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NEWS

## 53-year-old in court for illegal possession of elephant tusks (Zimbabwe)

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By Leonard Ncube, Chronicle

A 53-year-old villager from Dete in Matabeleland North has appeared in court for unlawful possession of four elephant tusks.

Similo Vundla of Mambanje village under Chief Nekatambe was arrested by an anti-poaching team in March.

The team comprising police and Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (Zimparks) rangers allegedly intercepted him as he rode a bicycle along the Dete-Marist Brothers Secondary School dusty road after getting a tip-off that he was carrying elephant tusks.

They stopped him and allegedly recovered four tusks he was carrying on the bicycle.

Vundla pleaded not guilty to acquiring, possessing or transferring raw ivory without a permit when he appeared before Hwange magistrate-in-charge Mrs Sekai Chiwundura who remanded him out of custody on his own cognisance to Friday next week.

Vundla is represented by Mr Givemore Mvhiringi of Mvhiringi and Associates.



Prosecuting, Mr Stanley Muleya said Vundla intended to sell the tusks.

“On 14 March at around 8PM a tip off was received at Hwange Main Camp to the effect that the accused person was in possession of ivory and was looking for a buyer. A team comprising rangers and police from Dete and Main Camp proceeded to Marist Brothers turn-off where they spotted the accused riding a bicycle, ” said the prosecutor.

The court was told that the team stopped Vundla and requested to search him after identifying themselves.

Four elephant tusks were found in a sack that Vundla was carrying on the bicycle leading to his arrest.

The ivory weighed 9.915 kg but its value was not given in court.





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