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Rhino poaching remains a challenge in SA and Africa

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Image: Reuters

World Rhino Day is aimed at raising awareness around all five rhino species and the work being done to save them.

As the international community marks World Rhino Day on Friday, South Africa and other parts of the African continent are still facing the challenge of [rhino poaching](#).

The International Rhino Foundation says poachers have shifted their focus from the larger rhino populations to smaller, and possibly more susceptible ones.

In South Africa, poachers are focusing on smaller areas, like the Hluhluwe Imfolozi Game Reserve, which has borne the brunt of South Africa's rhino poaching deaths in the past year.

While Namibia, home to the largest number of black rhinos in the world, saw a devastating 93% increase in rhino poaching from 2021 to 2022.

World Rhino Day is aimed at raising awareness around all five rhino species and the work being done to save them.

South Africa is home to the majority of the world's rhino and it is no surprise that it has been the country hit hardest by poachers.

More than 1 000 rhinos have been killed each year between 2013 and 2017 in the country.

Although there's a decrease in the number of poached rhino, over 230 were killed between January and June this year.

The Game Rangers Association of Africa says rangers have been hard at work to safeguard the endangered animals.

The association's CEO, Andrew Campbell says, "Rangers work goes beyond just everyone knows about the counter-poaching, and anti poaching work that they do. But it's beyond that. It's about wildlife monitoring, it's about community engagement, it's about undertaking conservation work. It's about fighting fires, it's about fixing fences and roads, so it's so much more, and rangers do all these things out there and no conservation work is possible without having dedicated people on the ground, doing the handwork under the sun like we see today.

Campbell adds, "It's a hot day here, it must be over 40 degrees. This is your general working conditions of many ranger across Africa. So, all respect to them. and as I said, they're the key to conservation, because having well supported well led well resource ranger teams on the ground."

Rangers from various game farms say that they are facing numerous challenges on a daily basis.

"We need intervention worldwide, so that they can be able to assist because rangers are risking their life and we cannot do it on our own, we need people from across the world to come and support rangers. Sometimes we do roadblocks, we search cars that are coming in so that we can check what people are bringing in with them. If they have a guns we check their licenses and the number of live ammunition. This is very huge problem, but at least for now its not as bad as before. If you check we have had this problem since 2012 and in 2015 it was worse, then from 2015 to 2020 there was a decline. However, in the past 3 years it seems as though we have the situation under control."

Dehorning of rhino, intervention by law enforcement agencies and hefty sentences to rhino poachers have played a significant role in reducing poaching.

Between January and June this year, 31 people were imprisoned for rhino poaching.

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