

# Rhino poacher jailed for 20 years in South Africa

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A Mozambican rhino poacher caught at a world famous game reserve in South Africa has been jailed for 20 years, police said.

Mapoyisa Mahluli, 30, was sentenced on Thursday following his arrest last year in the Kruger National Park, which borders Mozambique.

"Mahlauli was sentenced to an effective 20 years imprisonment after he was found guilty... for various rhino-poaching related crimes," said police spokeswoman Katlego Mogale in a statement on Monday.

"This will send a strong message to other potential rhino poachers about the consequences of their actions if caught."

Rangers tracked the poachers after they heard gun shots and discovered a white rhino whose horns had been freshly sawed off, in March last year.

A shoot-out ensued before Mahlauli was discovered with a rifle and a pair of rhino horns. His accomplice had fled.

Police said they also arrested a Hong Kong-bound Chinese national at Johannesburg's international airport on Friday, after he was found in possession of five [rhino horns](#) wrapped in foil.

South Africa is home to around 20,000 rhinos, about 80 percent of the worldwide population, but the country has suffered a record loss at the hands of poachers in recent years.

Poachers have killed more than 7,100 [rhinos](#) across Africa over the past decade.

Rhino horns are highly prized in Asia, where they are mistakenly believed to have medicinal powers.

The horns consist mainly of keratin, the same component as in human nails, and are sold in powdered form as a supposed cure for cancer and other diseases—as well as a purported aphrodisiac—in Vietnam and China.

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