

Kenya: Burundians Charged in Mombasa Over Illegal Possession of Elephant Tusks

Mombasa — Two Burundian nationals have been charged in a Mombasa court with illegal possession and trade in elephant tusks in an intensified crackdown on wildlife trafficking.

Gakiza Sulemani and Nkunubumwe Celecius appeared before Senior Resident Magistrate David Odhiambo on Monday, facing charges of dealing in 27 pieces of elephant tusks without a permit.

According to the charge sheet, the tusks -- classified as trophies from endangered species -- weighed approximately 62.85 kilograms and had an estimated market value of Sh12,570,000.

Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) officers arrested the two on August 3 in Miritini, Mombasa, following what authorities termed an intelligence-led operation.

"Our officers acted on credible intelligence that the suspects were actively seeking buyers for the illicit wildlife products. We remain committed to dismantling such networks that threaten our elephant populations," KWS said in a statement.

Sh4mn surety bond

The suspects pleaded not guilty to two counts: trafficking in wildlife trophies and possession of trophies from endangered species without the necessary permits, offences under Section 92(4) of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act, 2013.

Principal Prosecution Counsel Barbara Sombo urged the court to impose strict bond terms.

"Given the gravity of the offences and the fact that the accused are foreign nationals, we request stringent bond conditions to ensure their attendance in court throughout the trial," she submitted.

Magistrate Odhiambo granted each accused a bond of Sh4 million with one surety, ordering them to surrender their passports and provide two Kenyan contact persons as part of their bond terms.

The court slotted a mention on August 20.