



## State witness hammered over omissions in rhino trial

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In the trial involving four Chinese nationals arrested for trying to smuggle 14 rhino horns out of the country, the state witness was hammered during cross examination for omitting certain facts. Li Zinbing, Li Xiaoliang, Pu Xuexin and Wang Hui appeared in the Windhoek Regional Court at Katutura on Friday. They were arrested on charges of attempting to smuggle rhino horns worth more than N\$2,3 million and a leopard skin worth N\$50 000 out of the country. In her evidence, Warrant Officer Wilhemiina Shetunyenga testified how the rhino horns were found in two luggage bags at Hosea Kutako International Airport and on Friday she was put under cross-examination by defence lawyer Orben Sibeya. Sibeya questioned why Shetunyenga never mentioned in her statement to the police that Li Zinbing and Li Xiaoliang were asked if they knew what contents were in the bag. In response, Shetunyenga explained that she had forgotten to write down some information in her statement while other information she excluded because she thought it was not necessary. Sibeya pounced on this remark demanding to know if her (Shetunyenga's) memory gets better with time as she was only starting to remember some of the details now and not when she made a statement to the police. According to Shetunyenga when she asked the two accused if they knew what was in the bags, Li Zinbing said "yes" while Li Xiaoliang said "Yes, No." Sibeya wanted to know if Shetunyenga clarified what Li Xiaoliang had meant with saying "Yes, No". She then said that Shetunyenga also said that she had asked Li Zinbing to translate to Li Xiaoliang whether he knew what the contents of the bags were and it was communicated that he was aware of the content. However Sibeya wanted to know why none of this was reflected in her statement or why Detective Inspector Ophelion Immanuel Nandjebo who was then employed by the Protective Resources Unit had never mentioned any of this. "Why did you never tell us in addition to Li Zinbing saying that he knew the content that Li Xiaoliang also acknowledged this?" She said that there was no reason, but Sibeya claimed it was because it never happened. "You never asked Li Zinbing to translate and he never told you about the content. "I put it to you that this never happened that is why you did not write it down, Inspector Nandjebo did not testify about it and the accused persons dispute it." Shetunyenga has also testified when asked to open the bags Li Zinbing continuously spoke about a "boss" and that the boss is in the parking lot with keys. She thought that he may have been referring to Xuexin. Sibeya says that according to Li Zinbing only said "boss, boss" after the bags were opened and made reference to Shetunyenga. However Shetunyenga says that Li Zinbing was saying the word continuously while she was asking them to open the bags adding that the boss had the keys in the parking area. With this Sibeya also wanted to know if Li Zinbing was taken to the parking area to search for the "boss" as according to his client he was not taken outside of the airport to the parking area. Shetunyenga said that the constable who took Li Zinbing outside told her that they could not find the boss with the keys in the parking area therefore they must have gone there. Sibeya also pointed out that this fact does not feature in her statement. The case has been postponed to 14 to 18 September for the continuation of the trial. WINDHOEK ELLANIE SMIT



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