

## S. Africa may re-consider regulated rhino horn trade in future

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Rhino horn is composed mainly of keratin, the same component as in human nails, but it is sold in powdered form as a supposed cure for cancer and other diseases in Vietnam and China

South Africa does not rule out a future call for regulated international trade in rhino horn trade, despite its decision not to push for legalisation at an upcoming CITES conference, a cabinet minister said Sunday.

South Africa has "no immediate intention to trade in rhino horn," but is "maintaining the option to reconsider regulated legal [international trade](#) in rhino horn" when key requirements are met, Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa told reporters.

Some campaigners are calling for the lifting of the ban and had hoped South Africa would make a proposal to that effect at the upcoming Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) conference in Johannesburg in September.

But South Africa says it will only make such a call when its key conditions—including clear trading models with targeted markets - have been met.

"One thing we are very careful about is that we need to have a successful proposition for South Africa that goes through, that's not hampered by any doubt... but now there are a lot of uncertainties," Molewa said.

The minister also revealed that the numbers of South African rhino slaughtered by poachers so far this year has dropped to 363 compared with 404 for the same period last year.

The killing of rhinos is driven by demand for their horns in countries such as China and Vietnam where they are prized for their purported medicinal purposes.

South African which is home to some 20,000 rhino, or 80 percent of the global population, has suffered the brunt of poaching.

Out of the total 1,338 rhino poached in Africa last year, only 163 were killed outside South Africa.

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