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Court symbol used to illustrate the story

# Nigerian court convicts Vietnamese for trafficking in Pangolin scales

*The Vietnamese pleaded guilty to the charges of trafficking.*

By [Ben Ezeamalu](#)

[September 17, 2022](#)

Reading Time: 2 mins read

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A federal court in Lagos on Friday sentenced a Vietnamese, Nguyen Huy, to three months in prison for trafficking in 200 kiogrammes of [Pangolin](#) scales.

Daniel Osiagor, the judge, jailed Mr Huy after he pleaded guilty to two counts of trafficking brought against him by the Nigeria Customs Service.

According to the Customs, the convict contravened Nigeria's Customs and Excise Management Act with the unlawful possession of Pangolin scales, a specimen specified in the First Schedule to the Endangered Species Act.

Mr Huy was brought before the court after he – alongside others who are still at large – was arrested by Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and Wildlife Justice Commission( WJC), a joint wildlife enforcement operations, targeting illegal wildlife traffickers of Pangolin scales from Africa to Asia.

At the hearing of the charges against the convict, today, the prosecutor, Onyeka Ohakwe, informed the court that the suspects committed the offences on 9th May at a Chicken Republic restaurant in Marina, Lagos.

The prosecutor informed the court that the offences committed by the convict, contravened Sections 64 of the Customs and Excise Management Act, 2004. She said the offence is contrary to and punishable under section 166 of the Customs and Excise Management Act, Cap. C45, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004.

It is also contrary to section 5(1) of the Endangered Species (Control of International Trade and Traffic) Act, 2004 and punishable under section 5(1)(a) of the same Act.

Upon his guilty plea, the prosecutor, Mrs Ohakwe, thereafter, reviewed the facts of the charge and tendered some exhibits, which were admitted by the court.

She also urged the court to convict Mr Huy and to sentence him in line with the sections of the Customs Act he was charged for.

**TEXEM**

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But the convict's counsel, Okey Mgbobukwa, pleaded with the court to temper justice with mercy in sentencing his client.

He particularly urged the court to consider that the convict pleaded guilty to the charges made against him.

In his judgment, Mr Osiagor, after hearing from the counsel, sentenced the Vietnamese to three months imprisonment in each of the two counts.

The judge also ordered that the sentence shall run concurrently and to begin from the date of his arrest.

Pangolin is the world's most trafficked animal, prized for its scales which are used in traditional medicine in China. In 2019, the Global Environmental Reporting Collective chose the pangolin trade as its first focus for in-depth **investigation**.

In March, PREMIUM TIMES **analysed wildlife crimes data** and found evidence of systematic failure by the Nigerian law enforcement and judicial system to hold wildlife poachers and traffickers accountable.