

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: TWO MEN SENTENCED TO SEVEN YEARS FOR POSSESSION OF PANGOLIN

The Tzaneen Regional Court sentenced Golden Khumalo (40) and Sjabuliso Mpofu (47) to seven years imprisonment for possession of pangolin and contravention of the Limpopo Environment Management Act 7, 2003.

During trial, the court heard how the two accused would hunt for this protected species and sell them at an exorbitant price to underground market of locals and foreigners around Tzaneen. The evidence led showed that they were dealing in these kind of animals.

The state prosecutor called two witnesses who testified that these type of animals are endangered species which could be sold for amounts ranging from R90 000 to R400 000. In their defense, accused number one alleged that he was not aware that it was an offence to possess the said animals whilst accused number two denied any involvement in the commission of the offence. The court rejected their version and found them guilty as charged.

In aggravation of sentence, Prosecutor Paul Rikhotso highlighted that the illegal hunting of such species is a global problem with a negative impact on the pangolin population and the environment. Rikhotso referred the court to statistics showing that the crime is on the rise. He successfully argued for a direct imprisonment.

In handing down the sentence, the court agreed with the submission of the state and sentenced both accused to seven years direct imprisonment.

The DPP, Advocate Ivy Thenga commended the investigation team and the prosecutor, Paul Rikhotso for their excellent work in ensuring that the accused persons are duly

punished for their conduct. She said this would send a strong message to others who are involved in offences of this nature.

Kind Regards,

Mashudu Malabi-Dzhagi
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