

Seven years jail for woman found with ivory and pangolin scales

SEEJ-AFRICA note: The article reports a jail sentence of 12 years which is inaccurate. She received a seven year jail sentence relating to the 15.7 kg of ivory she was attempting to sell and in addition, relating to the 105 pieces of pangolin scales, a 3 million shilling fine (USD \$ 23,000) or in default, a five year jail sentence. However, if she cannot pay the fine, the five year jail sentence would run concurrent with the seven year sentence. The maximum jail time would be seven years. This sentence is now the typical sentence handed out by the Kenyan courts for wildlife crime offences.

This 2023 matter concluded in just over two years with 20 sittings, which is a positive trend being seen in Kenyan courts in wildlife cases that have been historically plagued with much longer trial duration times. Having said that, with only 5 prosecution witnesses involved, and one accused, there is room for improvement.

June 27th, 2025: A middle aged woman will serve a 12 years jail term after a Kabarnet court found her guilty of trading in wildlife trophies.

Esther Chebii, appeared before Senior Resident Magistrate (SRM) Edwin Mulochi for the offence which occurred on May 27, 2023 at around 6pm at Kabarnet town in Baringo central sub-county, where she was nabbed with five pieces of elephant tusks weighing 15.7 kilograms and 105 pieces of pangolin scales weighing two kilograms with a street value of Sh 2.37 million.

Chebii was charged with dealing in wildlife trophies of a specified critically endangered species, without permit or other lawful exemption, contrary to section 92 (2) of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act 2013.

In the second count, the accused was charged with being in possession of a specified critically endangered species, without permit or other lawful exemption, contrary to section 92(4) as read with section 105 of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act 2013.

The court heard that officers from the Kenya Wildlife Service had received an intelligence report of a lady, who had elephant tusks and was looking for a buyer at Kabarnet town.

It is from then that the officials disguised themselves as buyers, where the suspect informed them that she was selling the tusks at Sh70,000 per kg, but they further negotiated the cost to Sh20,000 per kg.

One of the officials who testified in court said that the suspect had promised to bring the tusks to Kabarnet town because they were stored at their village home and even promised to cut them into smaller pieces for easy packaging.

She agreed to meet the officials at Kabarnet Paradise Plaza, where the suspect was arrested and upon searching they found them in one big sack and two small bags.

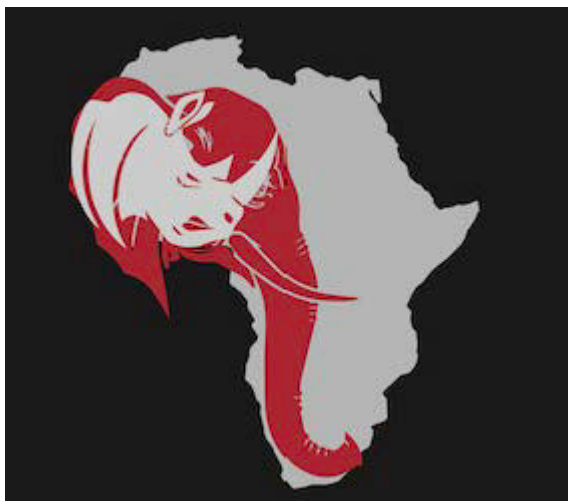
Chebii, who had pleaded not guilty to the charges during her defense, told the court that she had taken her ailing mother to Kabarnet town for treatment before being nabbed with luggage that did not belong to her near Equity bank.

Mulochi in his ruling said investigations have proved beyond any reasonable doubt that the accused committed the offence and was found guilty of being in possession of a specified critically endangered species without permit or other lawful exemption under section 215 of the criminal procedure code.

“Consequently for the first count and as per section 92(2) of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act, I sentence her to a prison term of seven years and for the second count I sentence her to pay a fine of Sh3 million in default to serve a sentence of five years. If she serves it, the sentence will run concurrently and from the date she had a plea (29/5/23),” he stated.

The magistrate, however, gave the accused two weeks right to appeal the sentence.

<https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/woman-found-with-wildlife-trophies-jailed/>



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