



## Chinese rhino suspects plead not guilty

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The three Chinese nationals who stand accused of trying to smuggle 14 rhino horns out of Namibia have pleaded not guilty to all charges. The case has in the meantime been referred to the office of the Prosecutor-General for a decision. Li Xiaoliang, Li Zhibing and Pu Xuexin appeared in the Windhoek Magistrate's Court in Katutura yesterday on charges of possession and export of controlled wildlife products. New charges have been added against the three men for contravening Section 6 of the Prevention of Organised Crime Act. If convicted under this section of the Prevention of Organised Crime Act, the three men may face a fine not exceeding N\$100 million or imprisonment for a period not exceeding 30 years. The three were caught with rhino horns valued at more than N\$2.3 million as well as a leopard skin of about N\$50 000 in their luggage at the Hosea Kutako International Airport on March 23. The three maintained that they did not know what was in the suitcases. They were about to board a flight to Hong Kong via Johannesburg when their bags were scanned. All three men yesterday indicated that they understood all the charges against them and said that they denied guilt on any of the charges. The case has been referred to the Office of the Prosecutor-General for a decision and was postponed until October 24. A decision must be taken on what charges to proceed with and in which court the case will continue. The accused were remanded in custody.

WINDHOEK ELLANIE SMIT



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