



**forestry, fisheries  
& the environment**

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Ref: O2/1/5/2**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**(For written reply)**

**QUESTION NO. 3224 {NW4298E}**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 34 of 2023**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 13 October 2023**

**Ms H S Winkler (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:**


- (1) Whether, with regard to the high levels of rhino poaching in the Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife, especially in the Imfolozi and iHluhluwe Game Reserves, and noting that rhino poaching is an international concern and the rhino form an important part of the metapopulation, her department has taken steps to support and assist KwaZulu-Natal in light of the dramatic increase in rhino poaching; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what form of support and assistance has been provided by her department in this regard;
- (2) whether the Intensive Protection Zone has been implemented in the specified parks; if not, why not; if so, how effective has it been?

**3224. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:**

- (1) The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) has taken steps to support and assist Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Wildlife in light of the increase in rhino poaching in Hluhluwe/iMfolozi Park (HiP). These include, amongst others, the following:

- A meeting with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Acting Chief Executive Officer and the Provincial MEC for the KwaZulu-Natal Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs in March 2023 to discuss the poaching of rhino in HiP and possible initiatives to assist in combating the high levels of poaching.
- The establishment of a Tactical Operations Joint Control Centre, which now facilitates the South African Police Service (SAPS) deployments to HiP.
- The DFFE has made available funding to assist with the boundary fence for the HiP which is regularly breached and through which wild animals can escape to nearby communities. iSimangaliso is assisting with the erection of the fence. This work on the fencing is due to commence towards the end of November 2023.
- Following a request to the Minister of Justice and Correction Services, the National Prosecuting Authority has designated a prosecutor to facilitate and co-ordinate rhino cases in KZN and cases have been prioritised and identified to be expedited through the court processes, with some being centralised to the relevant regional court.
- A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between Ezemvelo, South African National Parks (SANParks), iSimangaliso and DFFE for cooperation on Matters of Interest, particularly relating to the protection and management of rhinoceros. A site visit and assessment meeting attended by SANParks, DFFE and HiP Field Staff took place on 16 and 17 October 2023 to discuss assistance in terms of the MOU.
- The DFFE's Environmental Enforcement Fusion Centre (EEFC) is providing ongoing support to HiP Nerve Centre as well as provincial crime forums and investigative teams in KZN.
- DFFE has been engaging a number of donor organisations and NGOs to see how we can collaborate on initiatives to assist in KZN.
- Requests have been sent to the Minister of Police as well as various engagements through the NATJOINTS structures to request ongoing deployment of various SAPS units to assist HiP and Ezemvelo.

- (2) The Intensive Protection Zone concept has been implemented in KZN and specific resources have been directed to those reserves, although the pressure from poaching syndicates remains intense in relation to HiP.



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**MS B D CREECY, MP**  
**MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

DATE: 25/10/2023