

CHU DANG KHOA

Chu Dang Khoa, also known as Michael Chu or the “Diamond King” is a Vietnamese national and businessman who owns Voi Game Lodge in the North West Province in South Africa. Chu Dang Khoa is a serial miscreant who has, for decades, been linked to international criminal networks by South African law enforcement, local and international wildlife protection organisations and non-profit organisations. He has this week, once again, been accused of allegedly fuelling the illegal wildlife trade and the alleged trafficking of wildlife products.

The image below of Chu Dang Khoa was taken twenty years ago in 2006 at Voi Lodge. This was the first legal hunt of a rhino by a Vietnamese national recorded in Limpopo province, according to a 2016 Global Initiative Transnational Crime Report entitled [Rhino Tipping Point](#). [Hunting records](#) identify the professional hunter who accompanied them as Frikkie Jacobs from Shingalana Game Breeders and Hunting Safaris. Jacobs allegedly conducted 48 hunts with suspected Vietnamese pseudo-hunters between June 2009 and July 2011 according to North West province records.



Michael Chu an alias, for Chu Dang Khoa. Image source: <https://www.businesslive.co.za/fm/fm-fox/2016-07-15-the-crooks-behind-rhino-slaughter/>

Chu Dang Khoa Arrested in South Africa 11th March 2026

Twenty year after the photograph above was taken, on the 12th March 2026 it was [reported](#) by the South African government that Chu Dang Khoa would appear in the Kempton Park Magistrate Court on charges of the contravention of the National Environmental Management and Biodiversity Act. He had been arrested on the 11th March 2026 in Heidelberg during the execution of an authorised search and seizure warrant and a warrant of arrest.

The warrants were executed in Centurion and Heidelberg on the 11th March respectively, as part of an intelligence-driven operation carried out by the members of Serious Organised Crime Investigation's Wildlife Trafficking Section of the Hawks. The members were assisted by the Tactical Operations Management Section, the Pretoria K9 unit, SAPS Head Office Modus Operandi Centre at head office and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.

"During the search in Centurion, [suspected](#) illegal processed elephant ivory to the value of R20 000.00 were discovered and seized."

On the 12th March the same day as Chu Dang Khoa's appearance in the Kempton Park Magistrates Court [52-year-old Bao Trung](#), a Vietnamese national appeared in the same court for a formal bail application following his first appearance in court last week," the [police said](#). Bao Trung was arrested on the 25th February 2026 in Cape Town.

Vietnam Hails the Chu Dang Khoa Arrest as Major Breakthrough

[Education for Nature](#) is Vietnam's first non-for-profit organisation focused on wildlife conservation who have spearheaded efforts to end Vietnam's illegal wildlife trade made a [public statement](#) on the 12th March 2026.

"ENV applauds the South African police for this significant victory. Justice has been served after a long wait," said Ms. Bui Thi Ha, ENV Director of Policy and Legislation. "This is truly a monumental step in the global fight against transnational organized crime."

Chu Dang Khoa has long been [identified](#) as a shadowy figure deeply embedded in the illegal rhino horn and tiger bone trade. Through his South African enterprise, DKC Trading Company, Khoa owns Voi Game Lodge in the North West Province. The facility, which holds captive tigers and rhinos, has been linked to rhino horn and lion bone trafficking, as well as the export of tiger bones to Asian black markets.

Khoa had reportedly been in South Africa since late 2023, fleeing his home country after his mother was [arrested](#) on charges of asset embezzlement and illegal trading of financial documents in Vietnam. Most recently, investigators issued a warrant for Khoa after linking his network to a "staged" armed robbery of 98 rhino horns allegedly taken from Voi Game Lodge, and the subsequent trafficking of these horns.

While the fight against transnational wildlife trafficking is far from over, this landmark victory in the Khoa case demonstrates that no one is above the law and that meaningful change is possible," continued Ms. Ha. ENV commends international and local authorities, as well as NGOs, for their continued cooperation in targeting and eliminating leadership-level wildlife traffickers. ENV believes that upholding the law and holding wildlife trafficking kingpins accountable for their crimes is the only

way to deter future crime, dismantle major trafficking networks, and demonstrate the country's firm commitment to protecting endangered wildlife in Vietnam and globally."

Huy Bao Tran Arrested 26th February 2026

[Huy Bao Tran](#) was about to board a flight to Singapore with his family, was arrested by the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI) Western Cape, who assisted in executing the arrest warrant, which had been issued by the Kempton Park Magistrate Court.

