



Home > News

Police nab abalone poachers and bust large scale cleaning facility

Police in the Western Cape continue to crack down on abalone poaching and smuggling, and a separate offender gets 20 years behind bars.



by Dan Meyer — 2020-06-08 12:11 in News



Western Cape police made a bust of a fully operational abalone cleaning facility in Paarl. Photo: Pixabay

102 SHARES



8 000 stripped abalone.

ABALONE CLEANING FACILITY DISCOVERED

Zuang and Hussein were pulled over when officers in the Boland area noticed that they seemed suspicious. While the officers searched the vehicle, the two men hopped out and high-tailed it, but police gave chase and were able to apprehend them shortly afterwards.

In the vehicle, the they found a supply of abalone.

“Chen Zhuang (29) and Mohammed Hussein (28) appeared in the Paarl Magistrate’s Court on Thursday, 04 June 2020 after they were arrested for operating an illegal abalone processing facility,” said police spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Philani Nkwalase

“Initially Zhuang and Hussein were arrested by the Paarl Visible Policing members who stopped and searched a suspicious vehicle. The driver and passenger jumped out of the vehicle and fled on foot however police gave chase and arrested both suspects. The vehicle was searched and about 8250 stripped abalone was found inside. Both the vehicle and abalone were seized by the local police for further investigation.”

Nkwalese said that the Hawks then got involved, and the investigation led them to a premises in Paarl where a fully operational cleaning facility was set up.

“The Hawks Serious Organised Crime Investigation was roped in which led them to the suspects’ premises at St Francis Avenue. A fully operational abalone drying facility with processing equipment and more dried abalone was uncovered worth an all-inclusive value exceeding R1.3 million,” he said.

The suspects are expected to appear again on Wednesday 10 June for a formal bail application.



Abalone cleaning facility discovered in Paarl, Western Cape. Photo: SAPS

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In another, separate **victory for law enforcement agencies** trying to crack down on the smuggling abalone, a 28-year-old man was sentenced to a hefty prison stint having been guilty of crimes committed in 2017, with charges including attempted murder and unlawful firearm possession.

Zukisa Sibango was slammed with a 20 years sentence in total by the Atlantis Regional Court in the Western Cape on Friday 5 June, having been held at n Eat London correctional facility for a separate spate of crimes.

Sibango was part of an armed group that ambushed a private security vehicle and a truck whilst en-route to the Cape Town International Airport from St Helena with a consignment of legally cultivated abalone for export purposes.

“On 11 April 2017, on the R27 just outside Melkbosstrand, a gang of armed men driving in a minibus taxi and a sedan fired shots at the security vehicle whilst escorting the truck. Both bullet riddled vehicles were forced to stop. The driver of the security vehicle was hospitalised due to gunshot wounds and has since recovered,” said Nkwalese.

“The truck driver was forced to proceed to Du Noon where on arrival he was forced into the boot of the sedan. The truck was off-loaded and was later returned to the driver on the N7 near Morningstar upon his release.”

“Two suspects were subsequently identified through forensic investigations. Unfortunately Sibango’s accomplice died before he could be arrested.”

Last week, Sibango pleaded guilty on all charges and entered into a plea agreement with the state. He was sentenced to an effective 20 years imprisonment and was also declared unfit to possess a firearm.

“The sentences in accordance with the charges include seven years imprisonment for attempted murder, 3 years for a second attempted murder, 20 years for robbery with aggravating circumstances, five years for kidnapping, five years for unlawful possession of a firearm and two years for unlawful possession of ammunition. All of the sentences will run concurrently,” said Nkwalese.

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Gary De Sousa

If you dont stop this at source then there will be no abalone left,come on

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