

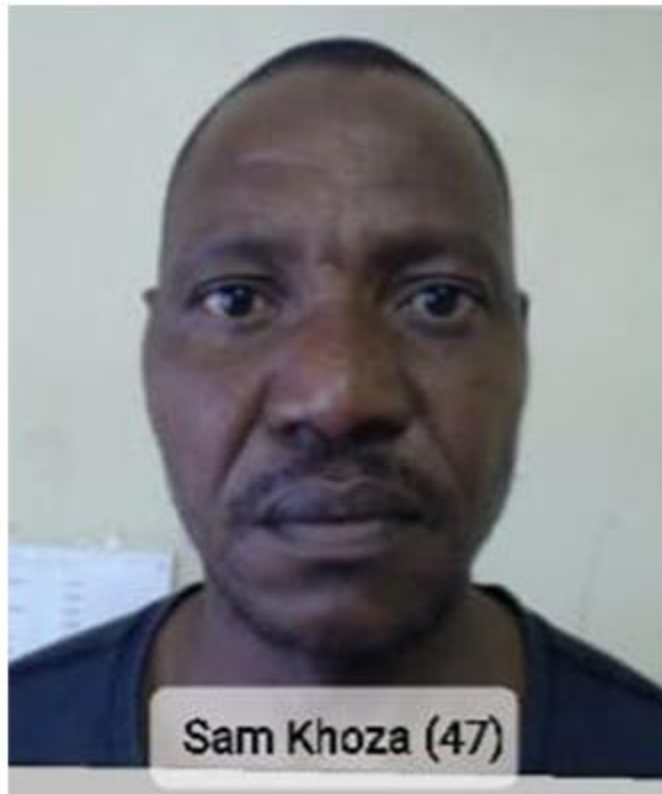
## Skukuza Regional Court sentences poacher to nine years' imprisonment

The man pleaded guilty to all charges and was sentenced on Friday May 20.

May 24, 2022

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A 47-year-old man was sentenced to nine years' imprisonment on Friday for illegal poaching. Sam Khoza (47) was apprehended in the Kruger National Park on November 11, 2020, when a shoot-out between field rangers in the park, Khoza and his two accomplices ensued.

A statement by a provincial police spokesperson, Brig Selvy Mohlala, said two of the suspects evaded arrest, but Khoza, who sustained some injuries during the shooting, was captured. He was found in possession of a rifle, some ammunition as well as a silencer.

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After he recovered from his injuries, he appeared in the Skukuza Regional Court, facing charges of being in possession of a prohibited firearm, possession of illegal ammunition as well as possession of a dangerous weapon. The case was handed over to the Skukuza Stock Theft Unit, experts in the field of probing matters related to illegal poaching.

Mohlala said the team worked tirelessly on the case and discovered that Khoza was born in Mozambique and was in South Africa illegally. He was then also charged with the contravention of the Immigration Act of South Africa. Khoza pleaded guilty to all the charges.

The provincial police commissioner, Lt Gen Semakaleng Manamela, commended the collaborative efforts displayed by the team of field rangers, the investigation team, the prosecution team, and the judiciary, which culminated in the sentencing of the accused. "We hope this sentence will serve as a deterrent to those of you who may think of emulating the actions of the accused," she said.

"We hope by now people have learned that one can be severely punished for the unauthorised killing of wild animals."