



## Seven years in jail for poacher cornered in the Kruger National Park



Published 11h ago

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**Pretoria – A 40-year-old Mozambican national, Brian Phiri, has been sentenced after being convicted for poaching by the Skukuza Regional Court in Mpumalanga.**

Police spokesperson, Brigadier Selvy Mohlala said the court sentenced Phiri after hearing that on June 14, last year, field rangers who were on duty at Lower Sabi inside the Kruger National Park noticed some suspects' prints which alerted rangers that there were intruders in the park.

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“It also appeared to the rangers that the intruders gained entry through the Sekelbospan area. The rangers then followed up on the tracks with the help of a tracker dog,” Mohlala said.

“They then managed to track down the suspects. However one of the suspects fled and he is still at large while one suspect was apprehended. The accused was reportedly found in possession of a .458 hunting rifle with its serial numbers filed off, seven Win Mag cartridges of a .458 rifle, two backpacks as well as an axe.”

The police at Skukuza were informed about the incident, and upon their arrival the man was arrested as well as charged.

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“Police investigation also revealed that the accused was from Mozambique and was in the country illegally,” Mohlala said.

On Tuesday, the case was finalised in court, and the 40-year-old man was sentenced as follows:

For trespassing, Phiri was sentenced to three years imprisonment and for contravention of the Immigration Act, he was sentenced to one year imprisonment.

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On the count of possession of a prohibited firearm, the Mozambican national was slapped with seven years imprisonment. On a count of possession of

unlicensed ammunition, he got a sentence of two years imprisonment, while on the count of possession of a dangerous weapon, the court added another year's imprisonment.

"The court ordered that all other counts run concurrently with the count of possession of a prohibited firearm. The accused will therefore be incarcerated for effective seven years," Mohlala said.

Meanwhile, provincial commissioner of police in Mpumalanga, Lieutenant-General Semakaleng Daphney Manamela has welcomed the sentencing, and appreciated the collaborative efforts which produced results.

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"We applaud the good work done by various stakeholders, including the field rangers, the investigators, the prosecution team as well as the judiciary," Manamela said.

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