



## Rhino-horn suspects denied bail

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Two men accused of possession of a pair of rhino horns were denied bail by the Walvis Bay Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Petrus Mutako Damaseb, 49, and Isak Steven Omeb, 29, both from Okahandja, appeared before Magistrate John Sindano on charges under the Controlled Wildlife Products and Trade Act and the Possession of Controlled Wildlife Products Act.

They were arrested on Sunday, allegedly while trying to sell the rhino horns in the harbour town. Sindano postponed the case to 18 July for further investigation and to allow the accused to obtain legal aid. State prosecutor Sylvia Kauluma opposed bail and informed the court that the value of the two rhino horns was estimated at N\$600 000. "The investigation is at a sensitive stage. A firearm was confiscated and there are two other horns that still need to be located," she said.

Omeb pleaded not guilty. He told the court that he had no knowledge of the horns and did not understand the charges against him. He claimed that he was only an assistant driver.

Police Commissioner Erastus Likuyu confirmed that a third suspect, a resident of Swakopmund, was released due to insufficient evidence linking him to the crime. A fourth suspect who had escaped during the arrest was later nabbed at Otjiwarongo.



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/assets/horn-suspects-denied-bail2017-04-190.jpg>)

SUSPECTS: Isak Steven Omeb (closest to the camera) and Petrus Mutako Damaseb. PHOTO: OTIS FINCK