



Babi withdraws urgent High Court application

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PROPHET OR POACHER: Jackson Babi. PHOTO: FILE

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WINDHOEK

An urgent application by self-proclaimed prophet Jackson Babi to, amongst others, review and set aside his arrest in connection with rhino poaching was withdrawn yesterday.

The High Court application was filed by his lawyer Kadhila Amoomo on 4 June.

However, Magistrate Linus Samunzala last week ordered Babi to be transferred to the Gobabis Magistrate's Court to appear on a charge of hunting specially protected game.

He appeared yesterday and was remanded in custody.

This was after he appeared in Windhoek last week on charges of possession and/or dealing in rhino horns, and possession of a hunting rifle and ammunition without a licence.

The two cases are connected.

Poaching

Babi was arrested recently after two rhino horns were allegedly found in his Kleine Kuppe home.

His arrest stems from two rhino carcasses that were found on a farm in the Gobabis area on 26 May.

It is suspected that the rhinos were shot with a hunting rifle. All four horns were illegally removed from the carcasses.

Babi is one of eight suspects who have been arrested in connection with the matter.

Urgent application

In the application, Amoomo said the search of Babi's house on 28 May must be declared unlawful and that a warrant for his arrest issued on 2 June must be reviewed and set aside.

Furthermore, he said Babi should immediately be released from detention, arguing that his arrest was unlawful.

Babi also wanted the warrant of detention issued by Samunzala to be set aside.

According to the founding affidavit, Babi was arrested on 28 May by members of the protected resources unit in Windhoek at his home.

"I was arrested on allegations of possession and dealing in controlled wildlife products. I was arrested after members of the police forcefully entered my home and thereafter proceeded to search my home without a warrant."

Babi denied he was in possession of the rhino horns found in his home. According to Babi, on 2 June while he was in custody, he was arrested on allegations of hunting specially protected rhinos.

Undercover operation

According to an affidavit by investigating officer John Hoaseb, his unit gathered information that certain people were in possession of rhino horns and were looking for buyers.

He said an undercover operation led to the arrest of four suspects at Otjiwarongo, namely Onesmus Haufiku, Elias Nashivela, Uutoni Enos and Mushitua Vaaruka.

A pair of rhino horns were recovered from the suspects and they were interviewed, which led to further arrests in Windhoek.

According to Hoaseb, the information then led to the house of Nashivela, where they found Alberto Mbware and Joseph Matheus.

Like dominoes

This led the investigation team to a house in Golgota in Katutura, which was occupied by Frizans Dumeni Naululu.

A hunting rifle telescope was recovered under his mattress.

Dumeni finally led them to a house in Kleine Kuppe, owned by Babi, to recover a parcel and box he had brought there, which contained the two rhino horns and rifle.

Following the withdrawal of the motion, the court ordered Babi to pay all costs involved.

Babi's two cases will likely be joined, and where the case will be heard will depend on a decision by the prosecutor-general.

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