**PRESS RELEASE**

**Maasai entrepreneur Richard Turere (22) wins Young Inventors Prize for his light system to protect livestock, livelihoods and wildlife**

* **Richard Turere wins Young Inventors Prize at the European Inventor Award 2023, ranking first out of three finalists**
* **The European Patent Office (EPO) honours Turere for inventing a lion-deterring light system to protect livestock from predators**
* **The simple and innovative system of flashing lights has been successfully adopted across Africa, India and Latin America**

**Munich, 4 July 2023 –** The European Patent Office (EPO) announced today that **Maasai inventor Richard Turere has won first place in the Young Inventor Prize at the European Inventor Award 2023.** Turere was distinguished for developing **a system to ward off lions and other predators from livestock** using light sequences in order to protect his community’s livestock without harming the endangered lions.

“*Today, my team and I might seem too young for people to take us seriously. But we are going to compel them to believe in us through our achievements and recognition like the Young Inventors Prize is part of that journey,*” says Richard Turere.

The lion population in Africa is estimated to have declined by 43% in the past 20 years, with roughly 20,000 lions thought to be roaming the entire continent, according to the [World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)](https://www.wwfkenya.org/lion_conservation_/). Many lions are killed to stop them from eating precious livestock, which is a key concern for the Maasai of Kenya.

**Turere has been named the winner of the second edition of the Young Inventors Prize,** which the European Patent Office (EPO) established to inspire the next generation of inventors.The prize recognises young innovators aged 30 or under who have developed technological solutions to tackle global problems and help reach the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Turere’s invention contributes to UN SDG 15: Life on Land, which includes protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.

**Protecting prey and predators**

Many prey animals of the Nairobi National Park, near where Turere grew up, seek shelter in communal lands to escape the threat of predators. And so lions have been drawn to hunt livestock in areas where humans live, which put the local communities' food and income at risk. Efforts by the government to pay farmers for their lost animals were too expensive and unsustainable. To counteract this risk, lions were often killed, significantly impacting the lion population, the area’s biodiversity and tourism.

After testing several ideas, Turere’s invention, known as Lion Lights™, is based on a simple concept: visually replicating the human presence that keeps lions away. Using changing sequences of flashing lights mounted on fences, the lions cannot become comfortable with the patterns and are discouraged from hunting livestock. As word of his technology and its success spread, other community members began requesting the system for their properties, and now over 2,000 homes in Kenya use Lion Lights. The system typically runs on solar energy but can also be coupled with wind power when the weather is cloudy or there is little sun. It has attracted international attention and has been implemented in several other countries, including Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia, Argentina, and India, where it has **helped deter various species of animals,** **such as hyenas, leopards and cheetahs.**

“*I want this story to inspire the young kids that they too can do something. Anyone can make it. Anyone can change this world,*” says Turere.

**The Young Inventors Prize winners were announced today at the European Inventor Award 2023 hybrid ceremony in Valencia (Spain). You can stream the ceremony** [**here**](https://inventoraward.epo.org/?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press)**.**

Find more information about the invention’s impact, the technology and the inventor’s story at [this page](https://new.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award/meet-the-finalists/richard-turere?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press&mtm_group=press).

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**About the inventor**

Richard Turere invented the Lion Lights system at age 11. As a young Maasai boy, Turere was entrusted with the vital responsibility of herding and protecting his family's cattle from predators. He recognised the need for a solution to deter lions and other predators from attacking livestock, which led him to develop the innovative light system that has since gained global recognition. In 2013, he founded the Lion Lights organisation, which now collaborates with more than 50 young people in his native village.

Turere's dedication and resourcefulness earned him the attention of Wildlife-Direct, a charitable organisation led by Dr Paula Kahumbu. Through their support, he won a scholarship to Brookhouse School in Nairobi, where he studied A-Levels. He later completed a BA in Global Challenges and Wildlife Conservation at the African Leadership University. In recognition of his achievements, Turere has received numerous accolades, such as a special commendation at the Africa Leadership Awards, being a finalist at the Anzisha Prize Awards, and being named a National Geographic Young Explorer in 2020. He was also a finalist for a Future for Nature award in 2021.

**About the Young Inventors Prize**

The European Patent Office established the Young Inventors Prize in 2021 to inspire the next generation of inventors. Aimed at innovators aged 30 or below from all around the world, it recognises initiatives that use technology to contribute toward the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. The winner will receive EUR 20 000, the second and third placed finalists will receive EUR 10 000 and EUR 5 000, respectively. An independent jury comprising former finalists of the European Inventor Award selects the finalists and winner. The EPO will confer the prize at the European Inventor Award 2023 hybrid ceremony on 4 July. Unlike the traditional Award categories, the Young Inventors Prize finalists do not need a granted European patent to be considered for the prize. Read more on the Young Inventors Prize eligibility and selection criteria at [this page](https://new.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award/categories-and-prizes).

**About the EPO**

With 6 300 staff members, the [European Patent Office (EPO)](https://www.epo.org/?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press&mtm_group=press) is one of the largest public service institutions in Europe. Headquartered in Munich with offices in Berlin, Brussels, The Hague and Vienna, the EPO was founded with the aim of strengthening co-operation on patents in Europe. Through the EPO's centralised patent granting procedure, inventors are able to obtain high-quality patent protection in up to 44 countries, covering a market of some 700 million people. The EPO is also the world's leading authority in patent information and patent searching.