The warrant for Huy Bao Tran's arrest was issued after investigators linked him to the [case](#) of two Nigerian nationals who were arrested in early December 2025 for the possession of 17 rhino horns and 26.2kg of lion and tiger bones at a storage facility in Kempton Park. *"The suspect has been linked to a Kempton Park case of possession of rhino horns and predator bones, which were discovered to have been from Haartebeesfontein in the North West. This is in contravention of sections of the National Environmental Management and Biodiversity Act. The suspect's arrest follows the arrest of two Nigerian nationals on 1 December 2025," the police said in a statement. The rhino horns are alleged to have been from a staged robbery reported on 8 December 2025 at Voi Lodge, in Hartbeesfontein, where 98 rhino horns were allegedly stolen. Upon further investigation, it was found that 17 of the recovered rhino horns on 1 December 2025 were part of the 98 rhino horns stolen on 8 December 2025. It was further established that the owner of the rhino horns was a Vietnamese national, who was suspiciously not present at the time of the robbery. The vehicle which was suspected to have been used as an instrument to commit the crime was traced to Woodhill Golf Estate in Pretoria, wherein search warrants were applied for and approved.*

EMS Foundation: Where Have All the Rhinos Gone? 2021

Chu Dang Khoa, also known as [Michael Chu](#) featured prominently in a 2021 report, [Where Have All the Rhinos Gone](#), published by [EMS Foundation](#).

The wealthy Vietnamese businessman registered a company in South Africa in 2005. According to the Rhino Tipping Point report, an [excerpt](#) of which was published in the *Financial Mail* on the 15 July 2016. Chu dang Khoa emerged as a key player in a company that was supplying wild animals from Voi Lodge to Vinpearl Safari Park, situated on the Vietnamese island in the Gulf of Thailand.

Of concern, is that the same report states that the South African Department of Environmental Affairs issued permits to export 130 animals to Vinpearl Safaris or Phu Quoc Tourism Development between September 2015 and February 2016. This allegedly included 20 tigers, 23 lions, 12 monkeys and two hyenas.

It has been widely reported that Chu Dang Khoa exploited the fact that in South Africa tigers are classified as [exotic](#),, creating a loophole which means that as a result, provincial authorities do not issue permits to keep tigers.

However, it is illegal to trade in tiger parts internationally, therefore the tiger bones would need to be disguised as lion bones in order to be legally exported from South Africa. [TRAFFIC](#) called for an investigation into Voi Lodge. Voi Lodge is mentioned on page 51 of a report sent to the CITES Secretariat by the [EMS Foundation and Ban Animal Trading](#) on the 28 of February 2018.

Voi Lodge, [they reported](#) had more than fifty tigers and was linked to criminal syndicates in Vietnam. Importantly, the report highlighted the fact that South Africa was incapable of regulating the lion bone trade and the facilities where this industry was taking place.

The Report was taken seriously and as a result an official investigation was instigated. An investigation resulted in an intelligence led operation carried out by the South African Police HAWKS North West Serious Organised Crime Unit, assisted by Crime Intelligence, Klerksdorp TRT, Potchefstroom flying squad and the Department of Nature Conservation led to the arrest of eight suspects on Sunday [25th November 2018](#) for the alleged illegal possession of game products.

The team intercepted two vehicles driving in convoy headed to a unused farm in Mareetsane. During a search of both vehicles the team discovered lion bones, lion meat, a tiger skin, gas cylinders, gas burners, and other equipment.

[The Vietnamese nationals](#) Nguyen Huu Son, Nguyen Van Tuan, Dao Thang, Pham Khur, pham Xuan Chanh, and QuoIThang with South Africans Johagem Louis Fouche, Michael Frederick Fouche and Lourens Pretorius Chu Due Thang appeared in court on the following Tuesday.

The case was postponed for a formal bail hearing. [They were charged](#) under the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act for the illegal possession of game products and carrying out restricted activities involving specimens of a listed threatened or protected species. The South Africans were granted bail of R10 000.00 each and the Vietnamese citizens were refused bail.

At the end of June 2019, after spending seven months in police custody the Vietnamese nationals were sentenced and fined to the total amount of R68 000.00 and ordered to leave South Africa.

On the 26th November 2019, according to reports, the HAWKS working with other South African law enforcement officials, recovered 100 rhino horns, four tiger carcasses, a tiger skin, weapons and rounds of ammunition during a raid on two farms in the North West province. During a raid on a farm near Klerksdorp, the first suspect was found in possession of a hunting rifle, a shotgun, a revolver, a pistol and a large quantity of empty cartridges and live ammunition.

