



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

50 New Rangers Graduate to Protect Badingilo National Park

BADINGILO NATIONAL PARK, SOUTH SUDAN – 25 August 2026 – African Parks, together with the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, today celebrated the graduation of approximately 50 newly trained Wildlife Rangers at Badingilo National Park, marking a significant step in strengthening conservation law enforcement capacity across one of South Sudan's most important protected areas.

The ceremony marked the completion of a structured ranger training programme designed to build a professional, disciplined and accountable wildlife protection force for Badingilo National Park. Training covered core law enforcement standards, appropriate use of force, ranger discipline, weapons safety and handling, operational conduct, and the fundamentals of anti-poaching operations, with emphasis on safe, lawful and rights-based field practice.

Badingilo National Park sits at the heart of the Great Nile Migration Landscape, a vast savannah and floodplain system that supports the largest land mammal migration on Earth. Each year, millions of white-eared kob, tiang, Mongalla gazelle and reedbuck move across South Sudan and into Ethiopia in response to seasonal rains and water availability. Strengthening ranger capacity in Badingilo is therefore central to protecting both the park's wildlife and the ecological processes that sustain this globally significant migration.

The graduation reflects the continued partnership between African Parks and the Government of the Republic of South Sudan through the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, under the long-term mandate to support the management, rehabilitation and development of Boma and Badingilo National Parks and the wider Jonglei Landscape. It also recognises the vital support of **The Wyss Foundation and the European Union**, whose investment is helping build the foundations for effective conservation, community engagement and landscape-level protection in the parks.

Government representatives, conservation partners, community leaders and invited guests attended the ceremony, joining the graduates as they demonstrated the skills, discipline and readiness required to serve in one of South Sudan's most strategically important conservation landscapes. Their deployment will help strengthen patrol coverage, improve operational response, and support efforts to reduce illegal wildlife offtake, including the commercial bushmeat trade that places increasing pressure on wildlife populations.

For Badingilo, the graduation is more than a training milestone. It represents continued progress in the professionalisation of ranger services, the development of local conservation capacity, and the strengthening of systems that enable protected areas to serve both wildlife and people. It also reinforces African Parks' commitment to supporting transparent, accountable and standards-based law enforcement in partnership with national institutions and communities.

African Parks extends its appreciation to **The Wyss Foundation and the European Union** for their generous support to conservation efforts in the Great Nile Migration Landscape, to the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism for its continued leadership and collaboration, and to all participants, officials,

partners and community representatives whose presence underscored the shared responsibility of safeguarding Badingilo National Park for future generations.

Training notes to Editors.

The graduating cohort of **50 Rangers completed 2-months** of an intensive ranger training programme at Badingilo National Park, delivered to strengthen operational readiness, discipline and professionalism within the park's law enforcement function. The programme brought together selected personnel equitably from across South Sudan's conservation and wildlife protection structure, with recruitment and participation guided by fitness, discipline, commitment to service, integrity and the ability to operate responsibly in remote field conditions.

The training combined classroom instruction, practical field exercises and parade-ground discipline, covering law enforcement standards, appropriate use of force, weapons safety and handling, patrol procedures, anti-poaching fundamentals, ranger ethics and professional conduct. Throughout the programme, trainers emphasised that effective conservation law enforcement depends not only on physical readiness, but also on restraint, judgement, respect for communities and adherence to clear operational standards.

Key message from the trainers: The trainers commended the graduates for their discipline, resilience and willingness to learn, noting that the transformation from trainees into professional rangers reflects the standard required to protect Badingilo National Park with confidence, accountability and respect for the people who share the landscape.

Key message from the graduates: Speaking on behalf of the cohort, the graduating rangers affirmed their readiness to serve, describing the training as a turning point that strengthened their confidence, sharpened their sense of duty and prepared them to stand as guardians of Badingilo's wildlife, communities and national heritage.

Quote from Gen. Khamis Adieng Ding, Director-General, National Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism.

"On behalf of the Honourable Minister, I bring greetings and congratulations to our newest Wildlife Rangers. This graduation demonstrates the strong and continuing partnership between the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and African Parks. Together, we are building a professional conservation force that meets international standards, operates with integrity, and serves the people of this great nation. The Ministry remains committed to strengthening our protected areas, supporting our rangers, and ensuring that Badingilo and Boma National Parks are managed to the highest standards for generations to come."

Quote from African Parks, Badingilo Park Manager, John Vogel:

"Today marks a defining moment for Badingilo National Park. We are commissioning 50 professional rangers - men forged through two months of demanding training, equipped not only with tactical skills but with judgement, restraint, and responsibility. They are the guardians of one of the world's largest great land mammal migrations, and the future reputation of this landscape will be built by what they do from tomorrow onwards. These rangers carry the pride of South Sudan on their shoulders, and I am confident they will serve with the discipline, integrity, and dignity that this extraordinary place deserves"

Quote from the African Parks Country Representative, Florington Aseervatham

"This graduation offers great hope for South Sudan. It is more than a symbolic event; it brings the rangers and the Ministry of Wildlife together in service of the country's future. It is part of nation-building, social cohesion, protecting world heritage,

safeguarding our natural resources, conserving the six million antelope confirmed by the 2025 aerial survey, and supporting the recognised World Heritage in Danger site.”

About Badingilo National Park

Badingilo National Park is a core protected area within the Great Nile Migration Landscape, spanning Badingilo and Boma national parks and the wider Jonglei ecosystem. In 2025, years of fieldwork, aerial surveys, species collaring and community engagement brought the landscape into sharper focus, confirming that millions of white-eared kob, tiang and Mongalla gazelle move through a dynamic network of routes shaped by rainfall, water, people and land use.

This growing evidence base is guiding a shift from learning to action. It has helped identify ecological priorities, resident wildlife populations including elephant, giraffe, buffalo, eland, roan, oryx and African wild dog, and key community-use areas such as grazing zones, water points and seasonal routes. Under Badingilo’s operational leadership, this work supports more targeted, conflict-sensitive conservation planning that aligns wildlife protection with community wellbeing and South Sudan’s long-term development goals.

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