

S.African rhino returns to wild after brutal attack

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A 10-year-old rhino that had its horn brutally hacked off returned to the wild Monday, after 30 operations over six years to repair the gash in its

face.

His [rescuers](#) named the bull Sehawukele, meaning "God have mercy on us".

Called Seha for short, he was found by police stumbling near a fence in a reserve, so disfigured that he could barely hear or eat.

The police called in John Marais, a wildlife vet who runs a charity called Saving the Survivors.

The group rehabilitates rhinos that survive poaching attacks.

"He has actually healed exceptionally well," said Marais. "And I think this is the next chapter where we are going to re-wild him in a 2,000-hectare camp where we have put two females of breeding age with him."

Even after extensive surgery, Seha's sinus cavities are still exposed, creating a risk of infection.

But conservationists have opted to return him to the wild nonetheless in the hope that he will mate and help grow the dwindling population.

"No rhino translocation is without risk," said Andre Uys, who manages the game reserve where Seha now lives.

But Seha was safely darted and released Monday. His rescuers are keeping his exact location a secret in hopes of preventing future poaching attacks.



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Poachers killed at least 249 [rhinos](#) in South Africa during the first six months of 2021—83 more than in the first half of 2020.

Full-year numbers aren't available yet, but 24 were killed in just two weeks of December.

The animals are slaughtered for their horns, which are smuggled into Asia where they are highly prized for traditional and medicinal purposes.

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