

SOUTH AFRICA

Former KZN cop gets 10 years for rhino poaching

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A former KZN cop was convicted and sentenced to 10 years in prison after he was found in possession of rifles and two rhino horns near a game reserve in northern KZN in 2018. File photo.

Image: Paul Ash

A former KwaZulu-Natal cop has been convicted and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for a 2018 incident in which he was found in possession of an unlicensed firearm and rhino horns.

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Sizwe Buthelezi, 39, appeared in the Durban regional court on Tuesday, where he was handed a 10-year sentence.

Provincial Hawks spokesperson Simphiwe Mhlongo said Buthelezi was a member of the KwaMsane tactical response team at the time of his arrest near Ntambanana in northern KZN.

“On October 11 2018 Buthelezi was seen leaving Hluhluwe iMfolozi Park. Rhino 9 Task Team and Ezemvelo Wildlife officials, who were in the vicinity, tried to stop him but he sped off and a high-speed chase ensued. He eventually lost control of his vehicle and crashed into a house,” said Mhlongo.

He said when they were leaving the park, another person managed to flee and evade arrest. Police took the decision to pursue Buthelezi in their vehicle until he crashed and they searched the vehicle.

Mhlongo said Buthelezi was found in possession of a hunting rifle with live rounds of ammunition, three hunting knives and two freshly-cut rhino horns.

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“He was placed under arrest and later charged accordingly by the Hawks members from Richards Bay serious organised crime investigation.”

Buthelezi made several court appearances before being sentenced on Tuesday. He has been deemed unfit to possess a firearm in future.

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