



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Ref: ZA Rhino Report to SC74
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Dear Mr Abi-Chahine

RHINOCEROSES: REPORTING TO THE 74TH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

Please accept our apologies for not responding by the due date, unfortunately we only received the letter requesting the report today.

In terms of Decision 18.110, South Africa still does not receive timely reporting of seizures from Parties where seizures have taken place. In most cases (although there are some exceptions), we become aware of the seizures through media reports and then reach out to the relevant country to request DNA samples. On average, it takes three to six months for permits to be issued and DNA samples to be delivered for analysis.

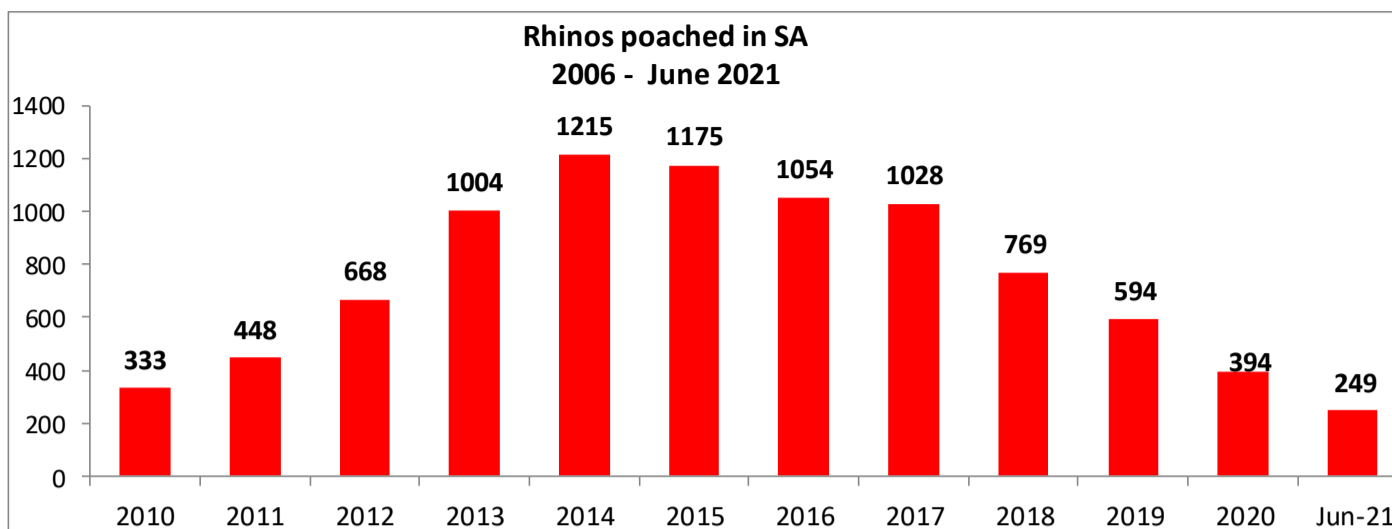
In terms of Decision 18.111, it is very difficult to exchange information between the investigation teams of the country of origin of the horns and the country of seizure since we seldom get information on who is leading the investigation in the seizure country and we seldom receive the Form for collection and sharing of data on rhinoceros horn seizures and on samples for forensic analysis as per Annex to Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP17). We would like to suggest that Parties update the contact details for their focal points, especially for Enforcement, on the CITES website for us to make contact with the appointed officials to share information as soon as possible after a seizure. It may also be useful to compile a list from the known transit and destination countries as to the investigative authority for cases involving rhino (this often varies between police units, customs authorities and CITES/environmental authorities depending on the country involved).

After ten years of implementing various strategies to combat rhino poaching by poachers who are recruited and managed by crime syndicates, South Africa has managed to halt the escalation of rhino losses and has now seen a year-on-year reduction in the number of poached rhinos since 2015. See table below which indicates statistics up until June 2021 (we are currently verifying the numbers for the period July to December of 2021).



