



CAPETIMES NEWS

American nabbed with 354 plants by CapeNature sentenced



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Cape Town – An American citizen has been sentenced to two years in jail, suspended for five years, and further banned from the

country for the illegal possession of indigenous plants.

Kalman Kaminar was sentenced in the Cape Town Magistrate's Court on two counts of illegal possession of succulent plants declared as protected. The South African Red Plan List declared some of the plants as vulnerable and endangered.

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Following a confiscation order overseen by the Asset Forfeiture Unit, the court ordered Kaminar to pay R500 000 to the State - R250 000 to be paid into the Criminal Assets Recovery Account and R250 000 to be paid to the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board.

Advocate Aradhana Heeranum successfully argued that the court declare Kaminar an undesirable person and ban him from entering South Africa again.

Kaminar was arrested last year by CapeNature officials when he and his tour guide were caught with the plants.

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“At the time of their arrest, he had 354 plants with him - 337 were protected and 17 were unprotected.

“Other plants were found at a guest house he was staying in in Robertson.

“Further investigation revealed that the accused arrived in the country on October 29, 2019, on a guided tour for various succulent plants,” The National Prosecuting

Authority (NPA) said.

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Before making the trip to get the plants, Kaminar was found with a detailed itinerary with a number of stops where the plants could be found, along with GPS co-ordinates of specific plants.

In argument in aggravation of sentence, Advocate Heeranum told the court that Kaminar was linked to a nursery named “Never Enough Cactus” in Los Angeles, California. He also has a Facebook page by the same name. She added that the 738 plants, valued at R780902, were obtained without permission.

“Illegal trade in wild fauna and flora is one of the five largest activities in the world along with illegal drug trade, illegal weapons smuggling and human trafficking.

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“Environmental crime is one of the most damaging, high profile and economically significant fields of global criminal activity. He planned his entire trip. There has been a recent increase in cases involving the trafficking of succulent plant species,” she argued.

Kaminar has appealed against his sentence and will be advised of his next court appearance through a summons, as per directions issued by the minister of Justice and Correctional Services.

Cape Times

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