



## Rhino poaching accused at Grootfontein remanded in custody

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The four men who were arrested on Friday for allegedly poaching two white rhinos at a private game farm at Grootfontein were on Monday remanded in police custody. They are 35-year-old Dave Ngumbi, 49-year-old Alfred Rukee, 38-year-old Lucas Hidinwa, and 40-year-old Hengua Kaipi.

They all appeared on Monday in the Grootfontein Magistrate's Court on charges of hunting specially protected game and dealing in rhino horns without a valid permit. The four were informed of their legal rights to engage the services of a private lawyer, apply for a State-funded lawyer through the Ministry of Justice's Legal Aid Directorate or defend themselves in court.

Ngumbi, Rukee, Hidinwa and Kaipi all opted to defend themselves in court during proceedings. Their case was then postponed to 24 November 2020 for further police investigations. Namibian Police Force spokesperson in the Otjozondjupa Region, Inspector Maureen Mbeha said the accused were arrested Friday night at Grootfontein. Mbeha said the four are linked to a poaching incident that allegedly occurred between 22 July 2020 and 15 August at the private game farm in the Grootfontein area. Preliminary police investigations indicate that the suspects allegedly conspired to hunt the specially protected game for their horns, Mbeha said. "They then shot a bull and a cow on the farm," she added. The police officer stated that the bull died of the gunshot wounds and its horns were removed by the

suspects, while the female rhino escaped and survived the attack with injuries. The two rhinos are valued at N\$1 million, Mbeha said. A vehicle suspected to have been used in the incident is also impounded at the Grootfontein Police Station.

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