



R10m Abalone deal: Bail application date set



The R8,4 million abalone that was intercepted at the Beitbridge border post last week while being illegally transported to Zambia concealed in a consignment of noodles.

Thupeyo Muleya Beitbridge Bureau

A 35-year-old Zimbabwean and a Chinese man (28) who were recently arrested by South Africa's organised crime unit, the Hawks for illegal possession of dried Abalone worth nearly R10 million are set to make a formal bail application tomorrow at the Atlantis Magistrates' Court, in Western Cape province .

Lawrence Muroma and Qing Quan Feng were found in possession of 70 boxes dried abalone on May 16.

Trading of Abalone shellfish, which is regarded as an endangered species, is prohibited in most SADC countries.

The shellfish is a unique type of snail classified under the gastropod phylum-Mollusca and is often referred to as the sea ear because of its flattened shape. This type of seafood is considered a delicacy in Asia.

Hawks spokesperson for Western Cape Ms Zinzi Hani said the two have been charged for possession and transporting of illegal Abalone in terms of the Marine Living Resources Act 18 of 1998.

“The two accused persons remain in custody,” said Ms Hani.

“They were arrested after members of our Serious Organised Crime Investigation, Crime Intelligence, and officials from the Department of Environmental Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) acted on information concerning the transportation of illegal Abalone.”

She said two accused persons were travelling in a Hino truck and a white Audi along the N7 highway and heading towards Malmesbury.