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Three suspects arrested for dealing in rhino horns

2020/04/26

Media Statement
Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (HAWKS)

MPUMALANGA – An intelligence driven operation has landed three suspects in jail after they were found with six rhino horns.

The operation comprising of the Serious Organised Crime Investigation, Detectives, Crime Intelligence, Tactical Response Team, Tracking Team and the Local Criminal Record Centre ensued after it emerged that three were allegedly dealing in rhino horns.

The team obtained a search and seizure warrant and descended on the suspects' house at Clau-Clau Newscom in Pienaar. On arrival at the premises, an intensive search commenced and members located a number of hunting knives in one of the three vehicles that were parked inside the yard. They also uncovered a sizable amount of money inside the house.

The team proceeded with the search around the yard and found six rhino horns hidden inside the outside restroom. The horns are believed to be sets from three dead rhinos.

The three suspects, two males and one female, aged between 24 and 34 were later arrested. The three vehicles, money and the six rhino horns have also been seized. The suspects are expected to appear before Kabokweni Magistrates' Court on Tuesday, 28 April 2020 for illegal possession of rhino horns in terms of the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act. Investigations are still continuing.

Meanwhile the National Head of the DPCI, Lieutenant General Godfrey Lebeya welcomed the arrests. "The DPCI shall continue to deal decisively with those who are involved in poaching these species. We shall be following the motive which is probably the making of an unexplained wealth with view to attaching same," said Lieutenant General Lebeya.

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