

'Disrupt wildlife trade'

By [Claire Keeton](#)

26 Sep 2016

Every person in the illegal wildlife trade in South Africa should be treated as an organised criminal and charged with "trafficking", said Lyle Pienaar, a member of the South African delegation to the COP17 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species in Johannesburg.



© andreanita – [za.fotolia.com](#)

When President Jacob Zuma opened the international wildlife meeting he called poaching a threat to national security.

Pienaar on Sunday, 25 September, said the illicit trade in rhino horn must be tackled as a national security instead of a conservation issue. Law enforcement agencies supported by other departments must take the lead against this "transnational organised crime", he said.

Pienaar, a security analyst, called for international co-operation against wildlife crime because this approach achieves results he said. He gave an example of a case in which poachers, buyers and corrupt officials were arrested and their assets seized following an intelligence-driven investigation.

WWF rhino programme manager Jo Shaw told *The Times*: "It is great that rhino poaching and wildlife trafficking is now being recognised as a form of transnational organised crime.

"Law enforcement efforts need to be targeted at traffickers and other players higher up the illicit supply chain."

Julian Rademeyer, one of the most authoritative voices on illegal trade in rhino horns, supported the view that the supply chain must be disrupted all the way to the kingpins at the top.

About 7500 poachers entered the Kruger National Park last year. There were 137 armed encounters between rangers and poachers.

Two rangers, seven soldiers and between 150 and 200 poachers were killed in 2015 said Rademeyer, noting that the poachers were being buried as heroes in some communities because of the money they brought back to them.

Of 928 cases of rhino poaching reported last year, only 61 made it to court and 29 were convicted.

Source: The Times

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>