



Kandjii court cases continue

Gobabis poaching case postponed to May

03 April 2017 | Justice

The poaching case against Gerson Kandjii (51) and four co-accused charged with killing rhinos on a Gobabis farm in December has been postponed to May. The five men remain in custody.

Kandjii, a former Brave Warriors physiotherapist, made another appearance before the Gobabis Magistrate's Court on Friday on poaching charges, following three months behind bars after his arrest in late December.

Magistrate Godwin Chidzande postponed the poaching case to 10 May for further police investigations and for legal aid feedback for the accused persons.

David Stephanus (35), accused number 4, did not appear on Friday as he was appearing in the Dordabis periodical court on another case of armed robbery at the Dordabis post office which took place last year.

Stephanus had initially indicated he would instruct a private lawyer to make a formal bail application, but this arrangement was cancelled after Stephanus changed lawyers late last week.

The three other accused in the matter are Erwin Tjiteere (37), Domingo Justice Moma (32) Zee Shekumba (39), who was the last of the gang to be arrested in late January.

Shekumba was employed at farm Khainas near Gobabis where the poaching took place. Three rhinos died from gunshot wounds inflicted by the poachers when they embarked on their mid-day hunting spree on 21 or 22 December.

Two of the rhinos died immediately and the poachers managed to saw off their horns before fleeing the scene. The third rhino, a young, pregnant female, survived the initial assault but died from the serious injuries she sustained about a month later.

A male rhino survived the attack.

All five suspects 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.

Crime spree

Kandjii, Moma, Tjiteere and Stephanus were all out on bail in previous cases of poaching, murder and robbery when they were arrested.

In January, Kandjii was also charged with illegal possession of ammunition after the police had discovered 46 cartridges for a hunting rifle in his possession. That case was postponed to 12 April.



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/asse-court-cases-continue2017-04-030.jpg>)
 MULTIPLE: Gerson Kandjii at the Gobabis Magistrate's Court in January, where he was charged with poaching on a farm near Gobabis.
 PHOTO: JANA-MARI SMITH

Kandjii is linked with Moma and Tjiteere in a murder and robbery case dating back to the killing of Reinhardt Schmidt on the hunting farm Hoodia in the Kalkrand District in February 2015. They were released on N\$5 000 bail in November 2015.

The case is set to continue on 28 April in the Kalkrand periodical court at Mariental.

During their last appearance on 6 March the case was postponed because a fourth co-accused, Stephanus Jansen, did not appear at court.

Together with four others, including David Stephanus who is now in custody in Gobabis, Kandjii was also arrested in November 2014 for allegedly poaching critically endangered black rhinos in Etosha National Park.

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

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

They were released on N\$20 000 bail in January 2015. That case will continue on 7 April at Okahao.

JANA-MARI SMITH