BELL 407GT HELICOPTER USED TO TACKLE RHINO POACHERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

News / Business aviation, Manufacturer

Charity Rhino911 will operate a Bell 407GT in an attempt to curb the problem of illegal Rhino poaching in South Africa.

The non-profit organization established by Fred Hees, President of BBM Inc. in cooperation with Heli Africa Wildlife will use the Bell 407GT to try and reduce the rising number of Rhino killed particularly in relation to the surging demand for illegal Rhino horn. Rhino911's goal is to stop the poachers well before they reach their targets.

"As a South African, I wanted make a difference and help save the Rhino species from extinction," said Fred Hees, President of BBM Inc.

Unlike other active anti-poaching efforts, Rhino911 benefits from tactical air assets and support groups flying the specially equipped Bell 407 helicopter. Operators will find and intercept poachers of Rhinos and other endangered species from extended ranges with advanced night vision (NV) and FLIR/WESCAM thermal imaging and other advanced sensors. The sensors on the Bell 407GT are capable of discerning and tracking personnel from extreme distance as well as analyzing and pinpointing possible hides and entrance, exit routes poachers use, allowing timely and effective action by law enforcement authorities.

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“Currently, a major challenge facing counter-poaching helicopter pilots is that they are not equipped with night vision and sensing systems, so they cannot operate at night and track poachers before or during the act. Our Bell 407GT and other Bell helicopters will change this equation entirely; we are able to fly day or night, isolate, track and pinpoint intruders to support anti-poaching efforts.” Added Hees.

The Bell 407 platform benefits from class leading performance, payload capability and operating economics, ideal for accomplishing multiple missions including anti-poaching. The M250 Rolls-Royce engine boosts power and fuel efficiency delivering best in class hot and high performance, perfect for the hot African climates.

“Rhino911 is a fantastic initiative and we are proud that the Bell 407GT will take part in this adventure with BBM Inc.,” said Patrick Moulay, EVP Global Sales, Bell Helicopter. “The advanced Bell 407 helicopters can operate far beyond the visual range of the poachers, are camouflaged, fitted with low visibility, low-noise blades and equipped with reinforced under-carriages, designed to protect the crew from hostile action.”

Rhino911 is in contact with the relevant government authorities in RSA and will be contacting existing Rhino and anti-poaching groups, private Rhino reserves, the Rhino Owners Association and key role-players in the Game Industry to collaborate on operational plans in order to ensure that all parties tackle the poachers in a holistic and controlled manner.

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