



Kandji and Co remain behind bars

Bail denied in rhino poaching case

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The case of three men accused of brutally killing two white rhinos and wounding two others on a farm near Gobabis in December has been postponed to 31 March.

Gerson Uakaerera Kandjii (51), a former Brave Warriors football team medic, and his two co-accused, Domingo Justice Moma (32) and Erwin Tjiteere (37), appeared before the Gobabis Magistrate's Court yesterday after a prison transfer from Windhoek last week.

They are charged with hunting specially protected game.

The three were arrested in Windhoek on 27 December following a police tip-off.

State prosecutor Salomon Kanyemba told Magistrate Godwin Chizhande that more charges could be brought against the three as the investigation continues.

According to the police, the four white rhinos, one of which was giving birth when she was killed, and one which survived a brutal shot through her windpipe, were valued at N\$5 million.

Kanyemba said the State "strenuously" opposed bail due to the ongoing investigation, the seriousness of the crime and in the interest of the public and justice.

He advised the court that the search for two more suspects continued, as well as the tracing of the two horns.

The five men stand accused of illegally entering a farm in the Gobabis district and shooting the rhino on 22 December.

They fled with two horns that they had hacked off the two carcasses, leaving behind two wounded rhinos with their horns intact.

In terms of the Nature Conservation Ordinance, the three suspects could face a maximum jail term of 20 years, a fine of N\$200 000, or both.

Magistrate Chizhande postponed the case to 31 March as per the prosecutor's request, and advised the accused to bring formal bail applications.

All three accused yesterday informed the court that they would apply for legal aid.

Kandjii, a qualified chiropractor, has two separate criminal cases pending - one related to rhino poaching in Etosha National



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/asse-and-co-remain-behind-bars2017-01-110.jpg>)

THIRD TIME: Gerson Uakaerera Kandjii (front) and co-accused Domingo Justice Moma (blue shirt) exit the Gobabis Magistrate's Court.

PHOTO: JANA-MARI SMITH



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/asse-and-co-remain-behind-bars2017-01-111.jpg>)

SAD END: The remains of the two rhinos killed by poachers were incinerated. PHOTO: JANA-MARI SMITH

Park in 2014 and another related to a murder and robbery at Kalkrand in 2015.

He also was charged recently with illegal possession of ammunition after the police discovered 46 cartridges for a hunting rifle in his possession. That case was postponed to 12 April.

At the time of the December poaching incident, Kandjii had been out on bail in the previous poaching case and the murder case.

The 2014 poaching case will continue on 27 February at Okahao, while the Kalkrand murder case will continue on 16 March.

Tjiteere and Moma are co-accused in the murder and robbery charges related to the killing of Reinhard Schmidt on the hunting farm Hoodia in the Kalkrand District.

Schmidt died of suffocation after his mouth and nose were gagged with adhesive tape while the robbers stole a TV, pistol and camera.

Reliable sources yesterday said that the two fugitives in the latest poaching case were also linked to the Schmidt murder case.

Sources close to the case say poachers attacked the four rhinos shortly after their daily feed.

Romeo, a tame and hand-reared white rhino bull, was shot multiple times at his feeding trough.

The pregnant cow was also shot multiple times, and had gone into labour before she died. The calf did not survive.

Walter Kinnear, the owner of the rhinos, yesterday told Namibian Sun that the brutal attack on the rhinos was a great shock and he hoped bail would not be granted.

"They are like children to me," he said, adding that he was haunted by the gruesome sight of the mutilated carcasses and wounded rhinos.

The young bull, aged between two and three years, sustained flesh wounds. However, the young female was shot multiple times, with one bullet tearing through her throat and causing serious injury.

Both animals continue to receive daily medical care and Kinnear said they were under 24-hour guard.

Yesterday, every available seat in the courtroom was filled with concerned members of the public, who hoped that bail would be denied.