

Chinese man fined over rhino horn in parcel

News - National | 2016-09-01

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A CHINESE citizen who tried to send a piece of rhino horn out of Namibia in a parcel was sentenced to pay fines totalling N\$40 000 or serve a two-year prison term yesterday.

Magistrate Ilge Rheent sentenced Lin Linfeng (31) in the Windhoek Magistrate's Court a week after he had pleaded guilty to two charges in terms of the Controlled Wildlife Products and Trade Act.

Lin admitted on Wednesday last week that he had tried to send a piece of rhino horn out of Namibia on 11 August in a parcel that was to be dispatched by a courier company. The contents of the parcel, which was to be sent to an address in Hong Kong, included a piece of rhino horn, valued at about N\$12 000.

Lin was arrested on 12 August, after the piece of rhino horn had been detected in the parcel. He admitted guilt to charges of illegally dealing in controlled wildlife products and the illegal export of controlled wildlife products on Wednesday last week. In a plea explanation given to magistrate Rheent, Lin stated that he was aware he was committing a crime when he tried to smuggle the piece of rhino horn out of Namibia.

He also informed the court that he is a student in agriculture, is working as a chef at a restaurant in China, is the father of a three-month-old baby, and is his family's only breadwinner. He was on a visit to Namibia when he committed the offences.

After noting that Lin has admitted guilt to serious offences and that the poaching of rhinos for their horns has been on the increase in Namibia in recent years, magistrate Rheent sentenced him to a fine of N\$20 000 or 12 months' imprisonment on each of the two charges. Defence lawyer Kadhila Amoomo represented Lin during his trial. Public prosecutor Ivann Tjizu appeared for the state.