

Five die in anti-poaching operation

The Minister and the Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Edna Molewa and Rejoice Mabudafhasi, together with the South African National Parks (SANParks) Board, have expressed their heartfelt condolences to the families, the Ministry of Defence and colleagues of the five people killed in a helicopter crash in the Kruger National Park on Saturday, 30 March 2013.



The Ministry and SANParks Board are saddened that the pilot and crew of the South African Air Force Agusta A109 light utility helicopter were killed during a routine air patrol during the anti-poaching operation named Operation Rhino on Saturday night. This operation is aimed at stemming the scourge of rhino poaching in South Africa.

Of the 188 rhino poached in South Africa as of last week, 135 had been killed in the Kruger National Park since January. The KNP remains the hardest hit by the scourge of poaching of these iconic animals having lost 425 rhino to poachers during 2012.

The Ministry and SANParks Board support the SA Air Force in determining the sequence of events that led to the fatal crash of the helicopter. We hope this sad event will not deter our men and women working tirelessly to protect our country's rhino population against the on-going scourge of poaching by marauding bandits.

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