Batho pele-putting people first

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To move from the current moderate decline to a minimum loss, the Department in cooperation with the provincial conservation authorities, South African National Parks (SANParks), the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (HAWKS) and private rhino owners, are focusing on a more proactive and integrated approach that builds on existing initiatives and blurs the distinction made between national, provincial, and private parks whilst increasing situational awareness. This Integrated Wildlife Zone (IWZ) approach prevents borders and boundaries from inhibiting planning and implementation to achieve maximum benefit. During 2020, seven IWZ's were introduced across South Africa. These are similar to the Integrated Protection Zones previously utilized within national parks and provincial reserves and sees an expansion of the effort to protect the world's largest black and white rhino populations. By introducing a zoning approach, the necessary resources are being redirected to areas most in need of support. It also strengthens cooperation between the state and private role-players and is aligned to the objectives of South Africa's National Integrated Strategy to Combat Wildlife Trafficking. The concept is based on multi-party cooperation and includes the use of appropriate technologies to ensure surveillance, early warning, and detection – all in an effort to become more pro-active.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries & the Environment (DFFE) has also established an Environmental Enforcement Fusion Centre, which is coordinating and improving the reactive and proactive response to rhino poaching and other wildlife crime. It has begun to consolidate rhino protection efforts across the country, standardising and boosting tactical level anti-poaching and introducing integrated information-led enforcement. Analysis capacity has been introduced with seven analysts. Their combined experience ensures that the Department can now support relevant investigating officers with profiling, association, cell phone, social media, crime scene and financial analysis. This work further strengthens the essential collaboration with the SAPS, the HAWKS, the Department of Justice, and other sector forces to gather, analyse and share intelligence on wildlife trafficking so that the international syndicate-related crimes can be effectively dealt with.

South Africa and its neighbours with rhinoceros' populations (Botswana, Eswatini, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe), regularly exchange information on illegal activities relating to illegal killing and subsequent trade in rhino horns. Joint law enforcement operations take place in the Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) with neighbouring countries on a regular basis to protect the natural resources in these parks, including rhinoceros.

SANParks engages with Mozambique on several forums established in accordance with the Greater

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Limpopo (GL) TFCA. This includes the Greater Lebombo Conservancy (GLC) Security Forum which consists of:

- a. Kruger National Park (KNP)
- b. Mozambique – Administration of Conservation Areas (ANAC)
- c. Mozambique – Environmental Police
- d. Mozambique – Private Concessions (Karangani, Ferreira, Masintonto and Sabie Game Park)

Before the COVID-19 Pandemic, meetings were held quarterly in Xinvane but have since been held virtually or along the SA/Mozambique Boundary. Various high-level visits have taken place between South Africa and Mozambique and this includes a Mozambican Delegation visit to KNP in October 2019. The delegation consisted of ANAC and Park Managers from Mozambique. It is also important to understand that on an Operational Level, the relationship between KNP Rangers and our Mozambique Counterparts whether Government or neighbouring Concessions, does not function based on scheduled meetings, but rather on daily communication and co-ordination via telephone or radio. The success of the current relationship and the efficiency that goes with it is based on the building of operational relationships where a shared vision is complimented by earned trust which has developed over time. This partnership is guided through the development of a *Joint Safety and Security Plan for the Greater Lebombo Conservancy, Kruger National Park and Limpopo National Park*.

In addition to the above, there are also structures in place to address the principles of the Treaty which was signed in 2002 between South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe and these include:

- a. GLTFCA Coordination
- b. Bilateral agreements between Mozambique Law Enforcement Agencies such as ANAC, Environmental Police and Lebombo Conservancies
- c. SANParks participation in Limpopo and Mpumalanga PROVJOINTS (SAPS coordinated).
- d. Forum of Southern African Development Community Chiefs of the Armies.

SANParks Environmental Crime Investigations (ECI) Unit has a working relationship with the Mozambique Police in Maputo and Gaza Provinces as well as ANAC in Maputo since 2013. SANParks officials have visited Mozambique on a regular basis and vice versa. Information pertaining to wildlife crime, including Rhino, Elephant, Lion and Pangolin, are shared during these sessions. Members of the already mentioned Mozambique Departments have on many occasions visited Nelspruit and Skukuza Police Stations to obtain details or statements from arrested Mozambican suspects to better understand wildlife crime networks in Mozambique.

South Africa and Viet Nam have been working more closely over the years, striving to not only implement Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), but also execute investigations between the two countries. To complement these efforts the South Africa / Vietnam Intergovernmental Partnership Forum was established to address various matters between the countries of which wildlife trafficking is one critical aspect.

One of the first major successes between the two countries was a combined investigation between South Africa and Vietnam that led to the seizure of 138 kilograms of rhino horns and approximately 3 tons of suspected lion bones in July 2021. In appreciation of this effort the Department of Foreign Relations, Ministry of Public Security of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam sent an official letter to the South African Embassy in Hanoi demonstrating the appreciation and cooperation between the two countries (see attached copy of the letter).

The investigation continues between the countries and it is anticipated that the rhino horn DNA samples

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will be submitted for analyses. This will enhance the investigation and complement further investigation efforts.

