



## Rhino wounded by poachers dies

### Gobabis farm loses second pregnant rhino

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A young white rhino cow that survived a poaching incident on a farm near Gobabis in late December has died from the gunshot wounds she sustained during the attack.

In a midday attack, during feeding time on 22 December, the gang of poachers managed to kill the patriarch bull and a female rhino that went into labour when she was shot. Her calf did not survive the trauma.

The second cow died of her wounds about 10 days ago. The young female was in the early stages of pregnancy.

Although she managed to flee the poachers, she sustained serious injuries after she was shot multiple times. One bullet had pierced her throat, damaging her trachea.

"She must have died a very painful death, because her insides were totally infected from further wounds," farm owner Walter Kinnear said yesterday.

He said after her death the team discovered that two more bullets, previously undetected, had "completely torn apart her insides". The autopsy further revealed that scar tissue in her throat had made it difficult to breathe.

Kinnear said a veterinary surgeon found it surprising that the rhino had managed to cling to life for as long as she did.

Both the young female and a young bull, which is recovering well, received daily medical treatment and were kept under close watch.

Yesterday Kinnear said the bull was stable and had not shown signs of fever. "He is likely to survive."

Police investigators have arrested all five suspects in the case, who had fled with two pairs of horns from the dead rhinos.

All five have been denied bail. The men are: former Brave Warriors medic Gerson Uakaerere Kandjii (51), farmworker Zee Shekumba (39), Domingo Justice Moma (32), Erwin Tjiteere (37) and David Stephanus (35).

They are charged with the illegal hunting of specially protected game. If convicted, they could face a maximum jail term of 20 years, a fine of N\$200 000, or both.

Kandjii, Moma, Tjiteere and Stephanus were all out on bail in previous cases of poaching, murder and robbery when the poaching incident took place in December.

In January, Kandjii was also charged 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.

Kandjii is linked with Moma and Tjiteere in a murder and robbery case dating back to the killing of Reinhard Schmidt on the hunting farm Hoodia in the Kalkrand District in February 2015. That case will continue on 16 March.

Together with three others, Stephanus and Kandjii were also arrested in November 2014 for poaching critically endangered black rhinos in Etosha National Park.



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/assewounded-by-poachers-dies2017-02-060.jpg>)

WOUNDED: The lone survivor of the poaching attack, a young bull, is recovering well but is kept under close watch and continues to receive medical care after he was shot multiple times.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

They were additionally charged with possession of a firearm without licence and unlawful possession of ammunition.

Police at the time reported that they seized thousands of dollars when the gang was arrested.

Both men were released on bail and failed to return to court in August 2016.

That case was postponed to 27 February at Okahao.

In another ongoing investigation related to 18 rhino horns smuggled by a Chinese national through Hosea Kutako airport in late November, police officer Pendapala Abraham litula (42) made a second court appearance in Windhoek on Friday.

litula, who is facing a charge of defeating or obstructing the course of justice, for allegedly failing or omitting to detect the rhino horns passing through a screening point at the airport, was released on N\$2 000 bail earlier this year.

On Friday the case was postponed for further investigation until 8 April.

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