



Oncologist granted N\$50 000 bail

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A Windhoek oncologist has been granted N\$50 000 bail by the Windhoek Magistrate's Court after he was arrested at the weekend for the illegal possession of three elephant tusks.

Dr Thomas John Brown van Wyk (44), known as Tommy, appeared before court yesterday on a charge of possession of controlled wildlife products.

A police spokesperson told Namibian Sun that Van Wyk's house at Auas View, south of Windhoek, was searched on Saturday afternoon after the police had received a tip-off.

Three tusks were found in the house, for which Van Wyk did not have permits.

The regional crime investigations coordinator, Deputy Commissioner Abner Agas, said Van Wyk was at work when the house was searched and he was not arrested that day.

According to Agas, Van Wyk surrendered to the police on Monday after consultations with his lawyer. Agas said the tusks were not fresh, but were complete tusks and not ornaments.

State prosecutor Sylvia Kauluma said in court that the value of the tusks had not been determined and the investigation was continuing.

According to her an agreement had been reached with the defence that bail would be set at N\$50 000.

Van Wyk must hand in his passport to the investigating officer, and must report to the Windhoek police Mondays to Fridays between 08:00 and 17:00. Van Wyk is also not allowed to leave Windhoek without the permission of the investigating officer.

Defence lawyer Evert Gous confirmed that he was appearing on behalf of Van Wyk and that an agreement had been reached with the State on bail.

Magistrate Mwilima Mwilima then postponed the case to 27 March.

A spokesperson for the environment ministry could not confirm whether the elephant tusks found at Van Wyk's house were fresh or merely ornaments. He said the ministry was consulting with the police but had not received an official report on the matter yet.

Van Wyk is a licensed doctor with over 15 years' experience in oncology, general medicine, emergency medicine, aesthetic medicine and surgery.

He is currently working as a radiation oncologist at the Namibian Oncology Centre in Windhoek. Van Wyk performed the first stem-cell transplant in Namibia in July last year.

He is not the first medical professional in Namibia to have been accused of wildlife crimes. Gerson Uakaerera Kandjii, a chiropractor and former Brave Warriors football team medic, is on trial in several rhino poaching cases and a case of murder and robbery.



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/assets/granted-n50-000-bail2019-01-300.jpg>)

TUSK TROUBLE: Dr Tommy van Wyk and his lawyer, Evert Gouws, leaving the Windhoek Magistrate's Court yesterday after he was granted N\$50 000 bail. Photo: ELLANIE SMIT

ELLANIE SMIT