



New Zimbabwe



## Zim Man, Lover Arrested In Botswana For Illegal Ivory Possession

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**By Staff Reporter**

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A ZIMBABWEAN man, charged together with his girlfriend for unlawful possession of elephant tusks, has saved his co-accused from further legal woes after telling the court she knew nothing of the ivory.

Marry Sibanda, will not go to prison for possession of elephant tusk thanks to her boyfriend Ryan Ndlovu, who spared her from possible long-term imprisonment of 10 years or a hefty fine of P50,000 for the offence.

The couple was initially indicted together for illegal possession of two elephant tusks that the state alleged were found in their possession in Tonota on January 27, 2021.

However, the offence took a different twist last week when Ndlovu exonerated Sibanda.

Ndlovu told the court Sibanda knew nothing about the ivory leading the prosecution to make an application for charges against Sibanda to be withdrawn.

Ndlovu told the court he led the police to where he had hidden his loot on the outskirts of Tonota.

However, Ndlovu and Sibanda pleaded guilty of entering Botswana illegally at an unknown date in 2019.

In mitigation, Ndlovu implored Chief Magistrate Mareledi Dipate to show mercy because he did not waste the court's time and the country's resources by pleading not guilty to both offences.

"I was promised P35,000 by the person who gave me the tusks to sell them to prospective buyers. I plead with the court to be lenient with me and in case I am told to pay a fine, it should pass a fine that I can afford to pay. I promise the court that I will never have any brushes with the law again," Ndlovu said.

However, Ndlovu was reprimanded by the magistrate after he pleaded with the court to assist him in acquiring a Botswana passport and work permit so that he can regularise his stay and find employment.

Dipate told Ndlovu what he was asking the court was not mitigation, and outside the mandate of the court

Sibanda also pleaded with the court for mercy adding the harsh economy in Zimbabwe had forced him to enter Botswana illegally.

“When sentencing me, may the court take into account that I left my disabled mother in Zimbabwe who is also taking care of my children,” she said.

Magistrate Dipate ordered the couple to be further remanded in custody until their sentence on July 8, 2021.