

*By Jeje Muhinde;*

This year's event of the Safari Rally has entered 34 entries as confirmed by FIA the world rally governing body due to start from the 23rd to the 27th. June. 2021 in Kenya.

According to the list released after the May 27 deadline by the event's secretariat, Gianca Rally of Giancarlo Davite and female pace reader Syliva Vindevogel have made the list and will be cruising a Mitsubishi Lancer Evo X.

The Gianca crew will be up to the race having retired in last year's event due to medical reasons.

This year's WRC list is led by point leader Kalle Rovanpera. He will lead the Toyota assault in their title defence campaign.

Others in the Toyota Gazoo Racing are defending champion Sebastien Ogier, Takamoto Katsuta, and Elfyn Evans.

Fabrizia Pons at 75, navigating Kenyan Piero Cannobio in a Hyundai i20, is the oldest contestant while Kenyan Rio Smith, 20, driving a Ford Fiesta F2 is the youngest.

Pons co-drove Michele Mouton to third place in the 1983 Safari in an Audi Quattro.

All three P1 manufacturers\_ Toyota, Ford and Hyundai are present for the African adventure slated for June 24-26 in Nairobi and Naivasha.

Nine times world champion Sebastien Loeb in a Ford Puma returns to Kenya for the first time since 2002 when he finished fifth in a Citroen Xsara WRC.

Loeb is the only driver after Pons to have ever driven in the old Safari Rally.

M-Sport Ford has also confirmed the participation of Craig Breen, Gus Greensmith, and Adrien Fourmaux. Greek Jourdan Serderidis will also run under the team.

Thierry Neuville, Ott Tanak and Oliver Solberg complete the Hyundai line up.

The Safari of old has evolved to fit the modern-day WRC, but its character remains with challenging closed dirt roads, stunning picture-postcard scenery, and exotic

wildlife.

Competitors can expect rocky and rutted tracks and unpredictable weather in the 19 stages which could transform dry and dusty trails into glutinous mudbaths while covering a total distance of 363.56km.