



**forestry, fisheries
& the environment**

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 240 {NW244E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 2 of 2023

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Mr D W Bryant (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

- (1) In light of the fact that the (a) United States (US) Treasury Department and (b) National Treasury recently agreed to form a task force to step up efforts to halt illegal trade in wildlife, with China allegedly identified as the popular destination of the illegal trade, what steps will she take to assist the US Treasury Department and the National Treasury in their efforts to curb the alleged Chinese illegal trade in wildlife;
- (2) whether her department is working with the SA Police Service and Interpol to identify the alleged Chinese smuggling syndicates involved; if not, why not; if so, what success has been achieved;
- (3) which (a) species are deemed to be most at risk from illegal trafficking and (b) provinces are the animals mainly being trafficked from?

240. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

- (1) (a)(b)

The central roleplayers in relation to the task force aimed at advancing efforts in South Africa and the United States to combat the laundering of money generated from illegal wildlife trade are the financial intelligence units, namely the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN)

in the US, and the Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) in South Africa. The work conducted in South Africa is undertaken under the auspices of the South African Anti-Money Laundering Integrated Task Force (SAMLIT). SAMLIT was formed in 2019 as a public-private partnership of regulatory authorities (the FIC and the Prudential Authority of the South African Reserve Bank), the banking sector and banking industry representatives. The objectives are to assist in the effective and efficient combatting of financial crime and enhancing a collective understanding of financial crime trends.

To achieve these objectives, SAMLIT established Expert Working Groups (EWGs) to focus on specific financial crime trends with a view to increasing knowledge about the financial flows associated with this crime among financial institutions, law enforcement and prosecuting authorities. Consequently, an EWG on the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) was established. The IWT EWG representatives include the FIC, registered banks, the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigations (DPCI), the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and money remitters. The DFFE, therefore, already participates in the EWG on IWT and contributes to targeted investigations which includes illegal trade in wildlife. Tactical Operations Groups were formed on the work of the EWG.

- (2) The DFFE has established a National Environmental Enforcement Fusion Centre (EEFC) where information (incidents, arrests, seizures, and prosecutions) pertaining to environmental crime is centralised. Information is collected in a standardised manner, allowing for high-level analysis products and associated investigation support and feedback. This unit works closely with all law enforcement agencies, including various units within the South African Police Service (SAPS), and assists in wildlife investigations along the entire criminal value chain, thereby allowing linkages between cases to be explored and convergence of crime types flagged. The DFFE is working with the SAPS (including the DPCI and Interpol) to identify the alleged smuggling syndicates involved.
- (3) (a) Within the South African context, currently rhinoceros, abalone and succulent plants are deemed to be the most at risk in terms of illegal trafficking.

(b) The provinces where animals are trafficked from are KwaZulu–Natal, Limpopo and Mpumalanga for rhinoceros and the Western and Eastern Cape for abalone. The increase in succulent poaching from the Northern Cape and Western Cape is also noted.



MS B D CREECY, MP
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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