Porsche South Africa donates Cayenne to The Black Mambas project to protect rhinos

16/06/2026 Porsche South Africa has donated a specially modified Porsche Cayenne to The Black Mambas project to serve as its first dedicated 'rapid response' vehicle.

The Black Mambas are the world's first all-female, unarmed anti-poaching unit, helping to protect the rhinoceros of the Greater Kruger in South Africa.

The group patrols an area of around 20,000 hectares in north-eastern South Africa. While the vast majority of patrols are done by foot, vehicles are critical for support.

Porsche South Africa and the Porsche Middle East and Africa regional office collaborated to ensure a permanent, fit-for-purpose vehicle contributes to their conservation efforts.

Prepared by Porsche Centre Johannesburg, the second-generation Cayenne has been transformed into

a dedicated rapid response unit capable of operating in the challenging terrain of the Greater Kruger.

The Cayenne is also presented in a striking livery to ensure it is a visible presence, aligning with The Black Mambas' non-violent philosophy.

"The Black Mambas do outstanding work to protect the rhinos of the Greater Kruger, and we are pleased to both support their efforts and bring further awareness to their cause," said Dr. Manfred Bräunl, CEO of Porsche Middle East and Africa. "Their non-violent, community-focused model of preservation is both innovative and effective. They should be proud of their record of protecting the rhinos of South Africa, and that their model is being adopted in other places around the world. It's great that the Cayenne is now an integral part of their team."

The Cayenne plays a critical role in daily operations, transporting patrol teams, delivering supplies, and enabling faster response to suspected poaching activity. It also supports overnight monitoring activities, where rangers remain near vulnerable rhinos to ensure their safety.

The Black Mambas Cayenne

Protecting wildlife across such a vast landscape presents practical challenges. Reliable transport is essential for reaching remote areas, supporting patrol teams, and responding quickly to potential threats. Previously, vehicle breakdowns were a frequent obstacle, limiting mobility and slowing response times.

By strengthening the team's ability to patrol the reserve, maintain a visible presence and respond when needed, the vehicle directly supports ongoing efforts to protect endangered rhinos and other wildlife in one of the world's most important conservation areas.

"The team at Porsche Centre Johannesburg took on the challenge of upgrading this Cayenne with great enthusiasm and responsibility," said Toby Venter, CEO of Porsche South Africa. "Our focus was to ensure the Cayenne could operate reliably across the vast and demanding terrain of the reserve. It combines performance, durability, and capability, and will serve as a valuable asset to the team."

The vehicle received a series of practical modifications to ensure it could operate reliably in challenging conditions. Suspension upgrades improve off-road performance, while underbody protection safeguard critical components from damage. A bull bar and spotlights allow for safer operation during night patrols. Yokohama off-road tyres provide the necessary grip across uneven terrain and a roof rack carries a full-sized spare wheel and additional equipment. Water tanks were also installed to support the patrol dogs that often accompany the teams. Finished with camouflage and reflective markings, the vehicle is already in full-time operation.

The introduction of the Cayenne has made a tangible difference to the daily work of the Black Mambas. The vehicle enables faster response to signs of intrusion and reduces the physical strain associated

with covering vast distances on foot. It also provides reliability, something that had previously been uncertain, allowing the team to focus fully on their work rather than the limitations of their equipment.

Looking Ahead

South Africa remains the most important country in the world for rhino conservation, and the recovery of its rhino population depends on sustained, long-term effort. Encouragingly, poaching incidents in Greater Kruger have declined in recent years, reflecting the impact of ongoing conservation work and the dedication of The Black Mambas on the ground.

“This vehicle has transformed the way The Black Mambas work,” said Craig Spencer, Warden of the Olifants West Region, Executive Director of Transfrontier Africa NPC, and founder of The Black Mambas. “It allows us to respond faster, cover more ground, and be present where we are needed most. Before, reaching certain areas could take too long, and unreliable vehicles made our job harder. Now, we can move across the reserve rapidly and consistency. It has strengthened our ability to protect this landscape, and it gives us the tools we need to continue this mission to protect the rhinos every single day.”

The Black Mambas

Formed in 2013, the Black Mambas are the world’s first all-female anti-poaching unit, patrolling 20,000 hectares of wilderness within the Greater Kruger. Their work focuses on prevention, monitoring for signs of illegal activity, and removing snare traps.

The Black Mambas’ approach to conservation is grounded in prevention, community education, and a constant visible presence. They operate unarmed, calling on support from response teams when required.

They maintain a visible presence 24 hours a day, every day of the year, to deter poachers before harm can occur.

“Our approach is preventative rather than confrontational,” said Spencer. “By maintaining a constant presence, we disrupt the patterns that poachers rely on, making it more difficult to enter and exit the reserve unnoticed.”

The role of the Black Mambas extends beyond patrols. Many of the communities surrounding the reserve face economic hardship, and it is from these areas that poachers are often recruited.

The Mambas work closely with these communities, and indeed are from these areas themselves. They deliver conservation education through their Bush Babies program, speaking to young people about the long-term value of protecting wildlife.

Their presence challenges perceptions, demonstrating that conservation can offer employment, stability and pride. In doing so, they are helping to reshape the relationship between the reserve and the people who live alongside it.

The rhinos

Rhino poaching in South Africa has long been one of conservation's most urgent and complex challenges. Between 2007 and 2014, the country experienced an exponential rise in poaching, with incidents increasing by more than 9,000 per cent.

The Greater Kruger and adjacent Kruger National Park are home to the largest population of rhinos in the world. Since 2013, the Kruger's rhino population has declined by around 60 per cent, highlighting the devastating impact of organised poaching networks and the fragility of conservation progress.

The Greater Kruger is now one of the most critical areas for rhino protection. Its vast and remote terrain makes prevention difficult, requiring sustained effort, local knowledge, and constant presence to safeguard wildlife across such an expansive area.

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