

KNP and traditional healers partner to fight poaching

Kruger National Park (KNP) has joined hands with traditional health practitioners in an attempt to fight the escalating rhino poaching pandemic. Over 500 traditional health practitioners from Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces gathered at Skukuza soccer stadium on Friday, 31 August to declare their stand against rhino poaching.



Joint initiative: Dr Sylvester Hlati (SADC president) watches carefully as Don English (Regional Ranger: Marula) performs a ritual during the traditional health practitioners event at Skukuza soccer stadium.

"A lot of the suspects that have been arrested have alluded that they use muti to avoid detection by rangers and dangerous animals. Whether this allegation is true or not, is irrelevant. What is important is that we have entered into a pact, to ensure that we fight these criminals, for the good of our beautiful country. This pact means that no criminals or poacher will get any muti. If they are to get any muti, it must be one that will expose them" said KNP managing executive Abe Sibiya.

Traditional health practitioners believe that through their 'muti' they can be able to make a contribution towards the reduction of rhino poaching in the park. This initiative headed by Dr Sylvester Hlati is the first of its kind, where communities bordering the park come publicly to declare their stand against rhino poaching.

We cannot stand by doing nothing

"Society cannot stand by and watch helplessly as international criminals declare war on our nation. We all need to defend our heritage with everything we have" added Sibiya.

He furthermore urged communities to take part in anti-rhino poaching initiatives. "To the rest of us, we need to go out there and expose these selfish detractors and betrayers of our country. They live in our neighbourhoods. They are easily identifiable through their lifestyles".

The traditional health practitioners had a night vigil at Mkhuhlu stadium where they performed the rituals and asked intervention from their ancestors.

The KNP is the main target for poachers as it hosts the highest number of rhinos. The number of rhinos killed in the park alone so far stand at 226.



A group of traditional health practitioners speak to their ancestors in an attempt to stop rhino poaching in Kruger National Park.