

LIFE SENTENCES FOR TWO CHILD RAPISTS

Rustenburg – Two men will find out the hard way that crime does not pay after they were each handed life sentences by the Bafokeng Regional Court in two separate judgements made on Tuesday 5 March and Wednesday 13 March.

In the first case, a 52-year old man was found guilty of raping two children in December 2016. The man, who showed no remorse during the trial, was handed two life sentences after the state proved to the court how the man lured the children into a room he rented in Tlathaganyane village, before raping them.

In the second case, a 42-year old man was handed three life sentences for raping three children in an area close to Boitekong and Tlhabane between September 2012 and March 2013.

According to police spokesperson captain Elsabé Augoustides, the man approached the minors while they were playing in the streets. "He lured the children by convincing them he knew their parents and pretending to talk to the 'parents' on his cell phone. After gaining their trust, he would then take them to a shrubby area in Yizo-Yizo informal settlement and rape them," she said.

After committing a series of heinous crimes, the man's luck eventually ran out when he left one of his victims unconscious after striking her with a

rock. This was after the child had bitten off part of his tongue during the rape ordeal.

The man, who was now on the run, put himself in more trouble by supplying false identification details at Job Shimankana Tabane Hospital, where he had gone to seek medical assistance for his wounds.

Police investigations and community awareness initiatives led to the arrest of the man in July 2013. Investigations by detective constable Obakeng Rasego and captain Eagerbord Mokgathe played a key role in the apprehension of the two offenders.



From Left: detective constable Obakeng Rasego and captain Eagerbord Mokgathe.

180 RHINO HORNS CEASED

Hartbeespoort/ Brits – The Department of Environmental Affairs welcomed the arrest of two men who were allegedly involved in smuggling 180 rhino horns weighing a total of 150kg to the Far East.

Without the cooperation and collaboration of the general public, South Africa will not be able to win the battle against rhino poaching and the smuggling of rhino horns.

Petrus Stephanus Steyn and Clive John Melville appeared briefly before the Brits Magistrates' Court on 15 April on charges related to the illegal trade in rhino horn. The case has been postponed to 26 April for a bail application.

According to Department of Environmental Affairs spokesperson Albi Modise, the men were arrested near Hartbeespoort Dam on 13 April. The operation was conducted in cooperation between members of the Hawks' serious organised crime endangered species

unit, the Special Task Force, Tracker SA and Vision Tactical. They received information that a vehicle from a coastal province was carrying a considerable amount of horns. The rhino horns were allegedly destined for the South East Asian markets.

Although the domestic trade in rhino horn is legal when the necessary permits in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act have been obtained, the international commercial trade of rhinoceros horn is prohibited in terms of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

The joint operation is yet another indication of the success of the Integrated Strategic Management of Rhinoceros in South Africa, the government's collaborative anti-poaching approach.

Members of the public wishing to report rhino poaching and environmental crimes can contact the department's hotline on 0800 205 005 or contact 10111.



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