

Local news

## 3 men sentenced in Mokopane for selling lion parts

The trio were arrested following a R50 000 transaction for parts of lions they killed on a private game reserve outside Lephalale.

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LIMPOPO – Jeremias Macheque (37), Hendriques Manganye (40) and Carlito Ngobeni (36) appeared in the Mokopane Magistrate’s Court on Friday, 4 December.

The trio faced charges of being in possession of an endangered species following an incident in 2016, according to a statement by Police Spokesperson, Col Moatshe Ngoepe.

“Police received a complaint about two white lions that were found poisoned and skinned at a private game reserve outside Lephalale on 28 May 2016. Police commenced with investigations and received a tip-off about the suspects who were selling lion parts in the Giyani policing area,” he explained.

An intelligence driven operation was conducted by members of the Provincial Stock Theft Unit and the trio was arrested following a transaction, estimated at R50 000, for two heads and the feet of a white lion.

“The lions were positively linked through forensic evidence of the reported incident in Lephalale,” he said.



Macheque and Manganye each received four and a half years' imprisonment, as well as a further six years' imprisonment of which three years is suspended for five years.

Ngobeni was sentenced to three years and six months' imprisonment and a further six years suspended for five years or a R20 000 fine. He was also declared unfit to possess a firearm.

Meanwhile, 29-year-old Hlayisani Godfrey Nghulele was sentenced in the Giyani Magistrate's Court for a separate incident. Ngoepe said Nghulele was sentenced to four years' imprisonment or a R20 000 fine, for being in possession of a pangolin.

"On 1 October 2019, Nghulele was arrested by the Provincial Stock Theft, Endangered Species and Crime Intelligence Unit during a joint operation conducted in Ngobe village, Giyani. Police followed information about a red bakkie with six occupants driving along the Ngobe main road. The vehicle was stopped, searched and police found a pangolin, which was still alive," he explained.

The six men were arrested and each were granted R1 000 bail. The five other accused were later withdrawn from the case, after Nghulele confessed that the animal was in his possession.

"Half of his four year sentence is suspended for five years on condition that he is not convicted of being found in possession of specially protected wild animal without authorisation committed during the period of the suspension," Ngoepe concluded.

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