

# National rhino horn trade remains legal in SA

The Johannesburg High Court has dismissed the Department of Environmental Affairs' application for leave to appeal against the lifting of the ban on national trade of rhino horn in South Africa.



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The application to lift the moratorium, which was initially invoked in 2009, was brought by private game farmers, John Hume and Johan Kruger. The High Court in Pretoria granted their application in November last year.

## Minister disappointed

Environmental Affairs minister, Edna Molewa, is said to be [deeply concerned](#) about the latest ruling announced on Wednesday, 20 January, upholding the decision to legalise domestic trade.

"It is hard to see any positive conservation benefits from lifting the moratorium on domestic trade in rhino horn, particularly at a time when rhino poaching figures are at record highs," says Dr Colman O'Criodain, WWF wildlife trade policy analyst.

"There is no domestic demand for rhino horn in South Africa, so it is inconceivable that anyone would buy it - unless they intend to sell it abroad illegally or they are speculating that international trade will be legalised.

"Reopening South Africa's national rhino horn trade will make it even harder for already overstretched law enforcement

agents to tackle record rhino poaching.

"It also goes against CITES which urges all parties to adopt and implement comprehensive legislation and enforcement controls, including internal trade restrictions and penalties, aimed at reducing illegal trade in rhino horn," he says.

## **International trade remains illegal**

According to the SABC, Hume's lawyer, Isaak Du Toit, has said that they were [satisfied with the decision](#).

The Private Rhino Owners Association (PROA) has also expressed support of the decision, [according to EWN](#), saying "it can now legally sell stockpiles of horn to create revenue for conservation".

International trade in rhino horn remains prohibited under the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

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