

# Rhino horn smuggling ring members charged in US

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A man shows off a piece of rhino horn in Hanoi on April 24, 2012. Three people have been charged in the United States this week with taking part in an alleged rhinoceros horn smuggling ring, authorities said Wednesday.

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The arrests and charges were made in "Operation Crash," a nationwide effort led by the [Fish and Wildlife Service](#) and the Justice Department to prosecute those involved in the black market trade of endangered rhinoceros horns.

Federal grand juries in Newark, New Jersey, and Miami have indicted Zhifei Li, in the international smuggling of rhinoceros horns.

Shusen Wei, a Chinese business executive and an associate of Li, has also been charged with offering to bribe a federal agent in the Li case, the Justice Department said in a statement. Both are Chinese nationals.

In addition, Qing Wang was charged Wednesday in a related [criminal complaint](#) in federal court in the Southern District of New York for his role in smuggling libation cups carved from such horns from New York to Li through Hong Kong.

In China, a centuries-old tradition holds that drinking from carved [rhinoceros horn](#) cups would bring good health, making them prized collectors' items.

All species of rhinoceros are protected under US and international law, and all [rhinoceros](#) species are endangered.

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