

# South Africa: How John Hume Allegedly Schemed to Defy Global Rhino Horn Trade Ban

*The State alleges that Hume, in association with his five alleged co-conspirators, knew or ought to have known that their enterprise 'uses or invests, directly or indirectly (Hume's) rhino horns, other rhino horns and rhino skins to fuel the illegal market'.*

A dark shadow has been cast around the "conservation hero" mantle of South African rhino baron John Hume following sensational allegations that he purchased or purloined the identity documents of several indigent people as part of an elaborate scheme to fraudulently circumvent a 50-year-old global ban on the rhino horn trade.

The domestic sale of rhino horns remains legal in South Africa - provided that the details of buyers and sellers are recorded and regulated under a special permit scheme - but no horns can be traded at an international level.

A draft indictment by the Directorate for Priority Crimes Investigation (The Hawks) - handed in to the Pretoria Magistrates' Court earlier this week - sets out how Hume and five alleged accomplices allegedly conspired to get around this hurdle by submitting false permit applications to sell horns to fictitious domestic buyers.

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The 83-year-old former property developer, who built up a herd of more than 2,000 primarily captive-bred rhinos, has never tried to conceal his ambitions to sell and profit handsomely from (legally) selling the horns of these threatened animals to buyers in China, Vietnam and other foreign nations.

However, those ambitions have been thwarted by the continued maintenance of...