

# Zimbabwe: Trio arrested for poaching

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Nhau Mangirazi, News Day

Three Hurungwe men who captured themselves on camera killing an elephant using traditional weapons and dogs yesterday appeared before Kariba magistrate accused of hunting or removing any animal or part of the animal in a safari area without a permit.

Francis Chigomararwa (30), Simeon Kezias (23) and Arthur Murimbika (24) all from Nyamakate area are also facing another charge of killing a buffalo. The accused were unlucky when a video went viral of them killing

an elephant after setting their dogs on it before attacking it using spears and axes.

The elephant was killed in Phundundu Concession on December 8 last year, but the accused were arrested over the weekend. The trio's accomplice, Kennedy Godera of Fox village, Nyamakate, who was the team leader, is still at large.

The State opposed bail arguing: "Poaching causes the decrease in tourism as tourists visit countries for a variety of wild animals and furthermore poaching causes loss of revenue collection through hunting quotas. Poaching damages ecosystem and affects wildlife and biodiversity."

According to court papers, on January 10, police detectives from the Minerals Flora and Fauna Unit and officers from the Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and the Wildlife Crime Unit, an investigation department under International Anti-Poaching Foundation, went to Phundundu concession area to hunt for the accused.

The probe was ignited by a video footage which went viral on social media showing poachers hunting and eventually killing an elephant using spears, axes and dogs. The trio is in remand facing other charges of killing a buffalo and contempt of court.

It is reported that they stated how they plotted the hunting of the jumbo on December 8 2023 and revealed that Godera was their leader. On December 9, last year and at around 3am, the suspects went into the Phundundu Concession area where the hunting kicked off. At around midday they came across a herd of elephants and they set their dogs on it.

They isolated one elephant from the herd and attacked it with spears and axes. The elephant collapsed due to excessive bleeding from a pierced ear.

They told the court that the video that went viral was taken by Godera using his mobile phone. Police detectives attended the scene and discovered an elephant skull, lower jaws and ribs. The weapons used to kill the elephant and nine dogs were confiscated. The elephant was valued at US\$50 000.