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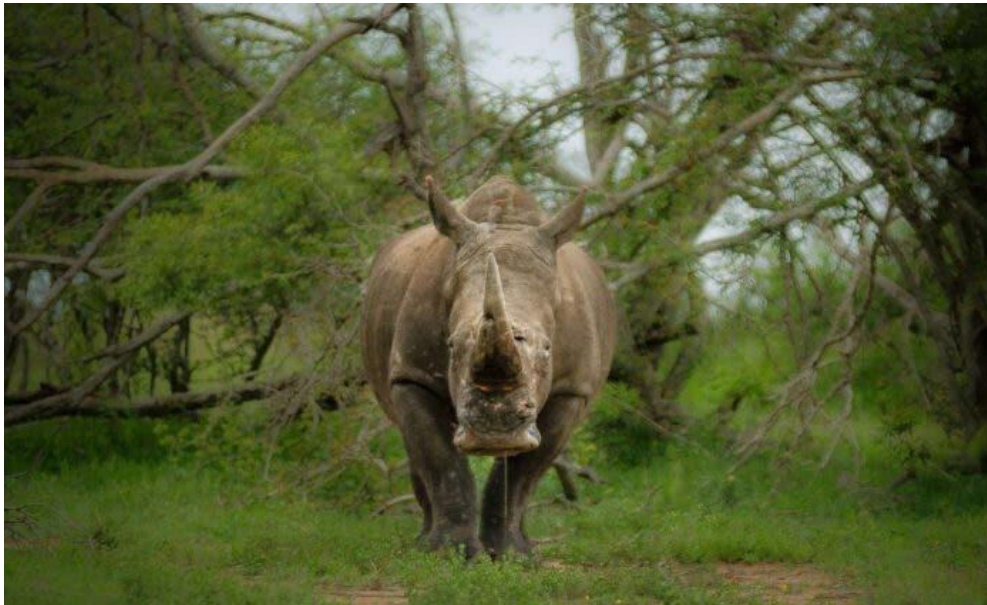
# Rhino Poacher Sentenced to 52 Years in Prison

By  
**SAPeople**

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Nov 20, 2022

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Rhino poachers from the Kruger National Park sentenced. Photo: IanZA / Pixabay

South African National Parks (SANParks) today welcomed the heavy sentencing of a rhino poacher by the Skukuza Regional Court, to a total of 52 years in prison for rhino poaching and related offences. The sentencing took place on Friday 18 November 2022, just days after another rhino poacher was successfully convicted and sentenced to 17 years in prison by Skukuza.

The latest poacher to be convicted is Sipho Titus Khoza, who will effectively serve 34 years as some of the sentences will run concurrently.

Sipho was arrested in the Kruger National Park (KNP) in September 2016 and again in December of that year, in the Stolzneke Section.

SANParks said in a statement on Sunday that Rangers had followed a spoor in September 2016 which led them to two people who were found in possession of a heavy calibre hunting rifle, ammunition, and poaching equipment. They were identified as Sipho and Simon Khoza. The two were charged and appeared in court to apply for bail which was granted (!). When they were supposed to go to trial, Simon Khoza absconded and is still at large.

During December 2016, rangers in Stolzneke heard shots while on patrol, and made a follow up. They then spotted three individuals whom they apprehended after giving chase. It was later established that the three had

unfortunately already killed two rhinos for their horns. The suspects were identified as Sipho, Francisco Mlambo and Sam Lejane. During their bail application, Mlambo and Lejane were granted bail (!) and absconded, leaving Khoza to face the music.

The Acting Managing Executive of KNP, Dr Danny Govender commended the Skukuza court, for imposing such a lengthy jail term.

*“This is a huge triumph for the work of our dedicated rangers, who work tirelessly to ensure criminals responsible for poaching our wildlife are brought to book. They are the first ring in the chain of justice being served. It is satisfying when the court hears the compelling evidence presented by the prosecution and meters out sentences commensurate with the heinous nature of the crime committed. We are grateful to all who presented credible evidence before the court and are happy that our courts are sending such a strong message to would-be criminals. We are hopeful that all his accomplices will be also be arrested and face the full might of the law ”.*

The court was informed that the third accused, Sam Lejane was recently arrested in Barberton on an unrelated matter and will soon be on trial.