

## Fourth Chinese charged over rhino horns

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by Werner Menges



**THE three Chinese men accused of trying to smuggle 14 rhinoceros horns out of Namibia in March last year could be joined in the dock by a compatriot, after another suspect was arrested in connection with their case this week.**

The fourth suspect to be arrested about the alleged attempt to smuggle rhino horns and a leopard skin out of Namibia on 24 March last year is a 40-year-old Chinese resident of Otjiwarongo, Wang Hui, who was apprehended in Windhoek on Monday evening.

A police spokesperson, deputy commissioner Edwin Kanguatjivi, said yesterday the police have been on Wang's trail since the arrest of three other Chinese nationals who are charged with having attempted to smuggle 14 rhino horns and a leopard skin out of Namibia in March last year.

Wang left the country when the three men were arrested, though, Kanguatjivi said.

Wang appeared before Magistrate George Mbundu in the Windhoek Magistrate's Court in Katutura on Wednesday. At this stage, he has been charged with unlawfully dealing in controlled wildlife products.

His case was postponed to 10 June after public prosecutor Anthony Wilson informed the magistrate that the prosecutor general would have to decide if Wang should be added as an accused to the case of the other three alleged rhino horn

traffickers.

Wang is being kept in custody in the meantime.

His three compatriots – Li Xiaoliang (31), Li Zhibing (53), and Pu Xuexin (49) – were arrested at Hosea Kutako International Airport on 24 March last year, after 14 rhino horns and a leopard skin were found in two suitcases that Li Zhibing and Li Xiaoliang had checked in as part of their luggage on a flight with which they were planning to leave Namibia.

The three men claimed during a bail hearing in May last year that they did not know what the suitcases in their possession contained.

Li Zhibing told a magistrate during their bail hearing that a Chinese citizen living in Zambia had asked him to take the suitcases with him to China. He said he was promised US\$3 000 as payment if he delivered the suitcases to someone in Shanghai. He also told the court that he had asked Li Xiaoliang to book one of the suitcases in as part of his luggage.

The court was further told during the bail hearing that the three men would be accommodated by a Chinese friend of theirs at Otjiwarongo, and that the same friend was willing to pay their bail, if the court granted them bail.

Li, Li and Pu are scheduled to appear in the Windhoek Regional Court again on 24 June on two main charges of unlawful export of controlled wildlife products, alternatively unlawfully dealing in or possessing controlled wildlife products, and a third main charge of the acquisition, use, possession or taking out of Namibia of property that forms part of the proceeds of unlawful activities.

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- Namibians are misused for the benefit of the Chinese only - whether it's on working sites or killing rhinos. Why has Sam Nujoma allowed the Chinese to flock into our country in their thousands. There should have been a restriction !!! - Freedom Fighter | 2015-05-22 [14977]
- This is so disgusting to see animals suffer this way. Some non-native people take advantage of Namibia; our people should wake up, we are a soft touch country and that is the truth. The authorities have to step up to the barbaric people. - chris madden | 2015-05-22 [14978]