



Kenya Tourism Federation

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Kenya Tourism Federation (KTF) Statement on Rhino Deaths

Kenya Tourism Federation, the umbrella body representing all tourism associations in Kenya wish to express our deep concerns and sadness in regards to the unprecedented tragic death of 11 Rhinos in the recent translocation exercise. If there are stakeholders that are hurting emanating from this tragic incident, it is the tourism fraternity.

We wish to state the following:

1. We identify with the outrage by Kenyans and many other stakeholders. Rhinos are endangered and it takes hard work and loads of commitment to raise 11 Rhinos to adulthood. The parent ministry, KWS and Cabinet Secretary Hon Najib Balala have explained the background of the cause of the deaths and we urge Kenyans to give the process a chance to ensure that no more such deaths ever recur.
2. We have faith in Kenya Wildlife Services; these are men and women who work really hard in extreme conditions with limited resources protecting our wildlife our heritage. Many rangers have lost their lives in line of duty against poachers who are hell-bent to decimate our rhino and elephant population. We recognize the loss and realize that the KWS team is more distraught since many are in conservation as a calling as opposed to personal gain. The hurting is akin to a medical doctor losing a patient. As tourism stakeholders, we stand with our rangers and KWS team at this difficult moment. The same team has overseen many other successful translocations and this was an unfortunate incident.
3. We are confidently assured that the horns from the dead Rhinos have been secured and it stands no chance for the same to end up in any commercial dealing. What Kenyans ought to realize and appreciate is that KWS are custodians of far more than these horns which include tonnes and tonnes of ivory nabbed in transit from other regions in Africa that is eventually released to KWS for safe keeping until they are destroyed through incineration; as we are all witness to the large stocks that is destroyed every couple of years. Kenya is on record as the only country that undertakes such measures unlike many other wildlife host countries that opt to sell their haul for commercial gain.
4. Kenyans are alert on the matters concerning the national heritage, and rightly so but as an independent private sector organization, we will maintain our deep



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- interest in matters wildlife. We further reiterate our reassurance of our commitment to work closely with the state to ensure that wildlife gets the best protection at all times.
5. We wish to thank H.E The President once again for placing Tourism with Wildlife under the same docket. During the heydays of Kenya's tourism, wildlife and tourism were all under one docket. It has always been the practice as is the practice with competing safari destinations having these two dockets together. It is in the best interest of tourism player's that we conserve wildlife and we would be the last ones to harm them. The anchor to our burgeoning tourism industry has been wildlife.
 6. We would like to reiterate our confidence in our Minister Hon Najib Balala who means well for this industry. He has on many occasions picked tourism from the doldrums; and is now focused to clean up KWS which has gone through lots of challenges in the last ten years and reposition this vital organization that has a huge task of protecting and growing our wildlife. It is rather tragic that the death of the 11 Rhinos happened when a whole new rejig was happening.

We add our voice to urge His Excellency the President and the government at large to allocate adequate funds to enable KWS deliver on its mandate. In the same breadth we would also like to thank leading conservation bodies like WWF for all the help and assistance they have accorded Kenya Wildlife Services over the years.

Additionally, we urge the Cabinet Secretary to now rein on suspicious wildlife conservation organizations that have operated in rather opaque manner ostensibly to help conservation in Kenya. We demand transparency and accountability from all such organizations since in essence they are competing for the same donor funding that would have gone to help Kenyan Wildlife Services who are the official custodians of all wildlife in Kenya. In reality KWS face the biggest challenge due to the large tracts of land they are expected to protect and conserve in light of ever increasing human wildlife conflict.

Mohammed Hersi

Chairman

Kenya Tourism Federation



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