

# Poachers' sentencing to be postponed

By **Sue MacLennan** - November 3, 2022



*Francis Chitiyo, Trymore Chauke, Misheck Chauke, Simba Misinge, Nhamo Muyambo and Abraham Moyane during an adjournment when Judge Gerard Bloem convicted them on charges of conspiracy to poach rhinos in the Makhanda High Court on 30 September 2022. All except Misheck Chauke escaped from Waainek Correctional Facility in Makhanda early on Tuesday 18 October. Picture: Sue MacLennan*

The sentencing of six rhino poachers convicted in the Makhanda High Court just over a month ago will be postponed until four of them who escaped from prison are traced. Francis Chitiyo, Trymore Chauke, Simba Masinge, Nhamo Muyambo, and Abraham Moyane and Misheck Chauke were convicted for conspiracy to poach rhinos in the Makhanda High Court on 30 September 2022. They were due to be sentenced on Friday 4 November. Five of them escaped from the Waainek correctional facility in Makhanda in the early hours of 18 October, together with two other prisoners. Misheck Chauke, was not named as one of the escapees.

The Chitiyo rhino poaching gang was arrested on the N2 near Makhanda in July 2018 and had been in custody ever since.

The 30 September judgment was precedent-setting in that it was the first case from arrest to conviction for conspiracy to poach rhinos, and the first rhino poaching case in the

Eastern Cape without a specific dead rhino or a rhino horn forming part of the direct evidence.

Five of the six poachers, along with two other inmates escaped from Waainek Correctional Facility in the early hours of Tuesday 18 October. With the five poachers were Luvuyo September, detained for charges of murder, attempted murder, kidnapping and robbery; and Bennet Kwarrie, detained for housebreaking and theft and attempted murder.

An accident in the Free State landed Kwarrie in hospital and back in custody hours after the breakout Masinge was arrested in bush east of Joza, Makhanda, close to the N2, a day later. Trymore Chauke broke cover by asking for food from people in Seven Fountains around 6.30pm on Sunday 23 October and was quickly rearrested.

Those caught and now back in jail are Trymore Chauke, Simba Masinge (both convicted rhino poachers) and Kwarrie. Still at large are Francis Chitiyo, Nhamo Muyambo, and Abraham Moyane (from the Chitiyo gang) and Luvuyo September, the only South African among the seven. The others are Zimbabwean citizens.

Senior Counsel Buks Coetzee, the prosecutor in the case, this week confirmed that sentencing of the rhino poachers would be postponed to the next court term in order to trace the four still at large.

South African Police Service spokesperson Warrant Officer Majola Nkohli confirmed on Thursday 3 November 2022 that Chitiyo, Muyambo, and Moyane and September remain at large. Police have urged community members to continue to alert them to any suspicious or unknown people in their neighbourhoods so the escapees can all be rearrested and returned to custody.



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## WANTED FUGITIVES WHO ESCAPED FROM MAKHANDA CORRECTIONAL FACILITY



Francis Chitho



Abraham Moyane



Nhamo Muyambo



Trymore Chauke



Luvuyo September



Bennet Kwarrie & Simba Masinge

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If you see any of them, please contact Captain Glen Peter on 082 301 9427

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