



Chinese rhino case transferred to regional court

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The case of three Chinese men accused of trying to smuggle 14 rhino horns worth about N\$2.3 million out of Namibia has been transferred to the Windhoek Regional Court in Katutura for plea and trial. Li Xiaoliang, Li Zhibing and Pu Xuexin were caught with the rhino horns, as well as a leopard skin valued about N\$50 000, stashed in their luggage at the Hosea Kutako International Airport on March 23. The three maintain that they did not know what was in their suitcases. They appeared yesterday before the Windhoek Magistrate's Court in Katutura, where the Prosecutor-General's decision was read to them and the case was postponed to February 17 next year. All three suspects will be charged with unlawful exporting of rhino horns under the Controlled Wildlife Products Act.

Alternatively they will be charged with unlawful dealing in or unlawful

possession of the rhino horns. The second charge will be unlawful export of a leopard skin, alternatively unlawful possession of a leopard skin. On the third count they will be charged with contravening the Prevention of Organised Crime Act for taking out the proceeds of unlawful activities from Namibia. Meanwhile, a Windhoek doctor who was arrested for being involved in rhino poaching, as well as three other rhino poaching suspects, appeared before the Okahao Magistrate's Court in the Omusati Region last week Wednesday. They were remanded in custody. The 48-year-old medical practitioner, Gerson Kandjii, Daniel Nghidinwa, 29, Stephanus Davids, 33, and Karunga Martin, 51, appeared on charges of illegal hunting of specially protected game. Their case was postponed to January 7, 2015. It is alleged that the four men were working together as a group and were responsible for rhino poaching in the Etosha National Park. The investigations are ongoing. WINDHOEK ELLANIE SMIT



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