old," she told the court.

Following the reports from Moi hospital and the prosecutor, the magistrate noted that the court had established that Mr Suluhu was an adult, not a minor as claimed.

She added that the court learnt that cases of wildlife poaching are on the rise in the area, so the sentence will serve as a deterrent.

"I have considered the evidence and the mitigation of the accused persons. The offence is rampant and at this rate there's a danger of wiping out a whole species of this wildlife. The law must be harsh to such offenders to serve as a lesson to others," she said.

Read the **original article** (<https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/taita-taveta/three-jailed-16-years-each-for-poaching-of-187-dikdiks-3462148>) on **Nation** (<http://www.nation.co.ke/>).

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