

Parliamentary Budget Vote Debate: 27
Environmental Affairs
By
Hon. JA Esterhuizen, MP

14 May 2015

Honourable Chairperson,

We are losing the war against the poaching of our indigenous wildlife!

Since 2008 our Rhino population has been steadily butchered for those seeking to profit from the illicit sale of Rhino horn. Our figures indicate an approximately 1400% increase in the killings since 2008. No sane person could ever state that we are winning the war against rhino poaching after looking at such statistics. The question is why? Why with all the resources at this government's disposal can we no longer protect our wildlife? Why is this ministry not at "code red" and incensed to the point of mania at the level of poaching that is being allowed to occur within our borders and in many of our national parks?

2014 set a new record in Rhino poached when the number rose to 1215 compared to 83 in 2008 and just 6 in 2000. Wildlife in our country are bleeding whilst the measures employed to prevent same are proving hopelessly inadequate. Our means of combatting poaching require an entire "rethink" and complete government, inter-departmental and international "buy-in" in order to stop this horror story. Government must be committed to ending this wanton slaughter of our wildlife for nothing but the profiteering of a few select individuals and international crime syndicates.

Honourable Chairperson, another issue close to the heart of the IFP and our leader Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, is the continuing barbaric practice of captive bred, tamed lion hunting colloquially known as "Canned Lion Hunting" in South Africa.

On the 12 March this year the Inkatha Freedom Party read a members statement in this house decrying the continued abhorrent practice of captive bred or canned lion hunting in South Africa. The statement averred to a Motion without Notice brought by the Inkatha Freedom Party on the 13 March 2014 in this very chamber and which was supported unanimously by this house which affirmed the belief that African wildlife, and in particular our Lion, Rhino and Elephant deserve the highest and most stringent measures of protection and further Implored government to immediately amend our laws to give effect to such measures.

Nothing has come of this!

Unlike poaching, and despite the Honourable Ministers aversions to the contrary, the trade involving captive bred or canned hunting is still legal in this country and is still openly promoted and advertised as a source of revenue. It is largely unmonitored; departmental officials in the North West Province cannot even tell you how many permits for hunts have been issued in the province. The Ministry also seem to be very cosy with the professional hunters association of South Africa (PHASA) in continuing to promote such "for profit" barbarism that hides under the cloak of "sport".

In a confined space, what chances do drugged, captive and tame lions have of escaping from the hunter?

We applaud the recent legislation by the Australian government in banning the import of all animal trophies from Africa as well as the recent moves by South African Airways and Emirates Airlines to embargo the transport of all hunting trophies from South Africa and call upon all transport carriers, whether they be by sea, land or air to follow suit!

Minster we urge you once again to ban captive bred, canned lion hunting!

We support this budget vote debate.

I thank you.