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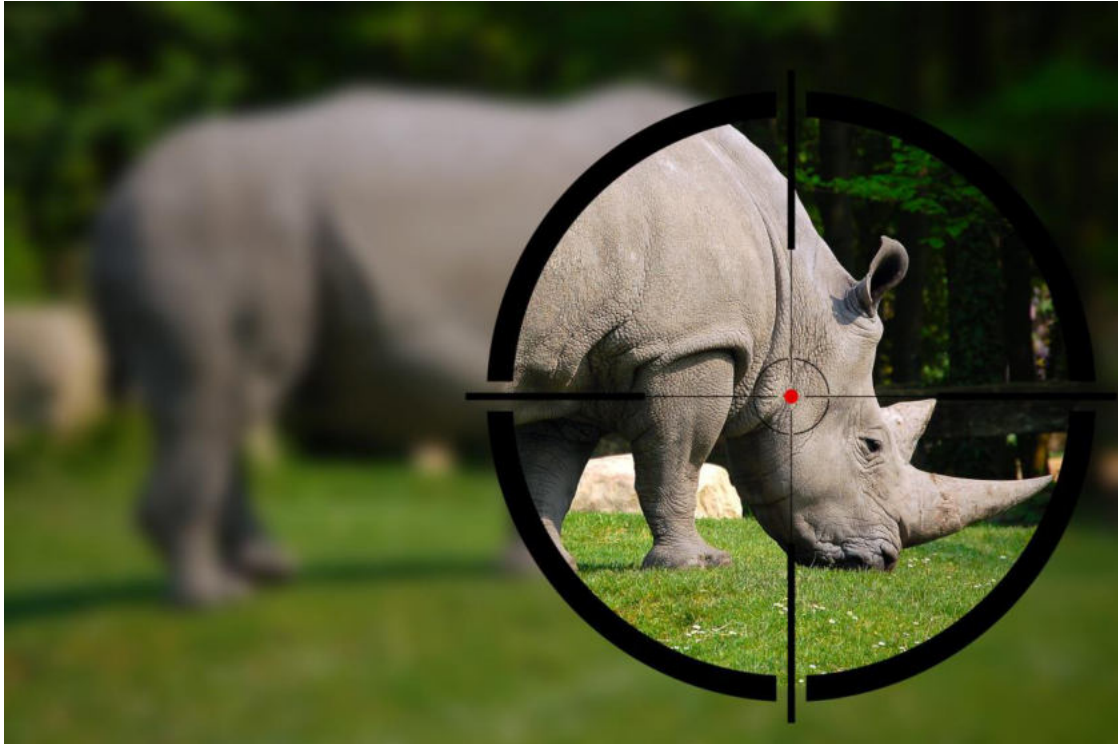
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Rhino poachers sentenced to 34 years in prison

Five rhino horns, one hunting rifle with a silencer, fourteen live rounds, two knives and five mobile phones were recovered from the car.



Picture: iStock

The Skukuza Regional Court on Tuesday sentenced rhino poachers to 34 and 39 years in prison following their arrest in November 2019.

According to Brigadier Selvy Mohlala, two of the three suspects who were arrested for rhino poaching and other related crimes were sentenced to 34 years' imprisonment.

The third suspect was sentenced to 39 years' imprisonment.

The suspects were arrested inside the Kruger National Park around the Malelane area on 23 November 2019.

Rhino poachers nabbed

According to a report, the rhino poachers were nabbed after the field ranger who was on duty spotted a suspicious looking white Hyundai H1 with two visible occupants.

He decided to stop it to conduct a spot check.

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He then requested a permit, which was produced and seemed to be in order as it was bearing the names of the two visible occupants.

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“While still speaking to the driver, he noticed that there were two other people lying flat on the floor behind the back seats,” said Mohlala

The field ranger requested the driver to switch off the engine and hand the car keys to him.

He then instructed the driver to alight and opened the rear door to search it.

“The field ranger then opened the sliding door and unexpectedly found the fourth passenger who was lying on the vehicle floor with the firearm pointed at the door.

“Five rhino horns, one hunting rifle with a silencer, fourteen live rounds, two knives and five mobile phones were found in the vehicle.”

The suspects made several court appearances and were later all granted bail.

Zwelithini Mathebula, 37, and Lucky Mhlongo, 39, were sentenced to 34 years’ imprisonment each for killing endangered species, possession of unlicensed firearm, possession of ammunition, conspiracy to commit a crime and possession of dangerous weapons.

ALSO READ: [Three rhino poachers sentenced to 85 years imprisonment](#)

Teddy Dlamini, 37, was sentenced to 39 years’ imprisonment for all the above-mentioned cases including pointing of firearm.

The Provincial Commissioner of the SAPS in Mpumalanga, Lieutenant General Semakaleng Daphney Manamela commended the dedicated and brave field ranger, investigation team, judiciary as well as prosecuting officials for the successful prosecution.