

# Media Statement



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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 22 SEPTEMBER 2010**

**RE: ELEVEN SUSPECTS APPEARED IN MUSINA COURT ON RHINO HORN CHARGES**

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On Wednesday, 22 September 2010, eleven (11) suspects, including two veterinarians, a pilot, professional hunters and a game farmer appeared in the Musina Magistrates' Court after being arrested by a joint task team comprising of members of the Directorate of Priority Crimes Investigation (DPCI), the South African National Parks, the Environmental and Nature Conservation, Civil Aviation Authority and the National Prosecuting Authority.

The accused were arrested in Modimolle, Polokwane and Musina on 20 and 22 September 2010. They are Dewald Gouws, Nardus Rossouw, Tielman Roos Erasmus, Leon van der Merwe, Paul Matomela, Dawie Groenewald, Sarette Groenewald, Karel Toet, Manie du Plessis, Mariza Toet and Martinus Pronk. They have all been released on bail and the case has been postponed to 11 April 2011 for further investigations.

The accused are facing charges ranging from assault, defeating the ends of justice, fraud, corruption, malicious injury to property, illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, contravention of the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act, No 10 of 2010 (NEMBA), contravention in terms of the Medicines and Related Substances Act, No 101 of 1965; as well as contravention of the Prevention of Organised Crime Act, No 121 of 1998.

The accused are alleged to be part of a syndicate which operates around Polokwane, Modimolle and Musina and have been involved in rhino poaching, killing, selling of the horns, as well as disposing of the carcasses of the rhinos.

**Issued by:**

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