



## WORLD RANGER DAY 2024 STATEMENT

On World Ranger Day, the international ranger community stops to recognise the critical role that the ranger profession plays in maintaining life on earth. If it were not for rangers unwavering commitment and passion for conservation, many species would already be extinct, and our ecosystems in a more degraded and perilous state than they currently are. We, as humans, are increasingly experiencing the ramifications of biodiversity loss and our negative impacts on healthy environmental systems. Rangers are, in many cases, putting their lives at risk so that society can enjoy fresh air, fresh water, and a healthy planet.

There are approximately 286,000 rangers in terrestrial sites globally, which is only 35% of what is actually required<sup>1</sup>. The new Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework targets include ensuring 30% of the planet is under effective conservation by the year 2030. If this stands any chance of being realised, we are not only going to need to invest in the current rangers, but also in future rangers. This was recently affirmed by Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, CEO and Chairman of the Global Environmental Facility who said that 'Protecting wild spaces is not just about acres and dollars but it's also about human resources. Rangers are some of the most underestimated actors in nature conservation, and they carry out essential work for global [#biodiversity](#) in the face of all kinds of limitations.'

To ensure a professional fit-for-purpose workforce, the [International Ranger Federation](#) (IRF) calls on those meeting at the 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 16<sup>2</sup>) who will be translating agreements from COP 15 to actions, to ensure significant investment into current and future rangers including men, women, state employed or private, or from local and indigenous communities, to provide them with the recognition, improved employment conditions and resources that they desperately need and deserve.

Every year the IRF honours those rangers who work tirelessly to protect our natural and cultural treasures. Since the last World Ranger Day, at least 140 rangers have died in the line of duty, with 53% being in Asia, followed by Africa with 30%. Although slightly down from the 148 ranger deaths in 2023, the number remains high, with a total of 1319 ranger deaths recorded over the last 10-years. These only account for recorded deaths and we acknowledge that many ranger deaths go unreported and unrecorded. Another concerning trend is that again we see homicides make up the majority of ranger deaths (27%) followed by animal encounters (26%). This highlights the many life-threatening risks rangers face, and why it is essential to ensure rangers are fully accounted for at COP 16.

The IRF tracks these trends to spotlight the challenges rangers face, and to find solutions to making their working conditions safer and more secure. Rangers should have the right to 'Decent Work' as outlined under Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals as any other profession. This is why the [Universal Ranger Support Alliance](#) (URSA) is working with the IRF to develop the ranger sector as a vital and internationally recognised professional service, similar to medical personnel and first

---

<sup>1</sup> Appleton, M.R., Courtiol, A., Emerton, L. *et al.* **Protected area personnel and ranger numbers are insufficient to deliver global expectations.** *Nat Sustain* 5, 1100–1110 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-022-00970-0>

<sup>2</sup> 21 October – 1 November 2024, Columbia. <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/2024>

responders. Rangers need better working conditions, opportunities for training and learning, fairer employment opportunities and conditions, and better representation, advocacy and accountability.<sup>3</sup>

On a positive note, rangers from around the world will soon be gathering in Hyères, France in October to share ranger-to-ranger solutions at the [10th IRF World Ranger Congress](#). This will be an important event to advance and professionalise the world’s ranger workforce and the critical role they play in achieving the Global Biodiversity Framework 2030. The Congress aims to give recognition to these frontline men and women and their skills as rangers at a local, national, and international level, to share challenges faced by rangers, best practices, identify on-the-ground solutions tailored to regional and global challenges and strengthen the global ranger community of practice.

The first ever State of the Ranger Report will be published at the WRC. The report will be the first ever global baseline of where the ranger profession currently stands, including the assimilation of the best available, internationally comparable data on the ranger workforce. This report will be published every 3-4 years during the IRF World Ranger Congress to allow the comparison of data with previous reports, and thus track the level of progress against the global efforts and investments made to improve the ranger sector. Some of the key findings of the report include:

- Only 56% of rangers consider that they have adequate health and safety training
- Nearly 55% of rangers said that they don’t have life insurance coverage.
- Just over 60% of rangers believe that their wages were sufficient to cover their basic needs.
- Over 60% of rangers believe they do not have sufficient resources to complete their job.
- Rangers join associations for diverse reasons, including as main reasons: 1) wanting to be part of a community of rangers (43%), 2) interacting and engaging with other rangers (40%), 3) associations promote an appreciation for conservation (35%).

Whilst there is still much work to be done in uplifting the vital role of rangers and providing them with the skills and support, they require in order to effectively carry out their duties, we must pause for a day to acknowledge every ranger, their sacrifice and their invaluable contributions to our planet. “Let us be inspired by the work of rangers on this World Ranger Day.” said Chris Galliers (IRF President), “Let us show our gratitude to these unsung heroes, but also drive change that makes the job of a ranger safer and more effective through increased support at a global level. For if rangers aren’t there to do it, who else is?”

[End]

## CALL TO ACTION

*How can I support Rangers?*

Help support the IRF with its work in advancing the ranger profession globally – to donate [CLICK HERE](#)

## *Did you know?*

The reason why 31<sup>st</sup> July is celebrated as World Ranger Day is because it was the day that the International Ranger Federation was established, in 1992.

---

<sup>3</sup>To access these resources, go to <https://www.internationalrangers.org/resources>

### **International Ranger Federation Definition of a ‘Ranger’<sup>4</sup>**

There is a wide range of working titles in use globally, all of which fit the definition of the term ‘Ranger’. We have identified a number of additional titles, listed in the appendix. For this document, the term ‘Ranger’ will be used to refer to any of the relevant working titles. Rangers play a critical role in conservation; they are responsible for safeguarding nature, and cultural and historical heritage, and protecting the rights and well-being of present and future generations.

As representatives of their authority, organisation or community, they work, often for extended periods, in protected and conserved areas and wider land-and seascapes, whether state, regional, communal, indigenous, or private, in line with legal and institutional frameworks. They should be dedicated and knowledgeable and should always act in a professional manner.

### **About International Ranger Federation**

The International Ranger Federation (IRF) is a non-profit organization, established to promote the vital role Rangers play in the conservation of the world’s natural and cultural treasures. IRF actively promotes and supports the formation of Ranger Associations around the world to ensure Rangers are more adequately supported and represented. IRF’s membership comprises over 100 ranger associations around the world. For more information, please visit [www.internationalrangers.org](http://www.internationalrangers.org).

### **Contact Information:**

To contact the IRF, please email:

[executiveofficer@internationalrangers.org](mailto:executiveofficer@internationalrangers.org)

---

<sup>4</sup> International Ranger Federation (2021). Ranger Code of Conduct. Version 1.0.  
<https://www.internationalrangers.org/toolkit/ranger-code-of-conduct-videos/>