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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UWA ARRESTS FOUR OVER DEATH OF A GORILLA

Kampala - June 12, 2020 - UWA personnel this week arrested four poachers in the Southern Sector of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park following the death of a gorilla known as Rafiki, the Silverback of the famous Nkuringo group.

The arrest follows investigations into the Silverback's death by our personnel after a post-mortem report revealed that the Silverback sustained an injury by a sharp device/object that penetrated its left upper part of the abdomen up to the internal organs.

The team arrested Byamukama Felix a resident of Murole village, Nteko Parish, Nyabwishenya Sub County, Kisoro District who was found in possession of bush pig meat and several hunting devices including a spear, rope snares, wires snares and a dog hunting bell that were recovered from his home on June 4th, 2020.

Byamukama confessed to killing the gorilla in self-defence. He says that he had gone hunting in the park with Bampabenda Evarist where they came into contact with the group. When the silverback charged at them, he speared it.

He revealed that he shared some of the bush pig meat with Museveni Valence and Mubangizi Yonasi, whom he said were fellow poachers. The UWA team working with the Chairman LCI Chairman of Murole village Mr. Ngabirano Pascal, arrested Bampabenda Evarist, Museveni Valence and Mubangizi Yonasi on June 7th, 2020.

The four suspects are currently at Kisoro Police station awaiting trial in the courts of law.

On June 1st, 2020, Rafiki, the silver back of Nkuringo gorilla group was reported missing in the group and on June 2nd, 2020, our team mounted a search for the missing silver back. The body of Rafiki was found in Hakato area inside BINP.

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About Nkuringo Gorilla group.

Nkuringo is the first gorilla group to be habituated in the southern sector of BINP in 1997. At the time of Rafiki's death, the group had 17 members; 1 Silverback, 3 Blackbacks, 8 Adult females, 2 Juveniles, and 3 infants.

UWA is monitoring the group to ensure it is ready for tourism when the park reopens to the public.