



Poaching suspect Kandjii behind bars again

More charges against former soccer medic

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JANA-MARI SMITH

Former Brave Warriors football team medic Gerson Uakaera Kandjii – previously accused of rhino poaching and murder - is again behind bars after he and three other suspects were arrested for the killing of two white rhinos in the Omaheke Region in late December.

A fifth suspect is still at large, and the police suspect he might have fled to a neighbouring country.

Court documents show that on Friday last week, Kandjii, along with two more Namibian citizens, Justice Mona Domingo (32) and Erwin Tjiteere (37), were arrested in Windhoek on 29 December in connection with the slaughter and wounding of four rhinos on the farm Kainas on 21 or 22 December.

A fourth suspect is expected to appear before the Windhoek Magistrate's Court in Katutura this week, also on a charge of hunting of specially protected species.

The three suspects who appeared last Friday are all implicated in the murder of Reinhard Schmidt during a robbery on the hunting farm Hoodia in the Kalkrand District in February 2015.

The fifth poaching suspect, who is still at large, is also one of the suspects in the Schmidt murder case, according to reliable sources.

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

All the suspects in the Schmidt case were released on N\$5 000 bail each in November 2015, sparking public protest.

Kandjii is also out on bail of N\$20 000 in an earlier poaching case. He was arrested in November 2014 in connection with rhino poaching in the Etosha National Park and the Palmwag area.

Police yesterday said the latest investigation and manhunt for the fifth suspect was continuing.

During the poaching incident on a farm 26 kilometres outside Gobabis shortly before Christmas, the poachers killed a prized rhino bull and a pregnant rhino cow, and wounded two young rhinos, one of which was also pregnant.

Police yesterday said that none of the horns that were hacked off had been retrieved.

During their first appearance before Magistrate Ruben Mutuku in the Windhoek Magistrate's Court in Katutura, the three accused were remanded in custody and their case was transferred to the Gobabis Magistrate's Court for their next appearance there on 10 January.

Kandjii also appeared in front of Magistrate Mutuku on a separate charge of illegal possession of ammunition after the police



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/asset/suspect-kandjii-behind-bars-again2017-01-050.jpg>)

DOCTOR DEATH: The alleged serial rhino poacher, murder suspect and qualified chiropractor Gerson Kanjii during his term as team medic for the Brave Warriors. PHOTO: NAMPA

discovered 46 cartridges for a hunting rifle in his possession. That case was postponed to 12 April this year.

On Friday, public prosecutor Filemon Nyau told Magistrate Mutuku that the matter required further investigation and that Kandjii should remain in custody because of the pending charges in the Schmidt murder case.

Mutuku informed Kandjii that he had the right to make a formal bail application.

Kandjii said he would apply for legal aid.

In August 2016, Namibian Sun reported that Kandjii and a co-accused in the Etosha rhino poaching case had failed to show up for their scheduled court appearance before the Okahao Magistrate's Court.

In that case, the suspects face charges of illegal hunting of specially protected species, possession of firearm without a licence and unlawful possession of ammunition.

In September, the case was postponed to 27 February 2017 for plea and trial in the Okahao Magistrate's Court.