

Armed poacher killed, rifle recovered in two anti-poaching incidents in Kruger National Park



Kruger National Park rangers during an anti-poaching patrol, as SANParks confirms two recent incidents in which a high-calibre rifle was recovered and a suspected poacher was fatally wounded.

Image: File

A suspected poacher was fatally wounded and a high-calibre rifle recovered during two separate anti-poaching incidents involving rangers in the [Kruger National Park](#) this week.

SANParks Head of Communications and spokesperson JP Louw said the incidents underscored the risks faced by rangers in their fight against wildlife crime.

“These incidents highlight the ongoing dangers faced by rangers in their daily efforts to protect South Africa’s wildlife,” Louw said.

The first incident occurred on Thursday, 5 February 2026, in the Malelane section of the park, where rangers came into contact with suspected poachers. No arrests were made, but a high-calibre rifle and bags were recovered at the scene.

SANParks said the seizure of the items “represents a significant disruption to poaching activities”.

A second contact took place on Friday, 6 February 2026, in the Stolznek section of the park, where rangers again encountered suspected poachers. One suspect was fatally wounded during the confrontation.

According to SANParks, the recovery of weapons and equipment “demonstrates the effectiveness of ranger patrols and the commitment to safeguarding rhinos from relentless poaching threats”.

SANParks commended the “courage and dedication” of its rangers, saying the fight against poaching remains a priority and operations will continue to be intensified to ensure the survival of rhinos for future generations.

Both incidents have been handed over to the South African Police Service for further investigation.

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