



UK



## Tanzania elephant poachers kill British helicopter pilot

🕒 30 January 2016 | UK



Roger Gower was helping to track poachers when they fired on him

**A British helicopter pilot has been shot dead by elephant poachers in Tanzania, the conservation charity for which he was working has said.**

The Friedkin Conservation Fund said Roger Gower had been tracking poachers on Friday in the Maswa Game Reserve when they fired on his helicopter.

One of his colleagues said he had been shot as he flew near the carcass of one of three elephants killed by poachers.

Charity founder Dan Friedkin said the organisation had lost "a dear friend".

The Foreign Office has confirmed the death of a UK national in Tanzania and said it was providing assistance to the family.

### 'Great pilot'

Pratik Patel, of the Friedkin Conservation Fund, said Mr Gower had been approaching the last of three elephants killed by poachers when he was shot.

He paid tribute to "a great guy, a great friend, a great pilot" who he said had loved working with Tanzania's wildlife.

Mr Patel said Mr Gower's main role had been flying people between the different camps on the reserve where he worked, but he had also flown daily patrols to support ground staff in their work against poachers.



Roger Gower had been flying in the Maswa Game Reserve

Tanzanian MP Lazaro Nyalandu, a former minister for natural resources and tourism, **said in a tweet** that the incident had happened in the Maswa Game Reserve, which borders the Serengeti National Park in northern Tanzania.

He said Mr Gower had managed to land his helicopter, but died before he could be rescued.

Mr Nyalandu said: "RIP Capt Roger. You loved our country and I knew you on many flights we took together in defence of our wildlife heritage.

"Those poachers who killed Capt Roger are coward[s], evil, and sad people. A fine-hearted individual gone too soon, and our hearts are broken."



Mr Friedkin said his charity was "profoundly saddened" by the death of Mr Gower - reported to have been a former accountant who qualified as a pilot in 2004.

He said: "We are committed to honouring Roger and his work. We are also committed to ensuring that those responsible for this attack are found and brought to justice.

"We believe that Roger can best be honoured by redoubling our commitment to protect elephants and our priceless wildlife heritage.

"This tragic event again highlights the appalling risk and cost of protecting Tanzania's wildlife."

The Friedkin Fund says elephant poaching is "especially prevalent" in Maswa, with rangers encountering ivory poachers "on a fairly regular basis".

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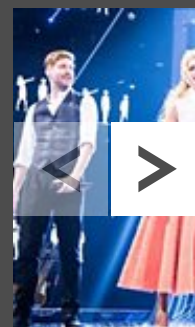
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