

RHINO POACHING IN MOZAMBIQUE: JUSTICE SERVED

Rhino poaching is currently a major problem in Southern Africa with, overall, very limited success in stopping the illegal killing of rhino. The Government of Mozambique, however, is taking the killing of rhino very seriously and this will hopefully deter any potential new rhino poaching.

In May 2011, an organized crime syndicate, based in South Africa, orchestrated the killing and dehorning of a rhino on the Vilanculos Coastal Wildlife Sanctuary, a protected area located on the peninsula de Sao Sebastiao, Mozambique. White rhino were re-introduced into the area in April 2010.

With swift assistance from the Mozambican police, the poachers were caught, firearms were recovered and the horn retrieved within 24 hours of the incident as the poachers tried to flee to South Africa. The National Director, as well as the Inhambane Provincial Director of the Police, were extremely helpful in all aspects of the case.

The rhino anti-poaching unit from Kruger National Park in South Africa joined the investigation as some of the accused were allegedly linked to rhino poaching activities in Kruger. Their assistance in the case was of great value.

The Mozambican Authorities and especially the National Director of Conservation Areas, Dr Pariela, showed much interest in the case and gave their fullest support to the investigation. Due to the extremely low numbers of rhino in Mozambique, such criminal activities cannot be tolerated.

On 23 August 2011 the Vilanculos court found the poachers guilty of illegally killing the rhino. They were heavily fined and sentenced to 8 years imprisonment.

The Mozambican Government's unconditional support and assistance resulted in justice being carried out.

The Sanctuary is unlikely to stock any rhino in future and will carefully select species for future game introductions, avoiding species that have a high black market value like rhino horn.



Photo taken in the Kruger National Park, South Africa