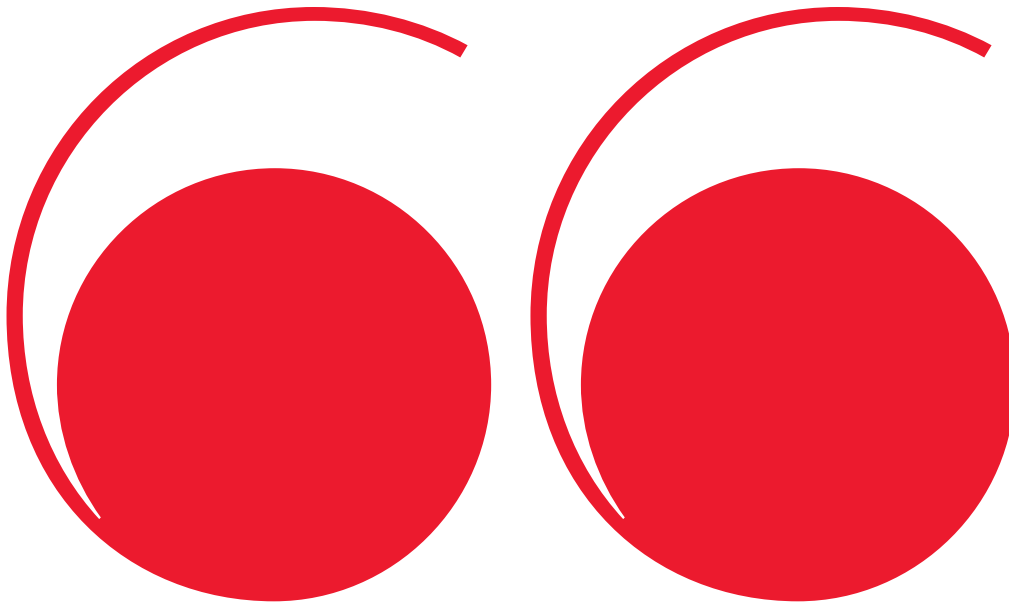


Python

Trial begins for four Zimbabweans arrested for possession of live pangolin with intent to sell



By Lulu Brenda Harris for CITE

Four suspects were arrested in Mwenzezi District in southern Zimbabwe last month, for possession of a live pangolin, four lion teeth and a python skin, with intentions to sell them for more than US \$ 5,000. The trial began on Thursday May 19, CITE has established.

Pangolins are protected under the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Act, and the country has one of the strictest laws against pangolin poaching in Africa.

According to the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks), illegal possession or dealing in a pangolin attracts a mandatory sentence of nine years.

Reliable sources informed CITE that the four were arrested at 0015 hours on April 29, 2022 as they were trying to sell the live pangolin, four lion teeth and python skin in Maranda turn area in Mwenezi.

They were allegedly selling the pangolin for US \$ 5,000, the four lion teeth for US \$ 200 and the python skin US \$ 200.

A team made up of Chiredzi Parks Investigations, the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) and Police Minerals, Flora and Fauna Unit (MFFU) reacted to the above information after receiving a tip from informers.

The accused are Ireane Machingura, 3, from Village Pahlela under Chief Mpapa in Chikombedzi, Trust Singari (unspecified age) from Village 2, Mahisere, Moment Ncube, 24, from Village 3 and Edson Gara, 35, from Village 2 Darlington, all under Chief Maranda in Mwenezi.

The four were detained at Chiredzi Police Station. Police managed to recover the live pangolin, which was yet to be weighed, the python skin and four lion teeth.

The four will answer to three charges when they appear at Mwenezi Court. According to a legal counsel for Speak Out for Animals operating in Masvingo region, Nancy Makuvise, possession of a pangolin warrants a minimum mandatory sentence of nine for first offenders and 11 years for second offenders.

"The python skin warrants a fine not exceeding Level 8 or imprisonment not exceeding three years while the sentence for having lion teeth is a fine not exceeding Level 6 or imprisonment not exceeding one year," she said. Speak

Out for Animals is an organization committed to combating wildlife crime using the legal system.

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