[Further probing](#) into the discovered firearms led the investigative team to Voi Lodge situated near Hartebeesfontein, where additional suspects were arrested after an assortment of firearms and ammunition were found which included a rifle, a hunting rifle, a pistol and a revolver. The suspects would face charges of the illegal possession of firearms and the contravention of the National Environmental Management-Biodiversity Act.

According to the [Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries](#) report on rhino poaching in South Africa 2019, this matter would continue in 2020. According to the [Education for Nature – Vietnam](#) Facebook Page The three suspects were two Vietnamese nationals - named as Nguyen Huu Dong and Chu Duc Thang - and a South African - Michael Fouche. A [local news](#) agency also confirmed the names of these suspects.

EMS Foundation: The Extinction Business: South Africa's Captive Lion Industry 2018

The Extinction Business: South Africa's Lion Bone Trade, is a comprehensive report published eight years ago by the EMS Foundation and Ban Animal Trading in 2018. This Report exposed how the commercial captive lion industry in South Africa fuels illegal trafficking of wildlife products and links to criminal networks.

The investigation highlighted that the legal trade permitted by CITES launders tiger and lion bones into Asian markets, prompting global calls for a zero-export quota and the closure of the big cat breeding industry in South Africa.

The Report confirmed that Asian criminals cannot succeed without the participation and facilitation of private ranch owners, 'professional' hunters, and outfitters in South Africa. In South Africa the private big cat breeding industry certainly does not equate to conservation or wildlife protection.

The international connections to illegal wildlife trafficking which is off significance to the latest arrests of Chu Dang Khoa and Huy Bao Tran. For example, an official list/register of rhino hunts/hunters provided by the North West Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment to the Democratic Alliance in 2012, shows Van Hai's name along with other wildlife traffickers and individuals linked to Chu Dang Khoa/DKC Trading/Voi Lodge (in the North West province) and the Xasavang Network.¹ Indeed, this list itself seems to point to a likely link, connection and overlap between Chu Dang Khoa/DKC Trading/Voi Game Lodge and Xasavang/Keosavang. It also links the rhino horn syndicates to the big cat bone trade.

The Report's examination of CITES export permits reveals various addressees linked to a common address in Lao PDR, associated with Vannaseng Trading Company, which imports Big Cat bones from South Africa.

Established in 2005 by Chu Dang Khoa, the company known as DKC Trading, has continued to operate, seemingly with little regulatory oversight. Its business scope includes various commodities, potentially wildlife. DKC Trading acquired two farms in 2010-2011, creating Voi Lodge, a 924-hectare facility for breeding and hunting rhinos, lions, and tigers.

Allegations made in the 2018 Report suggested that Voi Game Lodge may be breeding tigers for illegal trade, violating CITES regulations aimed at protecting endangered species. This Report highlighted the need for scrutiny regarding the activities at Voi Game Lodge, especially concerning the breeding of tigers for international trade.

There is overwhelming evidence indicating a complex web of wildlife trafficking operations that exploit legal loopholes and regulatory weaknesses. There is a pressing need for enhanced monitoring and enforcement of CITES regulations to protect endangered species, particularly in regions with known trafficking activity.

¹ Carnie, Tony, Bogus Rhino Hunters, *Wildside*, p. 27, Autumn, 2012.

Is South Africa Losing the Fight Against Organised Crime

National Director of Public Prosecutions [Shamila Batohi](#) told [South Africa's Parliament's Ad Hoc Committee](#) investigating allegations of criminal infiltration and political interference in the South African Police Service that South Africa is losing the fight against organized crime, describing it as a "slow-motion takeover. She [highlighted](#) concerted efforts to compromise prosecutors and confirmed receiving intelligence regarding corrupt officials within the National Prosecuting Authority.

Batohi stated that criminals have infiltrated key, high-level positions within the criminal justice system, including the South African Police Services and the National Prosecuting Authority. She [confirmed](#) receiving intelligence indicating that prosecutors are being targeted by criminal syndicates. While acknowledging the need for better performance, she highlighted the immense difficulty of prosecuting high-profile cases. Although some committee members criticized her, with some calling her approach a "dereliction of duty" for not naming specific corrupt prosecutors during the testimony, despite her citing ongoing investigations, [security analysts](#) and observers noted that the testimony confirms that the criminal justice system is heavily compromised, putting the rule of law at risk.

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