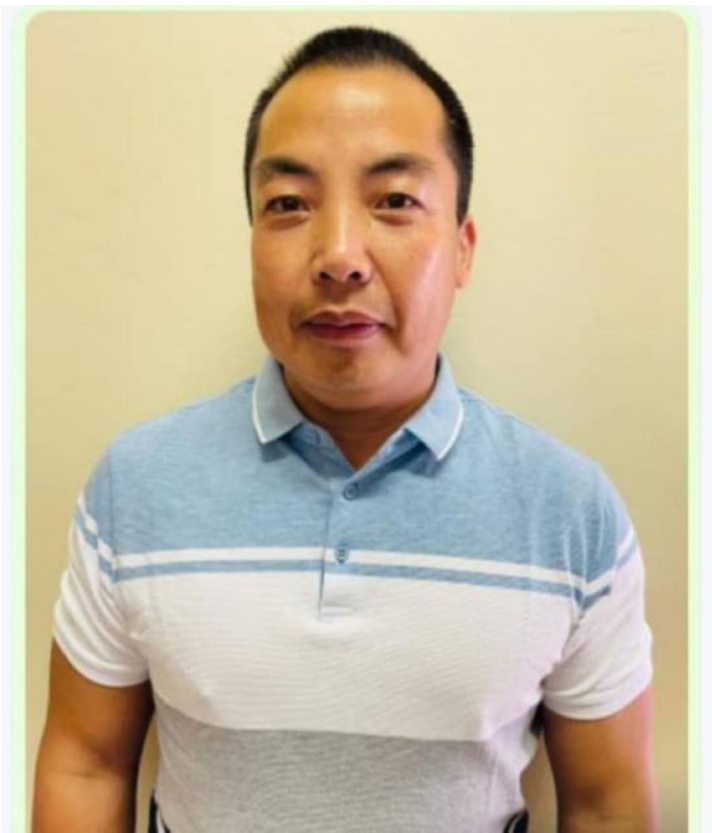




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Wang

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PRISON WARDENS FINED FOR CHINESE INMATE'S ESCAPE

Ellanie Smit

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Two correctional officers who were suspended after the escape of Chinese rhino-horn smuggler Wang Hui have been found guilty by an internal disciplinary process.

Deputy Commissioner-General Mariana Martin of the Namibian Correctional Service (NCS) told Namibian Sun that based on an investigation, three officers were suspended after Wang's escape.

"All three correctional officers suspended were eventually charged, with at present two found guilty of misconduct under the Correctional Service Act."

The two officers were found guilty of neglect of duty.

Martin added that the matter against the third officer is still pending.

That officer stands accused of neglect of duty and neglecting to observe any rule, standing order or administrative directive made or issued under Section 5 (3) of the Correctional Service Act.

The two convicted correctional officers were fined and have since resumed duty, Martin said.

The third correctional officer remains on suspension.

'Internal matter'

According to NCS Commissioner-General Raphael Hamunyela, the specifics of the fines imposed are regarded an internal matter.

"The assurance provided that the two officers that were found guilty of neglect of duty were imposed disciplinary measures is perceived sufficient for public interest," he said.

He added that, since Wang escaped from custody on 17 October 2022, there has been no trace of him.

"He has gone underground."

Wang escaped when he went to Brakwater with a warden from the Windhoek Central Prison to pick up material from a supplier.

The material was for a prison workshop for a health ministry project.

Wang - along with Li Zhibing, Pu Xuexin and Li Xiaoling - was found guilty in 2016 of attempting to smuggle 14 rhino horns and a leopard skin out of Namibia.

His three accomplices were caught with rhino horns worth N\$2.3 million as well as the leopard skin, worth about N\$50 000, in their luggage on 23 March 2014 at the Hosea Kutako International Airport.

They all received 14-year jail terms.