

## Three charged over killing of rhinos

News - National | 2017-01-04

Page no: !



by Werner Menges



**FORMER Brave Warriors football team medic Gerson Kandjii and two other men arrested over the killing of two rhinoceroses at a farm in the Gobabis district shortly before Christmas are due to make a first appearance in the Gobabis Magistrate's Court early next week.**

Kandjii (51), Justice Mona Domingo (32), and Erwin Tjiteere (37) made a first court appearance in the Windhoek Magistrate's Court in Katutura on a charge of hunting of specially protected game on Friday last week. Their case was transferred to the Gobabis Magistrate's Court, and they were ordered to be kept in police custody until their next scheduled return to court on Tuesday next week (10 January).

The three men were arrested on Thursday last week (29 December), and have been charged over the killing of two white rhinos at a farm in the Gobabis district on 22 December.

The two animals were found killed, with their horns hacked off and stolen, on 22 December. It was then discovered that another two white rhinos at the farm had also been shot, but survived.

One of the animals killed was a heavily pregnant rhino cow. The other was a stud bull, the owner of the farm where the poaching took place, Walter Kinnear, told *The Namibian* yesterday.

The two wounded animals are a bull and a young cow, which is also pregnant, Kinnear also said. While the injured bull is in

a satisfactory condition, the cow's condition remains serious, although it has improved since the attempt to kill her was made, he said.

Kandjii also appeared before magistrate Ruben Mutuku in a separate case on Friday. In that matter, he is charged with having illegally possessed ammunition, consisting of 46 live .300 calibre bullets, in Katutura on Tuesday last week.

Kandjii was ordered to remain in police custody on that charge, too, after public prosecutor Filemon Nyau informed the magistrate that he is also facing charges in other cases at Okahao and Kalkrand.

In the Kalkrand matter, Kandjii, Domingo and Tjiteere were charged with counts of murder and robbery with aggravating circumstances after a farm owner, Reinhard Schmidt, was killed during a robbery at his farm in the Kalkrand area in February 2015. They were released on bail of N\$5 000 each in November 2015.

Kandjii was free on bail on charges in connection with the poaching of rhinos in the Palmwag area and in Etosha National Park at the time that Schmidt was robbed and killed. He and four co-accused were arrested in November 2014 on charges of hunting of specially protected game and illegal possession of a firearm and ammunition. Their case is still pending in the Okahao Magistrate's Court.