

3 foreigners sent for trial over ivory theft

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KAMPALA. Buganda Road Chief Magistrate's Court has committed three foreigners to the High Court for trial on charges of unlawful possession of elephant tusks worth Shs9b.

The suspects: Kromah Moazu, a Liberian national, Kourouma Bangaly and Mr Mohammed Kourouma. Both Guinean nationals are charged with unlawful possession of protected species, unlawful importation of restricted goods, unlawful possession of specimen of protected species, conspiracy to commit offence and money laundering.

Prosecution contends that on February 17 at Najjanankumbi in Rubaga Division, Kampala District, the accused were found in possession of 437 pieces of ivory weighing 1.303.76kg valued at Shs9.3b which are restricted goods under the Uganda Wildlife Act and an offence under the East African Community Management Act of 2004.

The charge sheet indicates that the ivory in question was brought from Burundi without a valid import permit through a conspiracy between the accused persons.

On money laundering, the prosecu-

The case

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tion states that lead suspect Moazu, between 2014 and 2017, for the purpose of disguising the illicit origin of \$190,000 (nearly Shs685m), transferred and received the said funds from Vannaseng Trading Company account in Lao People's Democratic Republic of Asia on an account in his names at Eco bank Parliamentary Avenue Branch in Kampala.

He allegedly committed the offence with the aid of his co-accused.

The presiding magistrate, Ms Gladys Kamasanyu, committed the accused to the High Court following the submission by the State prosecutor, Mr Jonathan Muwaganya, that investigations into the case had been completed.

Mr Muwaganya told court that the Director of Public Prosecutions had issued clear instructions for the suspects to be committed to the High Court for trial.

The indictment contends that on January 5, 2016, Mr Bangaly was arrested in possession of two elephant tusks at Mengo in Kampala and was taken to the Central Police Station. He was released on police bond as investigations continued but he never reported back until detectives arrested him at Garden City Shopping Mall.