



Press release

It is with desolation that the Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (GVTC) learned, once again, about the villainous killing of five rangers and their driver, on Monday, 9th April 2018, on Nyakakoma-Ishasha section, Rutshuru territory, in North Kivu Province, in the Democratic Republic of Congo(DRC).

GVTC Executive Secretariat denounces vehemently this massacre of valuable staff members committed to the protection and the valorization of Virunga National Park, first park and world heritage in Africa. The repetitive killing of those park rangers constitutes an additional threat to the overall conservation of the biodiversity and wildlife resources within the GVL of which Virunga National Park is part. In addition, this threat has a negative impact on the implementation of conservation initiatives in which GVTC and its member States are continuously investing significant efforts to promote socioeconomic development through concerted management of natural resources and biodiversity

GVTC Executive Secretariat extends its deepest condolences to the families of these brave rangers and their driver, and to the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) for which they devoted their efforts till they arrived to this noble and supreme sacrifice of their lives for the conservation of fauna and flora in the GVL. Therefore, it should be recalled that, according to the statistics provided by ICCN, since the establishment of the Virunga National Park, this conservation organization has already lost a total of 175 park wardens killed while carrying out their mission. Moreover, the recurrent state of insecurity in and around the Virunga National Park lasted more than 20 years now; and is negatively affecting conservation and development initiatives in the region. That is the heaviest tribute ever paid for protecting natural resources in the world.

In this spirit, and given the magnitude of the threat, GVTC Executive Secretariat calls upon all local, national and regional authorities for significant commitment and real contribution to restoring peace and security that are conducive to conservation of the natural resources management contained in the GVL. Regional stability is a requirement that involves the security of populations living around protected areas, park wardens, conservation and development partners.

GVTC is a regional conservation institution established through a treaty signed by the three partner states of the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda on 30th October 2015 as a collaborative transboundary framework of programs, plans and activities to conserve a network of Protected Areas in the Greater Virunga Landscape (GVL) shared by the above mentioned countries.

Done in Kigali, on the 11th April 2018

Dr Georges Muamba Tshibusu

Executive Secretary

