

King Misuzulu issues warning to communities against damaging Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife game reserves' fencing



An Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife delegation had a meeting with King Misuzulu kaZwelithini at his palace in Phongolo. Picture: Supplied.

King Misuzulu kaZwelithini issued a warning to criminals within communities to stop damaging Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife game reserves' fencing including cutting fences and stealing poles.

The King was speaking during a meeting with an Ezemvelo delegation at his palace in Pongola on Thursday.

During his presentation to the King, Ezemvelo chief executive officer Sihle Mkhize, informed the King that Ezemvelo faces challenges beyond rhino poaching, including criminals within neighbouring communities stealing fence materials and poles.

Mkhize appealed to the King to issue a warning against these unacceptable incidents that affect the effective biodiversity and ecotourism management in the province.

King Misuzulu noted with concern that some individuals are damaging the infrastructure of game reserves including the cherished Hluhluwe iMfolozi Park (HiP).

He said such actions not only undermine the integrity of these historic game reserves but also pose significant dangers to innocent people living adjacent.

“As the custodians of this rich heritage, it is our collective responsibility to preserve and protect these natural treasures. The game reserves are not merely stretches of land but the pride of the Zulu nation, a legacy bestowed upon us by our ancestors. Our history is adorned with stories of how our forebears lived in harmony with the wildlife that graces our land,” said the King.

King Misuzulu appealed to communities to honour this legacy by working collaboratively with the management of these game reserves.

“Let us ensure that these sanctuaries remain safe and secure, fostering an environment where both humans and wildlife can thrive in mutual respect and coexistence. By doing so, we not only protect our heritage but also ensure that future generations will inherit the same pride and natural beauty that we have enjoyed,” King Misuzulu said.

The King also appealed to all traditional leaders to take decisive action against those who vandalise and destroy the infrastructure managed by Ezemvelo.

The purpose of the meeting was, among other things, to brief King Misuzulu on several developments that Ezemvelo has recently embarked on.



Mkhize said despite financial challenges, Ezemvelo has managed to increase the conservation estate in the province and thanked the King for supporting Ezemvelo’s mandate.

He said rhino poaching incidents in KZN have become alarmingly high.

Drastic interventions include increasing Field Ranger Deployment to enhance surveillance and protection efforts; employing fence liners from local communities to patrol the perimeter fence daily, identifying and repairing potential breaches; erecting a New Smart Fence in Hluhluwe iMfolozi Park to bolster security and installing vehicle trackers on all Ezemvelo vehicles to improve monitoring and rapid response capabilities.

According to Mkhize, despite these interventions, rhino poaching persisted.

He said Ezemvelo implemented a rhino dehorning program in April 2024, which has significantly curbed poaching incidents.

“Since the commencement of dehorning, the average monthly rhino poaching incidents have dropped from 30-40 to approximately five in May, June, and July.”

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