

Kruger urges rangers to return to work

The Kruger National Park has urged 204 striking rangers to return to work.



(Image: Esculapio, via Wikimedia Commons)

Kruger spokesperson William Mabasa said the park needed the rangers, who have been on strike for almost two weeks.

"The police, the soldiers and the (volunteering) rangers are doing a good job in the park, but they will not be there forever. We urge the rangers to come back to work. We will interact with them while they are at work," said Mabasa.

Mabasa said Kruger management was to meet with the rangers' representatives on Sunday.

He said management would go through the strikers' memorandum and list of demands and decide on a way forward.

"I hope we will be able to settle the matter and end the strike," said Mabasa.

He said the strike, which began on February 3, had not negatively affected the functioning of the park. "The demonstrators demonstrated peacefully and did not disrupt anything," said Mabasa.

He said no cases of rhino poaching had been reported in the park during the strike.

"The rangers went on strike when we were about to implement a strategy [to curb rhino poaching]. We were not sure if the strategy would work well without them, but I am happy to announce that [it is]," said Mabasa.

He said the principle of "no work, no pay" was being applied during the strike.

Since the strike began, police officers and soldiers have been patrolling the park.

Altogether 361 employees are on strike, including the rangers. They are demanding equal payment for employees tasked with the same responsibilities.

"They say some of the workers are being paid better than them while they are doing the same job. This is not true because we base our salaries on employees' services, work experience as well as the agreement we reached during the interview," said Mabasa.