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Ivory deal earns quartet lengthy jail terms

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Court Reporter

FOUR men were each jailed for nine years after they were convicted of illegally possessing raw ivory which they intended to trade in Harare sometime last year.

Tinashe Fifitini (29), Joseph Tondora (44), Kilford Mutandi (31) and Chamunorwa Mavhunga (27) were jailed when they appeared before magistrate Mrs Barbra Mateko charged with unlawful possession of unmarked raw ivory.

They were convicted after full trial.

Fifitini had denied the charges saying he never knew of the existence of the ivory and was only told that there were some items which were in the sack that needed to be placed in the car.

He claimed that there was one Mhofu who claimed that he uses the items for healing since he was a traditionalist.

Tondora claimed that he had visited a traditional healer seeking his services when he suddenly heard gun shots before they were arrested.

Mutandi told the court that he was invited to Budiro where they were arrested to collect some cellphones and was not aware of the existence of the ivory in question.

Mavhunga also denied the charges.

Mrs Francesca Mukumbiri, prosecuting, had it that on September 24 last year at around 11am detectives received information to the effect that the quartet were in possession of ivory and searching for buyers.

Detective sergeant Banhu then called Fifitini pretending to be a potential buyer and he asked to meet him at David Livingstone School in Harare.

After their meeting, they agreed to travel to Budiro and passed through Mbare where they picked Mavhunga.

They then went to Budiro 2 where they went to park at a certain house where the ivory was retrieved.

The quartet was then arrested and taken to court where they were convicted of illegally possessing the ivory.

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