



## environmental affairs

Department:  
Environmental Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Ref:02/1/5/2

**MINISTER**

### **QUESTION NO. 235 FOR WRITTEN REPLY: NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES**

A draft reply to **Mr E M Mlambo (Gauteng: ANC)** to the above-mentioned question is enclosed for your consideration.

**MS NOSIPHO NGCABA  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

**DATE:**

**DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED**

**DR B E E MOLEWA, MP  
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**DATE:**

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES**

(For written reply)

**QUESTION NO. 235 {CO356E}**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO.29 of 2017**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 10 October 2017**

**Mr E M Mlambo (Gauteng: ANC) to ask the Minister of Environmental Affairs:**

(1) Whether she can provide an update on the state of illegal trade in rhino horn and ivory in South and Southern Africa; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;

(2) whether the current efforts in stemming poaching activity and the international pressure to ban trade in endangered species and animal products are having any impact on the challenge; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details? CO356E

**235. THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPLIES:**

(1) As you may know, Cabinet decided on 6 August 2014, that South Africa needed to implement a more vigorous integrated strategic management approach aimed at reducing the threat to rhinos and the biological management of the species. During our last progress report on the implementation of our Integrated Strategic Management Approach on 24 July 2017 we provided an update for the six month period covering 1 January to 30 June 2017. The statistics provided showed a slight decrease in poaching incidents in the KNP attributed to our sustained effective law enforcement efforts. We However, the threat of poaching is now a challenge to other provinces and in particular, Kwa-Zulu Natal. As a result, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife has strengthened its response capacity as an anti-poaching unit in line with the existing Mission Area Joint Operational Center (MAJOC) in cooperation with SAPS.

A total of 359 alleged poachers and traffickers were arrested nationally in the first six months of 2017. The Stock Theft and Endangered Species Unit of SAPS continues to play an instrumental role in ensuring rhino poaching cases are properly investigated. From January to June 2017, 15 cases had been finalized which resulted in convictions with 22 perpetrators being sentenced to a total of 95 years imprisonment.

In addition, the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigations (DPCI) also known as the Hawks, working in close cooperation with other government departments, had from January to June 2017 made arrests and seizures in 9 rhino horn trafficking cases, involving 13 suspects and approximately 140 kilograms of rhino horn. There has been a marked increase globally during 2017 in the number of rhino horn detections and seizures at ports of entry and exit and positive confirmation through rhino horn DNA analysis is assisting enforcement officials to understand the routes utilized to move horns from illegally poached rhinos in South Africa to countries in Asia. The coordinated efforts between DPCI, the South African Revenue Service (SARS) Customs, supported by the Environmental Management Inspectors (EMI's) from this Department are thus beginning to result in the dismantling of the trafficking networks.

There had been a slight decrease in the number of rhino poached nationally in the reporting period (January to June 2017). A total of 529 rhino had been poached compared to 542 in the same period in 2016.

In Kruger National Park (KNP) a total of 243 rhino carcasses were found between January and the end of June 2017 compared to 354 in the same period in 2016. This represents a decrease of 34% in the KNP.

As said above, however, whilst there has been a decrease in the number of rhino killed for their horns in the Kruger National Park and Mpumalanga, the number of rhino poached in a number of the other provinces has unfortunately increased.

30 elephants were poached in the Kruger National Park in the reporting period (January to June 2017) but no elephants were poached elsewhere in the country. The interventions being implemented to counter rhino poaching are also used to respond to this emerging threat.

In relation to the Southern Africa region, we work closely with our colleagues in neighboring countries to protect our rhino and elephant populations. South Africa has bi-national meetings with all our neighbors and illegal wildlife trade features prominently on this agenda. The South African Development Community (SADC) has approved and is currently discussing the implementation of the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-poaching Strategy (LEAP) which will further enhance co-operation in the region against the illegal killing and subsequent illegal trade in our natural resources.

- (2) As reported above, the current efforts in stemming poaching activity have had a positive effect in the Kruger National Park, which has borne the brunt of the poaching. Unfortunately, poaching activities have shifted to other provinces and in particular there has been a marked increase in poaching in KwaZulu-Natal compared to 2016. It is difficult to say whether international pressure to ban trade in endangered species and animal products is having any impact on the poaching challenge as well as the trafficking of endangered species in general, especially because no empirical evidence exist to support the notion that banning results in reduced pressure on endangered species.