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4 men arrested in connection with separate Kruger National Park poaching incidents

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Four alleged poachers are in custody for two separate incidents in the Kruger National Park this week.
PHOTO: Gallo Images/ Stuart Fox

- Four suspected poachers have been arrested.
- Two were found in the Kruger National Park on Monday and the other two were arrested on Tuesday.
- This week, two other men were sentenced to 19 years in prison after they were arrested for poaching.

Four alleged poachers are in custody in connection with two separate poaching incidents in the Kruger National Park this week.

Their arrests come after the Skukuza Regional Court imposed lengthy prison terms in a separate poaching case earlier this week.

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The arrests were made on Monday when field rangers in the Houtboshrand Section of the park spotted human footprints, police spokesperson Brigadier Selvy Mohlala said.

Mohlala said:

The rangers followed the tracks with the assistance of a tracker dog and managed to corner two male suspects. Police [in] Skukuza were notified.... Two men were arrested and charged for possession of [an] unlicensed firearm with ammunition and more charges may be added as the investigation continues.

They have been identified as Raydon Zitha, 24, and Ernesto Zitha, 27.

On Tuesday, field rangers in the Tshokwane Section of the national park also spotted human footprints and followed the tracks. They found two men in possession of a hunting rifle, ammunition, and an axe. Skukuza police arrested the two men.

They were identified as Maxiyi Hlungwana, 33, and Khensani Chauke, 26.

All four alleged poachers are also accused of entering South Africa illegally from Mozambique.

They are expected to appear in the Skukuza Regional Court on 4 May 2022 for a bail hearing.

This comes after two men were sentenced for poaching in the Skukuza Regional Court on Tuesday.

Lawrence Flaveo Cuetsele, 21, and Nelson Mhlongo, 34, were arrested in March last year after they were found in the Lower Sabi area of the park in possession of firearms and ammunition.

Field rangers heard gunshots and with the assistance of a SANParks helicopter, three men were cornered. They were found in possession of a rifle, ammunition and a knife. They also had bags and clothing.

It was established that they had entered South Africa illegally from Mozambique.

"The three [men] appeared before court where one of the suspects, Antony Tembe, was granted bail. That was the last time he was seen, and he never set his foot in court again," said Mohlala.

A warrant for his arrest has been issued and he is still at large.

Cuetsele and Mhlongo were sentenced to an effective 19 years in prison.