

Master hunting guide in court

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A variety of crimes reported – also in other districts of the country

Represented by a gruff lawyer - he slapped the phone out of the journalist's hand - hunting guide Brian Roodt is facing trial in the Magistrates' Court for a number of wildlife crimes. The defendant has also appeared in court in other parts of the country for similar offences. He is currently free on bail.

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By Francoise Steynberg

(Edited by S. Noechel)

Windhoek

One of the cases against master hunting guide Brian Roodt, who has been charged with several wildlife crimes, has been adjourned until October 29. Roodt, the owner of Quality Hunting Safaris, appeared before the Special Wildlife Court in Katutura in the capital on Tuesday, where he is charged with failing to comply with conservation regulations.

He is alleged to have failed to submit his annual hunting report on where, when and what species of game he hunted, as well as failing to declare the number of hunting trophies and the names and nationalities of his clients. In this context, Roodt is also alleged to have made false statements about a hippo hunt with a Hungarian hunter, which he had not reported in the first place.

His legal representative, Gilroy Kasper, stated that shortly before his client's appearance on Tuesday afternoon, further charges had emerged in the indictment. "There is a personal vendetta against my client. The charge sheet was amended at the last minute and an additional charge of POCA (the Prevention of Organised Crime Act) was added. We cannot plead to this charge," Kasper complained to Regional Judge Immanuel Udjonbala, who is handling the case.

State prosecutor Wai Murangi countered that she had given Kasper the amended charge sheet an hour before Roodt's appearance. "There is no personal vendetta against the client and the state's intentions are not malicious," she vehemently stressed. Kasper argued that he had to pick up his children from school during lunch break. Udjonbala ordered Roodt's bail to be extended and the case to be referred to the Windhoek Magistrate's Court.

Outside the courtroom, Kasper also tried to prevent an NMH journalist from taking photos of Roodt and snatched her mobile phone from her hand. Roodt faces another seven charges in the Dordabis district. These include charges such as illegal hunting of protected game (a leopard), illegal hunting at night and with dogs, illegal possession of a leopard skin and also money laundering.

He was arrested on December 24 last year when he first appeared before the Dordabis District Court. He was behind bars over Christmas and appeared in court on December 27 on further charges. Roodt was released on December 28 on bail of N\$3000.

President of the Namibian Professional Hunters Association (Napha), Axel Cramer, confirmed that Roodt is indeed not a member of Napha. Cramer urged members to continue to abide by the rules, regulations and laws set by the members and the Professional Hunters Association. He said that by jointly adhering to these guidelines, Namibia can ensure the sustainability of wildlife populations and the long-term viability of hunting as part of Namibia's conservation strategy.

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