

SA, Vietnam to sign agreement on rhino poaching

South Africa and Vietnam are to sign a Memorandum of Understanding next week in a bid to address the scourge of rhino poaching in the country.

"This intervention on the international front is intended to promote cooperation between the two countries and compliance with [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species] CITES. The MoU will be addressing, in particular, the illegal trade in rhino horns," said the Department of Environmental Affairs on Tuesday.

It said for South Africa to effectively deal with the current scourge of poaching, and with illegal hunting largely driven by international demand for the rhino horn, these international engagements and agreements were crucial.

The agreement, the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of Biodiversity Conservation and Protection, comes as the figures for rhino poaching have soared to almost 600.

"The latest rhino poaching statistics indicate that a total of 598 rhinos have been lost to poaching since the beginning of this year, with the total number of arrests at 246," said the department.

The Kruger National Park has lost 364 rhinos to poaching. KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and the North West provinces continue to be the hardest hit by poachers, collectively accounting for the loss of 194 rhinos.



(Image: GCIS)

The Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Edna Molewa, is expected to sign the agreement with her counterpart, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Dr Cao Duc Phat in Hanoi, Vietnam.

In September 2011, the governments of Vietnam and South Africa agreed on a process towards the finalisation of the MoU that will see the collaboration of natural resource management, wildlife protection and law enforcement.

Members of the public are urged to report incidents of rhino poaching or any tip-offs that could lead to arrests and prevention of poaching to 0800 205 005.

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