

# WILDLIFE MONITORING TECH USED TO HARASS, SPY ON WOMEN INDIA

PARIS

Camera traps, drones and other technology for monitoring wildlife like tigers and elephants, are being used to intimidate, harass and even spy on women in India, researchers said yesterday.

In one particularly egregious example, a photo of an autistic woman relieving herself in the forest was shared by local men on social media, prompting villagers to destroy nearby camera traps.

Trishant Simlai, a researcher at the UK's Cambridge University, spent 14 months interviewing some 270 people who live near the Corbett Tiger Reserve in northern India.

For women living in villages around the reserve, the forest has long been a space for "freedom and expression" away from the men in a "heavily conservative and patriarchal society", Simlai told AFP.

The women sing, talk about taboo subjects, such as sex and sometimes drink and smoke while collecting firewood and grass from the forest.

But the introduction of camera traps, drones and sound recorders as part of efforts to track and protect tigers and other wildlife has extended "the male gaze of the society into the forest", Simlai said. On multiple occasions, drones were deliberately flown over the heads of women, forcing them to drop their firewood and flee for cover, according to a study led by Simlai published in the journal Environment and Planning.

## WE ARE AFRAID

"We cannot walk in front of the cameras or sit in the area with our Kurtis (tunics) above our knees. We are afraid that we might get photographed or recorded in a wrong way," a local woman was quoted in the study saying.

A forest ranger told the researchers that when a camera trap took a photo of a couple engaging in "romance" in the forest, "we immediately reported it to the police".

In perhaps the most troubling example, a photo of an autistic woman from a marginalised caste relieving herself in the forest was inadvertently taken by a camera trap in 2017.

Young men appointed as temporary forest workers, shared the photo on local Whatsapp and Facebook

## 270 PEOPLE

A camera trap attached to a tree Simlai, a researcher, spent 14 months interviewing some 270 people who live near the Corbett Tiger Reserve



AFP PHOTO

groups to "shame the woman", Simlai said.

"We broke and set fire to every camera trap we could find after the daughter of our village was humiliated in such a brazen way," one local told the researchers.

Aiming to avoid the cameras, some women have started roaming farther into the forest, which has the highest density of tigers in the world.

The women also sing less than they used to, which was used to deter animal attacks.

One local woman — who spoke about the fear of cameras forcing her into "unfamiliar spaces" in 2019 — was killed by a tiger earlier this year, Simlai said.

## NEW WAYS TO HARASS WOMEN

Another woman took advantage of the constant surveillance.

"Whenever her husband would beat her, she would run in front of the camera so that her husband did not follow her," Simlai said.

Overall, "these technologies are very good" and are revolutionising conservation efforts, Simlai emphasised.

But he called for more consultation with local communities about the technology, as well as more

## BETWEEN THE LINES

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transparency and oversight from forest authorities and sensitive training for local workers.

"A lot of that can be done by conservation organisations that — in the first instance — introduced these technologies to the Government," Sim added.

Rosaleen Duffy, a conservation expert at Sheffield University in the UK, told AFP that "sadly" she was not surprised by this research.

"What surprises me is conservationists who imagine that technologies can be introduced and used in a social, political and economic vacuum," she said.

"The cases in this research are not accidental," Duffy pointed out.

"They were actively using the drones to provide new ways of

continuing to harass women."

While this technology can be a powerful tool to conserve wildlife, "there must be clear rules for what they can and cannot be used for, and clear consequences for anyone misusing them", she added.

AFP

# Haiti gangs expand use of sexual violence: rights group

WASHINGTON

While fighting between criminal groups in Haiti decreased during this year, attacks on civilians have risen, including an expanded use of "horrific sexual abuse," according to a new report by Human Rights Watch (HRW). "Criminal groups have often used sexual violence to instill fear in rival territories," the New York-based group says.

"The rule of law in Haiti is so broken that members of criminal groups rape girls or women without fearing consequences," according to HRW researcher Nathalie Cotrino.

HRW said it conducted scores of in-person and remote interviews with survivors of sexual abuse in the impoverished Caribbean nation, as well as with officials and rights and humanitarian workers. It said from January to October of this year, "nearly 4,000 girls and women reported sexual violence, including gang rape."

And it cited UN research showing cases involving children were up 1,000 per cent from the 2023 period.

"The bandits don't care about their age," one aid worker said. "They rape because they have the power. Sometimes they do it for days or weeks," leaving some survivors pregnant — in a country that bans abortion — or injured without access to care.

One 25-year-old mother

said she was gang-raped by four men while looking for water for her children.

"They didn't use to do this, but now they do whatever they want," she said.

Rape has become so "normalised that most women who come to us say: 'They raped me, but at least they didn't kill me,'" one humanitarian worker is quoted as saying.

## COLLAPSE OF HEALTH SYSTEM

The escalating violence has left the health system on the brink of collapse.


Doctors Without Borders, known by its French MSF and which long provided free emergency care across Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince, suspended service there following attacks on its personnel, as well as "death and rape threats against MSF staff from members of the Haitian National Police."

The latter attacks followed allegations that MSF provided medical support to criminal groups. The organisation says it "provides care to everyone based solely on medical needs."


HRW called on the international community to urgently increase funding to support a response that improves security, while respecting human rights.

Among other steps, it urges the Government to decriminalise abortion.

AFP



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**NWOYA DISTRICT SERVICE COMMISSION**  
P. O. Box 1033, Gulu - UGANDA

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Applications should be submitted in triplicate on Public Service Form 3 (PSF3, Revised 2008) addressed to the Secretary, Nwoya District Service Commission not later than **24<sup>th</sup> December, 2024 by 5:00pm**. Application forms can be obtained from Public Service Commission, Kampala or District Service Commission Offices country wide or may even be downloaded from Public Service Commission website [www.psc.go.ug](http://www.psc.go.ug).

Applications should bear the title of the post and the reference number accompanied by photocopies of **CERTIFIED** Academic Certificates and Transcripts, Licence and Certificate of Registration were applicable and three (3) recent coloured Passport size photographs.

Officers already serving in Government **MUST** route their applications through their Heads of Department who should be informed of the closing date of this advert.

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1	Senior Clinical Officer	U4 (Med-2)	01	NDSC/156/2/2024
2	Assistant Nursing Officer (Nursing)	U5 (Med-2)	01	NDSC/156/3/2024
3	Medical Laboratory Technician	U5 (Med)	01	NDSC/156/4/2024
4	Medical Laboratory Assistant	U7 (Med)	01	NDSC/156/5/2024
5	Enrolled Nurse	U7 (Med)	03	NDSC/156/6/2024
6	Health Assistant	U7U	01	NDSC/156/7/2024
7	Porter	U8	01	NDSC/156/8/2024
8	Askari	U8	02	NDSC/156/9/2024
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2	Deputy Head Teacher (Primary)	U5	10	NDSC/156/11/2024
3	Education Assistant II	U7	13	NDSC/156/12/2024
<b>PRODUCTION</b>				
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SECRETARY, NWOYA DISTRICT SERVICE COMMISSION