

White rhinos reintroduced to DR Congo national park

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Northern white rhinos, like this female shown in Kenya in 2018, have been decimated by poaching.

Sixteen southern white rhinoceroses have been released into DR Congo's Garamba national park, officials said on Saturday, reintroducing an

endangered species that was decimated by poaching.

The last northern white rhino in the park, which lies in the Democratic Republic of Congo's northeast, was poached in 2006.

According to a joint statement from the park and [conservation groups](#), 16 southern white rhinos have been transported from a private reserve in South Africa to Garamba.

"The return of white rhinos to the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a testament to our country's commitment to [biodiversity conservation](#)," Yves Milan Ngangay, the director general of the Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature (ICCN), said in a statement.

The operation was led by the ICCN, conservation NGO African Parks, and Canadian mining firm Barrick Gold, which sponsored the rhino move.

Established in 1938, Garamba [national park](#) is one of Africa's oldest. But conflict, poaching and chronic insecurity in volatile Congo has decimated its wildlife over the years.

African Parks CEO Peter Fearnhead was also quoted in the statement as saying that efforts to save the northern white rhinos in the park had been "too little, too late".

"This reintroduction is the start of a process whereby [southern white rhino](#) as the closest genetic alternative can fulfill the role of the northern white rhino in the landscape," he said.

More southern white rhinoceroses are expected to be sent to Garamba National Park in the future.

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