



Chinese bail hearing postponed

24 April 2014 | Justice

The bail hearing of the three Chinese men who were arrested at the Hosea Kutako International Airport for trying to smuggle 14 rhino horns out of the country has been postponed until May 8. Li Xiaoliang, Li Zhibing and Pu Xuexin appeared on charges of possession and the export of controlled wildlife products. The three men appeared at the Windhoek Magistrate's Court in Katutura yesterday for their formal bail hearing but the case was postponed because the proper arrangements had not been made. Magistrate George Mbundu was supposed to preside but was in the North for personal matters and therefore Magistrate Uaatjo Uanivi took over his cases. Uanivi said he had not been informed to make any bail arrangements and was only there to postpone the matter until it could be heard by Magistrate Mbundu. Olivier Lino, who appeared on behalf of the three accused, argued that his clients had been in custody for more than a month and that the bail application should be heard on an urgent basis. Nevertheless, Uanivi postponed the bail hearing until May 8. The three accused were remanded in custody. The three Chinese were caught with 14 rhino horns, valued at close to N\$2.3 million, and a leopard skin in their luggage on March 23 at the Hosea Kutako International Airport on their way to Hong Kong via Johannesburg. They had left China on March 9 and arrived in Zambia the following day. They then entered Namibia through the Wenela border post on March 12 on tourist visas. The State has opposed the granting of bail due to the seriousness of the offence and because the three foreigners are a flight risk.



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