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The Itezhi -Tezhi Magistrates' Court in Southern Province has convicted and slapped a five year jail sentence with hard labour on a 51 -year-old man for being found in possession of Ivory.

Itezhi – Tezhi Magistrate Watson Mweemba convicted Godfrey Shamazongo, 51, of Kandundwe village in Iyanda area in Musungwa Chiefdom after he pleaded guilty to the offence.

Shamazongo was charged with unlawful possession of a prescribed trophy contrary to section 130(1) (2) (a) of the Wildlife Act No. 14 of 2015 of the laws of Zambia.

Particulars were Shamazongo on 15th September 2023, in Itezhi -Tezhi had in his possession a prescribed trophy namely 10.4 kilograms of Ivory without a certificate of authority from the Director General of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife.

Facts were that on 14 September 2023, officers from the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) were on duty when they received intelligence that a person was in possession of a prescribed government trophy, namely ivory, in Iyanda areas in Chief Musungwa's chiefdom.

The officers followed the report and posed as buyers, and they found a male named Godfrey Shamazongo, introduced themselves, and after negotiations, Shamazongo produced two pieces of ivory, he was apprehended and taken to Ngoma wildlife headquarters, where he was charged and arrested with the subject offence.

Mr. Shamazongo stated that he intended to sell the ivory when asked what he planned to do with it.

In mitigation, Shamazongo asked for maximum leniency saying that he was married with children and that sending him to jail would spell untold suffering on his family.

Shamazongo further asked the court to consider that he was a first offender who deserved leniency from the court.

In passing sentence, Magistrates Watson Mweemba said that "I have considered your mitigation and that you are a first offender and you deserve leniency, however, the offence you committed carry a mandatory sentence of five years. The law does not give me any discretionary powers to reduce sentence, and I therefore sentence you to five years in prison with hard labour".

The court has further granted an application by Public Prosecutor Luckson Ngoma to have the 10.4 kgs of Ivory forfeited to state in accordance with the law.