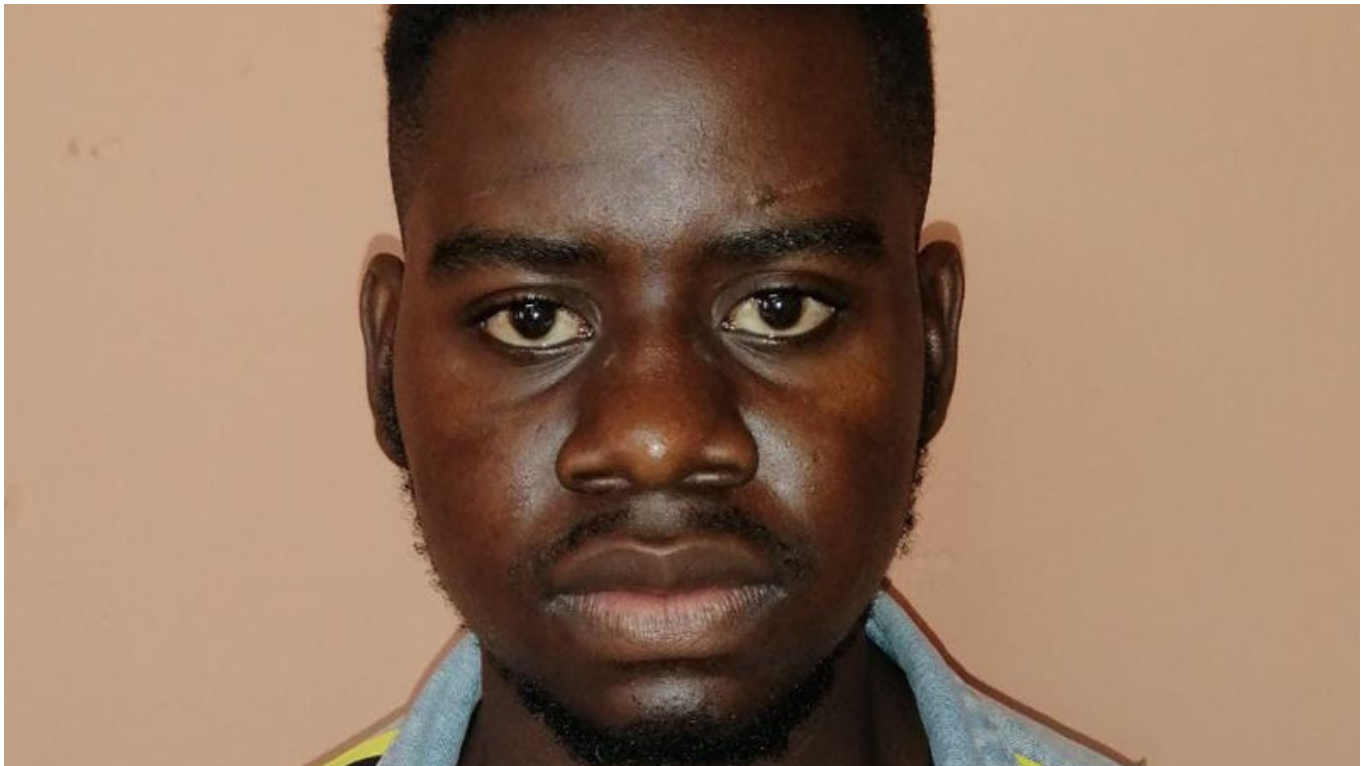




NEWS CRIME AND COURTS

Rogue Kruger National Park rangers: 14th suspect arrested for rhino poaching case



Nkateko Maluleke, has been charged for money laundering in connection with a case where Kruger National Park rangers provided information to assist rhino poachers. Picture: Hawks

Published 2h ago



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Pretoria – Mpumalanga provincial head of the Hawks, Major General Nico Gerber has welcomed the arrest of the 14th accused person, 24-year-old Nkateko Maluleke who was wanted in a case of money laundering, where field rangers allegedly provided tactical information to [rhino poachers in the Kruger National Park](#).

Maluleke was not present during the arrest of other accused people from Maluleke and Lekhuleni families. Members of the two families were nabbed during a multi-disciplinary take-down operation executed in the early hours of December 2.

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“Consequently, a warrant of arrest was issued against him,” said Mpumalanga spokesperson for the Hawks, Captain Dineo Lucy Sekgotodi.

“Financial investigation revealed illicit money flow in and out of the accounts of the suspects. It is alleged that the Lekhulenis paid money into the accounts of the field ranger Maluleke and his family members as gratification for tactical information in Kruger National Park to assist poaching syndicates.”

Maluleke was arrested, charged and appeared before the Bushbuckridge Magistrate’s Court last week, where he was released on R5 000 bail.

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“He will be back in court on 15 February, 2023 to join other accused who were also given bail,” Sekgotodi said.

Meanwhile, the Mpumalanga Hawks chief, Gerber thanked the law enforcement team for their “magnificent effort” for the successful efforts in the operation dubbed “Blood Orange”.

In April, IOL reported that Kruger National Park field rangers – Daniel Chikwa Maluleke, 60, and Solly Ubisi, 56, were appearing before the Skukuza Magistrate’s Court, charged with corruption, money laundering and fraud linked to wildlife trafficking.

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“The arrest follows a comprehensive investigation which included their financial affairs. It is alleged that the suspects provided tactical information to rhino poaching syndicates in exchange for large sums of money,” the Hawks said.

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