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Department welcomes hefty sentences imposed on three rhino poachers

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Three Mozambican nationals will serve an effective prison term of 35 years each after being found guilty of dehorning three white rhino horns at the Pilanesberg Game Reserve in 2018.

Image: 123RF/Stuart Porter

The department of forestry, fisheries and the environment has welcomed the hefty sentences handed down by a North West court to three rhino poachers on Wednesday.

The Mogwase regional court handed down sentences of 85 years each to Mozambican nationals Arlindo Muhlana, Adam Hlongwane and Gamula Chauke.

The men were arrested in 2018 after the poaching and dehorning of three white rhino cows in the Pilanesberg Game Reserve.

“The men were found in possession of, among others, six rhino horns, an axe, firearms and ammunition. The bakkie they were travelling in was also confiscated,” the department said.

The men were convicted on 10 charges each, including three charges of illegal hunting of the rhino cows, illegally chopping off rhino horns, illegal possession and conveyancing of six rhino horns in terms of the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act, illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, and trespassing in a protected area.

The sentences imposed were ordered to run concurrently, meaning each man will serve an effective 35 years in prison.

The department said the sentences reflect the severity of the crimes involved in the poaching of rhino in SA and sends a clear message to those involved in these unlawful activities.

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