

**RESOLUTION OF THE FOURTH WORLD CONGRESS
INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION
MARCH 21-28, 2003
WILSON'S PROMONTORY NATIONAL PARK**

Background:

The International Ranger Federation (IRF) and its affiliates are concerned about the alarming levels of threats and physical violence faced by rangers, park employees and their families in protected areas. The scope of this resolution is intended to address violence directed toward the protected area community as a whole, with special emphasis on the ranger occupation.

Rangers, in protected areas worldwide, provide "frontline" park protection and consequently face a variety of risks while performing their duties. This resolution will focus on one significant risk area, the threats and physical violence perpetrated upon rangers and employees.

While the data is incomplete, and in some cases little more than anecdotal, there is clearly a serious worldwide problem. Rangers, at an alarming rate, are being threatened, physically assaulted and killed while working in protected areas. Facilities including ranger stations, homes and equipment are being targeted to intimidate employees.

An informal survey conducted by IRF in 2003 provides a shocking glimpse at the magnitude of the problem. In the last five years, of only 17 ranger associations that reported, we know of 31 rangers who were killed and 32 rangers injured while performing their duties. Without a doubt the actual figures will be much higher than we are currently aware of. In the last five years, rangers were killed in five continents in protected areas. For example, recently in Uganda's Murchison National Park, 10 rangers were kidnapped and 7 murdered by rebels in the protected area.

Rangers are susceptible to violence for many reasons. Often rangers protect very valuable natural and cultural heritage resources and as a result are vulnerable to such acts of violence as poaching, looting, and commercial exploitation. Compounding the problem is the fact that rangers work in remote locations, frequently alone, often with poor communications and availability of back up. In some parts of the world rangers find themselves attempting to manage protected areas in the midst of armed conflicts or outright warfare.

Maintaining the security and protection of rangers and employees who live and work in protected areas is essential, if the world's protected areas are to survive.

IRF is committed to identifying, preventing, reducing or eliminating the threats and physical violence against rangers, employees and their families, as they live and work in the protected areas of the world. This resolution builds on other IRF resolutions that focus on improvements of capacity and competence for protected area managers and rangers.

Accordingly, it is the intent of IRF to provide this resolution to the World Protected Areas Congress for its consideration.

Assumptions:

1. All rangers, worldwide, during the performance of their duties in protected areas are potentially exposed and subjected to threats and physical violence.
2. Inherent within the operation of protection areas is the obligation to provide for the safety and protection of rangers/employees from threats and physical violence.
3. There are many risks and dangers associated with the ranger profession. However, this resolution deals specially with the concerns of physical violence and threats to rangers/employees who are working and living in protected areas.
4. Efforts to mitigate risks and/or resolve these issues will occur at many levels, the individual ranger, supervisory/managerial level and, stakeholders (including, legislators, NGO's, community leaders, and related partners and organizations). All three levels have responsibilities and opportunities to ensure the safety of rangers and employees.
5. The scope of this problem is not widely understood within the protected area community, and little external awareness exists on a global basis.

Resolution

WHEREAS, the IRF is committed to enhancing the safety and protection of rangers/employees who live and work in protected areas and recognizes that rangers face alarming levels of physical violence and threats in the course of their duties; And,

WHEREAS, the IRF recognizes that the preparedness of rangers in many protected areas can be substantially improved, and many of the threats facing rangers can be prevented, reduced or eliminated through improved staffing and training, increased awareness, and adequate support and resources; And,

WHEREAS, the IUCN has expressed interest in raising worldwide awareness on the issue of threats and violence to rangers and employees including an opportunity to highlight the value and contribution of the ranger profession at the Durban 5th World Protected Areas Conference;

Be it Therefore RESOLVED: That the IRF is committed to undertake whatever means and methods are available to increase the personal safety of rangers/employees subject to threats and physical violence and that the IRF asks the delegates to the Durban 5th World Protected Areas Conference to adopt measures to enhance the safety and protection of rangers.

Addendum

The IRF has identified the following actions to identify, develop and disseminate problem-solving steps and recommendations that will increase the level of personal protection for rangers, worldwide.

- IRF encourages governments and protected area managers to provide a sufficient legal framework and basis to perform their protection duties (including support with appropriate laws, regulations, policy, standards, and operational planning)..
- Each protected area manager has an affirmative responsibility to provide training for rangers in personal protection.
- Each protected area manager should promote the role of the Ranger and collect information related to assaults and threats against rangers.
- Protected manager should prepare threat assessments for their rangers to determine the appropriate types and levels of protection for their rangers.
- IRF will establish a "Lessons Learned" forum through its website and newsletter to provide relevant and accessible case information with the objective of preventing similar incidents in the future.
- IRF will establish a workgroup that will develop a format for reporting assaults and threats against rangers, aggregate and summarize data and produce a yearly report for its affiliates and interested parties.
- IRF will develop a model training program for ranger personal protection that may be adopted or modified by its affiliates, as necessary.
- IRF commits to raising awareness on personal protection issues and concerns including the role of the ranger and the value of parks.
- IRF, in developing, evaluating and implementing personal protection programs and training recognizes that cultural differences and challenges exist.
- IRF encourages each nation to ensure that a law is enacted that provides specific protections for rangers who are physically assaulted while performing their duties. The IRF will encourage strong penalties for assaults and physical violence against rangers as a deterrent to continued violence. Prosecution of persons who kill or injure rangers should be vigorously pursued.

- IRF believes that rangers have a personal responsibility for their own protection, including identifying potential threats and hazards, communicating problems, acquiring appropriate training and identifying sources of support and assistance.
- IRF believe that protected area managers should provide personal protection equipment that is serviceable and commensurate with the level of risk which might be encountered.
- IRF will develop a broad based ranger exhibit outlining the role of the ranger for display at the Durban 5th World Protected Area Conference.
- IRF will establish a clearinghouse on its web site of standards and training manuals for use by its affiliates.