



# Poachers sentenced to 15 years



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## Hertta-Maria Amutenja

The Windhoek Magistrate Court has handed down prison sentences of up to 15 years to four individuals involved in a heinous rhino poaching case.

The culprits were found guilty for their involvement in a poaching incident dating back to December 2016, where four white rhinos were ruthlessly killed on a private farm in the Gobabis District.

On 22 December 2016, the suspects allegedly, without a hunting permit, killed four white rhinos – two bulls and two pregnant cows – each valued at N\$1.25 million, with a total value of N\$5 million.

The late Uakaerera Kandji, a former Brave Warriors football team medic, and his three co-accused faced serious charges, including hunting specially protected game, theft of rhino horns, and trespassing, as well as malicious damage to property.



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Romeo Muyunda, Chief Public Relations Officer of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Tourism, stated that Magistrate Johannes Shuuvani, delivered the verdict on 18 September 2023, underscoring the gravity of the crime and emphasising the judiciary’s awareness of the devastating impact of rhino poaching on conservation efforts and associated benefits.

“All four accused were convicted on three out of four counts. The sentences, including 15 years of imprisonment, five of which are suspended, were for hunting specially protected game. They also received six years, with three suspended, for theft of the rhino horns. Three of the four accused were sentenced to one year, with six months suspended, on trespassing charges,” said Muyunda.

However, they were acquitted on the charge of malicious damage to property.

In addition, Muyunda expressed satisfaction with the court’s decision, emphasising the importance of the sentences as a clear deterrent factor against engagement in rhino poaching.

He further urged the public to actively condemn and report any suspected incidents of poaching to the authorities, reinforcing the collective responsibility in preserving Namibia’s wildlife.



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