



[Home \(/index.php\)](#) / [Newsroom \(newsroom.php\)](#) / [Media Statements \(ms.php\)](#)

Nine suspects arrested for money laundering

2022/12/02

**Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (Hawks)
Media Statement**

MPUMALANGA – A total of nine suspects aged between 22 and 61 were arrested during a multi-disciplinary integrated take down operation "Blood Orange" conducted in Mpumalanga, Gauteng and Limpopo provinces respectively by the Hawks based Mpumalanga Serious Corruption Investigation, Serious Organised Crime Investigation and Serious Commercial Crime Investigation, Crime Intelligence, Tactical Response Team and Local Criminal Record Centre during the early hours of Friday, 02 December 2022.

The arrest follows a comprehensive investigation which included their financial affairs. KPMG was co-opted to do the financial investigation of the money flow into the accounts of the suspects. It is alleged that the two main accused, who were previously arrested on 24 April 2022 and charged with corruption, money laundering and fraud linked to wildlife trafficking, provided tactical information to rhino poaching syndicates in exchange for substantial sums of money which were transferred into the bank accounts of the family members who received gratification and benefited from the funds hence their arrest. Maluleke and Ubisi were released on bail by the Bushbuckridge Magistrate's Court and their case was postponed to 07 December 2022 for the arrest of the other suspects who were arrested today.

A joint search and seizure operation under the same operational project Blood Orange was conducted in Gauteng Province on the same day by members of Gauteng DPCI, TOMS, SAPS K9 and Endangered species Units and EMI from DFFE at Sunnyridge Primrose.

During the search a Volvo motor vehicle fitted with a hidden compartment was searched and inside was a black sports bag containing suspected rhino horn shavings. A small room was discovered next to garage suspected to be used for rhino horn processing whereby a large band saw, scales, grinders, grinding discs and a hand scanner commonly used to detect micro chips, various financial documents and digital devices were found and seized for further investigation. The vehicle was also confiscated and handed in at Van Rijn Deep pound.

The remaining two suspects are still at large and they will be traced and brought to book. Investigation, continues.

Anyone with further information that can assist in the investigation is urged to contact the Hawks investigating officer, Colonel Danie Hall on 071 481 3281.

Ends

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