

Three convicted, sentenced to five years for unlawful possession of game meat

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The Itezhi Tezhi Magistrates Court has convicted and sentenced three Itezhi Tezhi residents to five years in jail and fined two others K120, 000 for unlawful possession of 810 kilograms of game meat worth K42, 448.

Adam Namilonga (57), Evans Chikubulu(22), both of Mashiya Village, Scever Chibomvu(39), of Munjita Village, Lovenes Musakabatu(46), and Kasautu Shamaundu(37), all of Mashiya Village in Chief Chilyabufu's chiefdom, were charged with two counts.

In count one, Namilonga, Chikubulu and Chimbomvu stood charged with unlawful possession of a protected government trophy in violation of Wildlife Act No. 14 of 2015.

Allegations were that on 27 February 2022 in Itezhi Tezhi, the trio jointly did possess 150 Kgs of dry Hippo meat, 53kgs of Antelope, and 113kgs of sable meat without a certificate of ownership.

In the other count, they were charged with unlawful possession of a government trophy in violation of Section 97(1) as read in conjunction with Section 136 of the Wildlife Act No. 14 of 2015.

The allegations are that on the same day, Loveness Musakabantu and Kasautu Shamaundu possessed 181kgs of Hart Beast meat without a certificate of ownership.

According to the indictment meats were valued at K42, 448.

When the case was heard by Itezhi Tezhi magistrates Mugala Chalwe, first witness Nyambe Maswabi, a Senior Investigation Officer at the Department of National Parks, stated that on February 21, 2022, he received a phone call from their informant stating that a truck carrying illicit game meat was on the Itezhi Tezhi Namwala route heading to Pontoon.

He stated that he instantly summoned additional officers and proceeded to Namwala Road, where they quickly located and intercepted the truck.

He stated that they searched the vehicle and discovered lots of meat, and that the suspects were transported to Itezhi Tezhi police station.

Shebby Namukolo, the other witness, testified about the technique he used to identify various meats.

Namilonga testified in his defense that on the material day, his bull was not feeling well and was unable to walk, so he chose to kill it so he could sell the meat in Namwala, but when they arrived at Bauunza, their vehicle was intercepted and searched.

He said that he told the officers that it was cow beef and that their Veterinary Department Permission was at the police station but officers did not believe them.

Musakabantu and his companion offered a similar explanation, claiming that the meat they were transporting was from their cattle.

In mitigation, Namilonga said he was old and would not be able to handle the harsh prison life. Chikubulu said he was married with children and was caring for an elderly mother who would suffer if he was imprisoned and Chimbomvu said he was married with dependants.

Musakabantu said she was married with children while Shamaundu said he was looking after orphans.

In sentencing them, the magistrates Chalwe stated, "I have taken into consideration all that you have said in mitigation but the offences of unlawful possession of protected

trophy require a mandatory sentence of five years, whereas the offence of unlawful possession government trophy requires an invariable fine of K120, 000 cash." She stated.

She then sentenced Namilonga, Chikubulu, and Chimbomvu to five years.

As regard to Musakabantu and Shamaundu she imposed a fine of K120, 000 cash in default three years simple imprisonment