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Mozambique: Eleven Elephant Tusks Seized in Tete



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Agencia de Informacao de Mocambique (Maputo)

(<http://www.poptel.org.uk/mozambique-news/>)

Maputo — Officers of Mozambique's National Criminal Investigation Service (Sernic) have seized eleven elephant tusks in a house in the western city of Tete, according to a report in Sunday's on-line issue of the independent daily "O Pais".

The police struck as the traffickers were about to sell the tusks. The two men found in possession of the tusks have been arrested. The traffickers denied involvement in poaching, and said they were only middlemen hired to sell the ivory.

The Tete Sernic provincial spokesperson, Celina Roque, said that, in order to arrest the traffickers, police officers had pretended to be interested in buying the ivory.

This is the second ivory seizure reported within a week. The first was a police raid on a house in Boane municipality, about 30 kilometres west of Maputo, in which 50 tusks were seized. It is not yet known whether these elephants were killed in Mozambique or in a neighbouring country.

Poachers now face lengthy prison sentences. The killing of any protected species carries a jail sentence of between 12 and 16 years.

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