

Five suspected poachers denied bail

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Page no: 3



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FIVE suspects who were arrested last week for being in possession of four elephant tusks were denied bail in the Katima Mulilo Magistrate's Court on Monday.

The four Namibians, Mashozi Lizazi (34), Sonety Lizazi (39), Sameja Debecoius (49) and Alex Sitali (32), as well as Zambian Tapiso Simasiku, all indicated during their first appearance that they are not guilty, and opted to source private legal representation.

They are facing two charges of the possession of controlled game products and dealing in controlled game products without a licence.

Simasiku is facing a third charge of entering Namibia illegally.

The case was postponed to 26 April for further investigations as the value of the four elephant tusks is still unknown.

According to the police, the suspects allegedly went to poach two elephants in the Chobe National Park of Botswana last week. On Thursday, the police received a tip-off from a community member, who informed them that the suspects are making their way to Namibia with four elephant tusks.

The police thus started with their operation. When they received official confirmation that the tusks were brought into

Namibia and hidden at a house in the Choto compound, they decided to go and raid the house on Friday.

They found the four elephant tusks. Upon finding the tusks, they asked the owner of the house, Sonety, who was present at the time, about how the tusks got into her house.

She then implicated the other four suspects, telling the police that they are the ones who brought them there. The four suspects were not home at the time as she told the police that they went to Zambia to meet with potential buyers.

The police then decided to pursue the suspects into Zambia, but caught up with them at the Wenela border post upon their return. The four suspects were arrested, along with the owner of the house.

The five accused persons appeared before magistrate Vincent Nzaca.

Diana Khama appeared for the prosecution.