



## State closes in landmark rhino horn trial

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The State has closed its case in Namibia's biggest rhino horn smuggling trial to date, in which four Chinese nationals stand accused of trying to smuggle 14 rhino horns out of the country. Li Xiaoliang, Li Zhibing, Pu Xuexin and Wang Hui appeared in the Windhoek Regional Court in Katutura last week for the continuation of their trial. They were arrested for allegedly trying to smuggle rhino horns worth more than N\$2.3 million and a leopard skin valued at N\$50 000 out of Namibia. The items were found in two luggage bags at the Hosea Kutako International Airport on March 24 last year. Prosecutor Simba Nduna indicated last week that the State has new information it may want to bring to court, but first needed time to verify it, and therefore did not want to close its case. Defence lawyer Orben Sibeya, however, said the defence has a problem with the fact that the State was now coming with new information, which it had not yet disclosed, after indicating it wanted to close its case. Magistrate Alexis Diergaardt then granted a final postponement until Wednesday, for the State to verify the new information. However, it seems the State was not able to verify the information and no further witnesses were added to its case. The trial has been postponed until January 27 next year, when the defence will have an opportunity to present evidence to the court. ELLANIE SMIT



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