

Southern Eye

4 years in jail for pangolin possession

Local

By [Silas Nkala](#) | 15h ago



They had pleaded guilty to the two offences.

TWO Zimbabweans, who were recently arrested for illegal possession of a pangolin and illegally entering Botswana, have been jailed four years each.

The duo, Kelvin Maposa (43) and Matitshidza Sibanda (33) from Plumtree, who are unemployed, appeared before Francistown senior magistrate Tshepo Magetse last week.

Magetse convicted and sentenced the border jumpers to four years in jail for capturing a protected animal, as well as another year for being in Botswana illegally.

They had pleaded guilty to the two offences.

According to media reports from Botswana, Magetse ruled that the sentences will run concurrently meaning that they will serve four years hence they will be locked up until 2027.

In his plea, Maposa said they found a pangolin in the bush and adored it. “We decided to keep it to attract tourists and make money,” he told the court.

The court was told that police received a tip-off that the two possessed the pangolin and they raided the duo at its accommodation in Francistown’s Coloured location on July 22.

It was the State’s case that the two men were caught red-handed with the pangolin amid indications that they had only been in the country for three days before falling foul of the law.

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Although they admitted having the scaly mammal in their possession, both men insisted they were unaware it was illegal to do so.

“We like rearing animals, so after seeing it we thought by rearing it will be more like creating employment for ourselves as people will be coming to see it and pay us.

“We left Zimbabwe to escape poverty and thought this animal had been sent to us by God. We didn’t know it was against the law,” Sibanda reportedly told the court.

The court also heard that the duo entered Botswana through an ungazetted point of entry on July 19 at or near Maitengwe village.

In both Zimbabwe and Botswana, pangolins are classified under the protected game animals and one has to be licensed to be in its possession.

International Fund for Animal Welfare, a global non-profit organisation helping animals and people to thrive together, stated that pangolins are the most trafficked mammals in the world due to high demand for their scales and claws which are reportedly used in traditional medicine.

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