

Suspected poachers remanded in custody

News - National | 2017-06-07

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THE four suspected poachers who were arrested on Saturday following a shoot-out with the police at Khorixas will remain in custody after the court denied them bail.

Elia Paulus (22), Eino Shilongo (32), Uutoni Joas (27) and Frans Vatileni (27), appeared in the Khorixas Magistrate's Court yesterday on charges of illegal discharge of firearms, possession of firearms without licences, and attempted murder.

A charge of illegal hunting of protected game has also been added to the charges.

All but one of the suspects told magistrate Christian Shafuda that they do not want any legal representation. Their case was postponed to 6 July, and they will remain in custody after the court denied them bail on the grounds that they may interfere with the ongoing police investigations, and may be a threat to the public too.

The four first appeared in court on Monday, but their case was postponed to yesterday because there was no Oshiwambo translator for them then.

Police spokesperson deputy commissioner Edwin Kanguatjivi on Monday said police received a tip-off that the men were planning to poach rhinos in the Khorixas area, and tracked them down.

"The police arrested one of the suspects on the spot, while the other two, including the driver, escaped, but were arrested later the same day," he said.

Kanguatjivi stated that the police confiscated two firearms and two masks. A source at the court also said the suspects were initially allegedly found aiming their rifles at two black rhinos, but suddenly bolted when they noticed a police helicopter hovering above them.

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