

# Indonesian police arrest 6 suspected poachers over the killing of 26 endangered Javan rhinos

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Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Indonesian authorities said Wednesday they have arrested six suspects in

an international poaching ring targeting the Javan rhinoceros, a critically endangered species.

The suspects are part of a network that used homemade firearms to kill at least 26 Javan rhinos since 2018 to get their horns. The horns are in high demand in Asia where they're predominantly used in traditional Chinese medicine and increasingly for making ornaments, said Banten provincial police chief Abdul Karim.

He said the six men were arrested in a joint operation by [police](#) and the Forestry and Environment Ministry last month. One of the leaders of the syndicate, Sunendi, was arrested last year and sentenced to 12 years in prison and a 100-million rupiah (\$6,135) fine.

Police and a team of rangers from Banten's Ujung Kulon National Park were searching for eight other members of the syndicate, officials said.

Karim said an investigation found that Sunendi, who uses a single name like many Indonesians, and nine others had killed 22 Javan rhinos since 2018, while another group had killed four more since 2021. They sold the [horns](#) to Chinese buyers through a local handler, who is currently on trial.

Police seized homemade firearms, bullets, gun powder, a steel sling noose and other equipment used to poach rhinos.

Rasio Ridho Sani, the head of law enforcement at the Forestry and Environment Ministry, said the population of the Javan rhino is declining and only about 80 mature animals remain, mostly in the Ujung Kulon National Park in the western part of Indonesia's main Java island. They are threatened by destruction of tropical forest habitat and poachers, he said.

"Poaching of protected animals is a serious crime and is of international concern," Sani said. "We are working closely with the Banten Regional Police to search and arrest the perpetrators of animal poaching crimes who managed to escape during the operation."

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