

# Africa Sustainable Conservation News

News, analysis and comment on conservation and wildlife issues in Africa – this site aggregates news stories and publication does not indicate approval or disapproval of the content. The content is there to inform and initiate debate.

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

## Chinese national imprisoned for 14 years in Malawi

**Date: September 29, 2021 Author: somervillesustainableconservation Malawi24 0 Comments**

Sep 28, 2021 Martha Chikoti

The kingpin of one of Southern Africa's most prolific wildlife trafficking syndicates, Lin Yun Hua, was today sentenced to 14 years in prison in Malawi.

Lin received 14 years for dealing in rhino horn, alongside 14 years for possession of rhino horn and six years for money laundering.

The sentences will run concurrently thus serving a total of 14 years and he will be deported back to China on completion of the jail term.

Chinese National, Lin Yun Hua, is believed to head up the 'Lin-Zhang gang', which has been operating out of Malawi for at least a decade.

He was arrested in August 2019 alongside Malawian National, James Mkwezelemba, after a 3-month manhunt by the authorities.

Today's verdict relates to the associated charges of money laundering and the trafficking of rhino horn.

This brings the total of Lin Zhang gang members sent to prison to fourteen. Ten Chinese and 4 Malawian Nationals have received prison sentences on a variety of offences related to the possession of firearms and protected or listed species, including pangolin, rhino horn,

hippo teeth, or elephant ivory.

The disruption of such a prominent and long-standing network has already been met with global commendation, sending a powerful message to organised crime actors on Malawi's resolve to disrupt illegal wildlife trade networks.

The judgment and ruling of Lin will be pivotal to Malawi's story in its ability to bring high-level wildlife criminals to justice.

In her statement, High Court Judge, Justice Chipao, sitting as a Senior Resident magistrate, highlighted aggravating circumstances, in particular his conduct of absconding justice for three months, as well as the evidence that pointed to his role as gang leader.

She also emphasised that the traffickers were encouraging the poaching and therefore needed to receive a more serious punishment than poachers to deter the existence of the market.

She stated, "The pieces of rhino horn came from not one but five different rhino what's more the Court feels that Lin was a mastermind, as he owns all the properties where specimens were found'.

Brighton Kumchedwa, the Director of the Department of National Parks & Wildlife has said: "It is critical that wildlife criminals can expect to feel the full weight of the law and the message needs to be loud and clear: Malawi is no longer a playground for the likes of the Lin-Zhang syndicate that exploit our natural heritage, damage our economy, incite corruption and pose a risk to national security. This is indeed a victory for the Malawi – and a victory for our nation's wildlife in particular."

The landmark cases are notable both for the scale of the operation and because it led to the jailing of the first non-African nationals for wildlife offences in Malawi.

Lin's wife, Mrs Zhang, is one of the convicts in question, and is currently serving an 11-year prison sentence.

Lin Hui Xin – the daughter of Mr Lin and Mrs Zhang, and also married to a Mr Li Hao Yaun who is also serving 11 years for syndicate-related crimes – was arrested in December 2020 for alleged money laundering offences. Her trial is ongoing.



## Published by somervillesustainableconservation

Journalist, academic and writer on African wildlife journalism and politics. Specialist on eastern and southern Africa, politics and human aspects of conservation, lion-human relations, elephant conservation and ivory, rhino conservation, journalism, radio and propaganda. View all posts by somervillesustainableconservation

© 2021 AFRICA SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION NEWS

WEBSITE POWERED BY WORDPRESS.COM.