

THE WILDLIFE MIRROR

Keeping you informed

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GOVERNMENT TO RE-STOCK RHINOS IN AJAI WILDLIFE RESERVE

Government is set to restock Ajai Wildlife Reserve with White Rhinos on condition that local people stop poaching and begin to live harmoniously with wildlife. This was revealed by the Minister for Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities Hon. Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu during Celebrations to mark World Wildlife Day on March 3, 2019 in Arua District.

Prof. Kamuntu promised the people of Arua that White Rhinos will be restocked as soon as their number increases. In the past, Arua district was a home to White Rhinos but were taken to Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary to avoid extinction due to insecurity that threatened their life. "These rhinos will only be brought back if the people begin to leave harmoniously with wildlife in Ajai Wildlife Reserve," the Minister insisted.

The Minister was responding to a request by the Arua District Chairperson Genesis Achema who wanted government to restock Ajai wildlife Reserve with White Rhinos so that the local community can benefit from tourism and promote the conservation of wildlife with a greater interest. They have since lived in this Sanctuary very successfully. Currently,

rhino numbers are steadily increasing to 26 individuals. Residents of Arua have however insisted that rhinos need to be returned to Arua such.

Mr. Genesis Achema said that Arua is strategically located as a hub connecting other district of West Nile, South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo with a potential of developing as a tourism town because of its many attractions such as the Wali-olewa falls, River Nyanga and the pyramids. He urged the government to work on the roads and so as to provide easy routes leading to these attractions.

He vowed to protect the rhinos once they are returned to Ajai Wildlife Reserve. The cry for white rhinos came out strongly as the rhino used to be the pride of the Lugbara people. The prominence

of these rhinos is seen in the rich culture of the Lugbara people. Right from the naming of buildings and places in Arua, one can tell the love for rhinos in this place. One of the places named after the white rhino is the Rhino Camp, which is a home to hundreds of refugees. The locals also stressed the need to start enjoying the benefits from wildlife conservation. Dr. Akankwasa Barirega, Commissioner Wildlife Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities noted that once tourism in this region is promoted, tourist numbers will increase and numerous benefits shall be realized. The financial benefits from wildlife that are shared with communities surrounding the park is one way of establishing harmonious coexistence between people and wildlife.



Prof. Kamuntu speaking at World Wildlife Day celebrations in Arua.