



# environmental affairs

Department:  
Environmental Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ref:02/1/5/2

## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 2288 {NW2526E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 26 of 2017

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### Mr N Paulsen (EFF) to ask the Minister of Environmental Affairs:

What efforts are being made to uncover, track and expeditiously bring to justice the main operators of the rhino horn organised trade syndicates within South Africa's borders and those profiting most from it?

### 2288. THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPLIES:

Significant efforts continue to be made to investigate and disrupt those syndicates responsible for rhino poaching and the trafficking of rhino horn. Due to the organised nature of these crimes the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigations ("the Hawks") takes a lead role supported by other units within the South Africa Police Service, the South African Revenue Service, the Financial Intelligence Centre, the National Prosecuting Authority as well as SANParks, the provincial conservations authorities and the Department of Environmental Affairs. This integrated approach is realising success at higher levels within the syndicates (and not only those individuals responsible for poaching).

During 2016 this integrated approach resulted in the dismantling of levels 3 to 4 rhino horn trafficking activities as follows:

Arrests @ levels 3 and 4: 19

Total Rhino horns seized: 165

While in the first six months of 2017 the following activities related to levels 3 and 4 within these rhino trafficking syndicates:

Arrests @ levels 3 and 4: 12 suspects

Estimated Rhino horn weight: 138.46 kilogram

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The Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation has confirmed that they currently have two (2) projects under investigation; six (6) major investigations and 4 wildlife trafficking syndicates on the court roll. Senior State Advocates from the National Prosecuting Authority have been assigned to support the investigations and lead these prosecutions.

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