

Supporting rangers and their families

Rangers are exposed to extreme situations, including tough weather, dangerous animals (big and small), large, powerful machinery, and of course, armed poaching gangs and livestock rustlers.

David Hill | Events Manager

Given these conditions and the critical importance of a ranger's work in protecting endangered wildlife, you might think that rangers have access to effective equipment, regular training, and insurance to support them if they're injured or killed at work. Unfortunately, this isn't always the case. Since 2015, ForRangers (an initiative set up by Pete Newland and Sam Taylor), in partnership with Save the Rhino, has been working to improve this, donating more than US\$2.25 million to support rangers' lives.

Across Africa, more than half of wildlife rangers don't have access to insurance if they are seriously injured or killed while on duty. This alarming statistic doesn't only put rangers at considerable risk, but their families as well. Many rangers are the breadwinners in large and extended households. Without support, the people that depend on them – daughters, sons, wives, husbands, mothers, fathers, nieces and nephews – could be left not only without someone they love but also with increasing financial burdens.

To improve this, since 2018, ForRangers has funded a group life insurance policy, which now, in 2021, extends to 1,467 rangers working in 21 protected wildlife areas in four African countries: Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania and Nigeria. Since the policy began, it has, unfortunately, had to be used to support families of rangers that have died.

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One of these rangers was Solomon Chidunuka

Solomon Chidunuka (above) was the Senior Wildlife Warden of Muchinga Province in North Luangwa National Park, in Zambia. He began his wildlife protection career in 1989 and was dedicated to wildlife and conservation throughout, rising through the ranks of management and receiving international awards for his work. He gained and maintained the respect of his colleagues, tourism operators, communities, and conservation NGOs. Many considered Solomon one of the strongest wardens in Zambia; indeed, he was the winner of the Tusk Wildlife Ranger Award in 2017.

Sadly, in February 2021, Solomon passed away

While nothing will ever make up for this loss, the insurance policy purchased by ForRangers meant that his wife, Rachel, and their children, have been supported since Solomon died. The title to their property has been secured and Solomon's children will be able to finish their education.

Unfortunately, Solomon wasn't the only ranger that passed away in the past year. Between July 2020 and June 2021, 119 rangers across the world have lost their lives while on duty. Many of these rangers' families may not have had access to insurance. That's one of the reasons why ForRangers' work is so important.

Funds from individual donors, as well as participants in the 2018 and 2019 For Rangers Ultra marathons, are contributing towards this insurance scheme, alongside other vital initiatives, including purchasing equipment and providing regular training, to improve rangers' lives.