Bilateral meetings between South Africa and Viet Nam were also executed during the WIRE UNODC meeting in December 2021 with the aim of strengthening cooperation between the two countries.

Should you require any further clarity on the above or additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the Department.

Kind regards



Ms Nomfundo Tshabalala
Director-General
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
Letter signed by: Frances Craigie
Designation: Chief Director: Sector Enforcement
Date: 2022/01/06



CỤC ĐỐI NGOẠI
BỘ CÔNG AN NƯỚC CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM

Số: 3096/BCA-ĐN

Cục Đối ngoại, Bộ Công an nước Cộng hòa xã hội chủ nghĩa Việt Nam kính chào Đại sứ quán nước Cộng hòa Nam Phi tại Việt Nam và tiếp theo công hàm số 2222/BCA-ĐN ngày 04/6/2021 liên quan đến vụ nghi vận chuyển trái phép sừng tê giác từ Nam Phi vào Việt Nam, xin trao đổi như sau:

Ngày 01/6/2021, Cục Đối ngoại, Bộ Công an Việt Nam nhận được công hàm số H53/21 của Quý Đại sứ quán trao đổi về một tàu nghi vận chuyển sừng tê giác trái phép từ Nam Phi sẽ cập cảng Việt Nam sau ngày 30/6/2021. Căn cứ thông tin do Cảnh sát Nam Phi cung cấp và qua các biện pháp nghiệp vụ, ngày 18/7/2021, cơ quan chức năng Bộ Công an Việt Nam và Hải quan thành phố Đà Nẵng đã phối hợp khám xét 01 công-ten-nơ chứa hàng từ Nam Phi cập cảng Tiên Sa, Đà Nẵng. Qua khám xét phát hiện hơn 138kg sừng động vật nghi là sừng tê giác và hơn 3,1 tấn xương động vật nghi là xương động vật hoang dã quý hiếm.

Bộ Công an Việt Nam đánh giá cao và trân trọng cảm ơn sự phối hợp tích cực của Quý Đại sứ quán trong thời gian qua khi liên tục trao đổi về lịch trình của tàu thông qua đầu mối Cục Đối ngoại. Bộ Công an Việt Nam tin tưởng rằng, hai Bên sẽ tiếp tục duy trì kênh trao đổi thông tin và hợp tác hiệu quả trong phòng, chống tội phạm liên quan đến động vật hoang dã; đồng thời, mong muốn nhận được sự hỗ trợ của cơ quan chức năng Nam Phi trong quá trình điều tra lô hàng trên.

Nhân dịp này, Cục Đối ngoại, Bộ Công an Việt Nam xin gửi tới Đại sứ quán nước Cộng hòa Nam Phi tại Hà Nội lời chào trân trọng nhất. ♀

Hà Nội, ngày 23 tháng 7 năm 2021



Kính gửi: Đại sứ quán nước Cộng hòa Nam Phi tại Việt Nam,
Số 31 Hai Bà Trưng, Hoàn Kiếm, Hà Nội

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY
OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN RELATIONS

No: 3096/BCA-DN

The Department of Foreign Relations, Ministry of Public Security of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam presents its compliments to the Embassy of the Republic of South Africa in Viet Nam and in reference to the Former's Note No. 2222/BCA-DN dated 04 June 2021 regarding a case of rhino horn trafficking from South Africa to Viet Nam, has the honor to inform the Esteemed Embassy as follows:

On 01 June 2021, the Department of Foreign Relations, Ministry of Public Security of Viet Nam received the Esteemed Embassy's Note No. H53/21 regarding a possible shipment of illegal rhino horn on a vessel which was due to dock in the port of Da Nang after 30 June 2021. Based on the information provided by South African Police and through investigation, on 18 July 2021, MPS competent unit and Da Nang Custom seized a container from South Africa in the port of Tien Sa, Da Nang, containing 138kg of rhino horn and more than three tons of wildlife animal bones.

The Ministry of Public Security of Viet Nam highly appreciates and respectfully thanks the Esteemed Embassy's active collaboration over the recent time in continually exchanging the shipment's itinerary through its focal point in the Department of Foreign Relations. The Ministry of Public Security of Viet Nam is looking forward to the two Sides' maintenance in information exchanging channel as well as effective cooperation in combating wildlife crime and to the support from South African competent authorities during the investigation of the above-mentioned shipment.

The Department of Foreign Relations, Ministry of Public Security of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the Republic of South Africa in Ha Noi the assurances of its highest consideration./.

Ha Noi, 23 July 2021

To: Embassy of the Republic of South Africa
No. 31 Hai Ba Trung, Hoan Kiem district, Hanoi