

Footie star arrested over elephant tusks



Leonard Ncube, Victoria Falls Reporter

HWANGE Football Club player Craven Banda has been arrested after he was allegedly found with eight raw elephant tusks.

Banda (35) who resides at N2 Lusumbami Village, Number 5 and is employed by Hwange Colliery Company, was arrested in Hwange on Sunday after a tip-off.

An anti-poaching team made up of police officers and Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) rangers cornered Banda in Makwika Village where they found him with the tusks in a bag.

The weight and value of the ivory is yet to be ascertained as investigations continue.

Matabeleland North police spokesperson Chief Inspector Sipiwe Makonese said Banda is facing charges of unlawful possession of raw ivory which is a violation of Section 82(1) of the Statutory Instrument 362/1990 'As Read With' Section 128(b) of the Parks and Wildlife Act Chapter 20:14.

“On the 24th of May at around 1pm an informant received a tip-off to the effect that the suspect was in possession of elephant tusks. Reacting to the tip-off, a team comprising police and ZimParks rangers went to Makwika Village where they saw Banda sitting at a bus terminus holding a blue bag at around 3PM,” said Chief Insp Makonese.

She said the anti-poaching team approached Banda and asked to search his bag after introducing themselves.

Inside the bag was a white sack containing eight pieces of raw elephant tusks.

The team asked Banda to produce a permit allowing him to possess the ivory and he failed to show one.

He was arrested on the spot.

Meanwhile, Chief Insp Makonese said some members of the public were taking advantage of the lockdown to commit crime.

“People should not commit crime thinking that police are only concerned about enforcing lockdown regulations. We also want to appeal to those who have information about criminal activities to report to the police,” she said.

Banda was once a key left back for Hwange FC for more than 10 years and also played in Botswana where he was on loan to Motlakase Power Dynamos between 2011 and 2013.

Last year he played for Makomo FC in the Southern Region Zifa Division 1 league before returning to the coalminers for the 2020 season which is yet to kick off. —
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