

**BRENT
STIRTON**
/ GETTY IMAGES

Rangers
Rangers



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Rangers

Ils mènent une guerre qui ne dit pas son nom. Sur des lignes de front mouvantes enfouies dans des territoires reculés et hostiles, ils combattent un ennemi qui n'arbore ni drapeau ni uniforme et qui ignore les frontières des États souverains. Souvent mal équipés, ces rangers risquent quotidiennement leurs vies pour de maigres salaires dans un seul et unique but : endiguer le fléau du braconnage. Majoritairement alimenté par une demande des marchés asiatiques et l'émergence des nouvelles richesses chinoises et vietnamiennes, le commerce illégal de trophées d'ivoire, de cornes de rhinocéros, d'écailles de pangolins et autres butins entraîne l'accélération de l'extinction de plusieurs espèces protégées.

Photojournaliste sud-africain, Brent Stirton documente la lutte contre le braconnage et le trafic d'animaux depuis 2007, année où il réalise cette fameuse photo de la dépouille d'un gorille portée, tel un Christ, par une dizaine de rangers, et qui lui valut un premier prix au World Press Photo. Douze ans et une vingtaine d'autres prix plus tard, en 2019, c'est l'image de Petronella Chigumbura, membre d'Akashinga, la première unité de rangers exclusivement féminine, qui est remarquée et en lice pour la Photo de l'Année.

Tout au long de ces années, Brent Stirton n'a pas cessé de suivre le quotidien des rangers. Zimbabwe, Afrique du Sud, République démocratique du Congo, Tchad, République centrafricaine, Ouganda, Kenya... Partout sur le continent africain, ces hommes et ces femmes affrontent avec résolution cette hydre protéiforme : des chasseurs locaux à la solde des cartels asiatiques jusqu'aux groupes terroristes comme l'Armée de résistance du Seigneur de Joseph Kony ou les Janjawids soudanais et autres milices tribales. Dans cette guerre d'usure pour la sauvegarde de la faune, les rangers sont en première ligne.

Cette exposition leur est dédiée.

Vincent Jolly

Grand reporter au *Figaro Magazine*

Brent Stirton souhaite remercier *National Geographic*, *Le Figaro Magazine* et *GEO* d'avoir soutenu son travail et publié ses photos tout au long de ces années.

↑ Exercice de camouflage et de dissimulation. Petronella Chigumbura (30 ans) est membre d'Akashinga, une unité anti-braconnage composée exclusivement de femmes. Réserve naturelle de Phundundu, Zimbabwe, juin 2018. Akashinga (les braves) est une unité de rangers créée comme modèle de conservation alternatif. Ces rangers travaillent avec plutôt que contre les populations locales, dans l'intérêt à long terme des communautés et de l'environnement. Akashinga recrute des femmes issues de milieux défavorisés qui s'émancipent grâce à leur emploi, et aide les habitants à bénéficier directement de la protection de la faune. D'autres stratégies, notamment celle consistant à utiliser les droits dont s'acquittent les chasseurs de trophées pour financer la conservation, ont été critiquées et perçues comme imposées de l'extérieur sans tenir compte des besoins des populations locales. © Brent Stirton / Getty Images

Stealth and concealment training. Petronella Chigumbura (30) is a member of Akashinga, an all-female anti-poaching unit. Phundundu Wildlife Park, Zimbabwe, June 2018. Akashinga (The Brave Ones) is a ranger force established as an alternative conservation model. It works with rather than against local populations for the long-term benefits of the communities and the environment. Akashinga recruits women from disadvantaged backgrounds, empowering them, offering jobs, and helping local people benefit directly from the preservation of wildlife. Other strategies, such as using fees from trophy hunting to fund conservation, have been criticized as solutions imposed from the outside with no consideration of the needs of local people.

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LIEU D'EXPOSITION
COUVENT DES MINIMES

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Rangers

They are conducting a war, albeit not named as such. The front lines are on the move, going deep into remote and hostile areas, fighting an enemy with no flag, no uniform, and no regard for the borders of sovereign states. The rangers, often poorly equipped and invariably poorly paid, risk their lives for one sole purpose and that is to put an end to the scourge of poaching. The illegal trade in elephant tusks, rhinoceros horns, pangolin scales and other exotica has thrived with great demand from Asian markets and boosted by the large numbers of nouveaux riches now in China and Vietnam. As a result, a number of protected species are now endangered or even verging on extinction. Since 2007, the South African photojournalist Brent Stirton has been covering the battle waged against poaching and wildlife trafficking, and it was in that first year, in 2007 that he took the famous picture of the dead gorilla in a Christ-like position, arms outstretched, being carried aloft by a dozen rangers, and the photo won a World Press Photo first prize. Twelve years and some twenty awards later, in 2019, the picture of the ranger Petronella Chigumbura, a member of the all-female unit Akashinga, is in the running for the World Press Photo of the Year.

Over all those years, Brent Stirton was covering the wildlife rangers in their day-to-day work, in Zimbabwe, South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, the Central African Republic, Uganda, Kenya, in fact everywhere in Africa where both male and female rangers resolutely tackle the many and varied forms their enemy takes. This covers the full spectrum from local hunters in the pay of Asian cartels all the way through to organized terrorist groups such as Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army or the Janjaweed from Sudan and various tribal militias. It is a long war of attrition to save wildlife, and the rangers are there on the front line.

This exhibition is dedicated to those rangers.

Vincent Jolly

Feature Reporter, *Le Figaro Magazine*

Brent Stirton wishes to thank *National Geographic*, *Le Figaro Magazine* and *GEO* for supporting his work and publishing his photos over all these years.

EXHIBITION VENUE
COUVENT DES MINIMES



Les autorités de Lomé ont saisi une cargaison de quatre tonnes d'ivoire provenant d'un massacre d'éléphants à Dzanga Bai, en République centrafricaine, en 2013.

Lomé, Togo, janvier 2015.

© Brent Stirton / Getty Images

Authorities have seized a four-ton shipment of ivory linked to an elephant massacre at Dzanga Bai (Central African Republic) in 2013.

Lomé, Togo, January 2015.

© Brent Stirton / Getty Images



Brent Stirton is a South African photographer and special correspondent for Getty Images Reportage. He has worked for *National Geographic*, *GEO*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde* and many other respected international publications. He has photographed campaigns for some of the world's largest non-profit organizations, such as the World Wildlife Fund, the Ford Foundation, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Gates Foundation. He regularly shoots for Human Rights Watch. Virunga National Park, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has been a recurring subject for Brent Stirton. In 2007, his photo of a slain silverback gorilla in Virunga, published in *Newsweek* magazine, ignited worldwide outrage. The work earned him the 2008 Visa d'or Feature Award at Visa pour l'Image and several other international honors. Brent has received 10 awards from World Press

Photo and 10 awards from Pictures of the Year International, most recently for his work on how illegal ivory funds terrorism in Africa. He has received honors from the Overseas Press Club, the Frontline Club, *Days Japan*, China International Photo Awards and many other photography organizations. In 2013, 2014 and 2015, he was named Photojournalist of the Year by the Natural History Museum (U.K.). He was a finalist for the 2015 Prix Pictet for his work on endangered species. This year, he received the 6th annual Photographer's Award from the Photo Society, a group of his fellow *National Geographic* contributors. He is also a Canon Ambassador. Brent Stirton spends most of his time working on long-term investigative projects and remains committed to issues of wildlife conservation, environmental sustainability, diminishing cultures and global health.