



# Transnational wildlife crime: The case for creating an international judicial process

Ecocide Workshop

5 November 2012

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# Contents

- Examples of transnational wildlife crime
- Why is this happening?
- Why is this a problem?
- Why are we failing to tackle it?
- Why do we need an international judicial process?



# 2011: Annus horribilis for African Elephants

Illegal ivory trade continues to grow

by Richard Thomas



## AFRICAN ELEPHANTS

1989 CITES ban on ivory trade  
➤ Elephants were thriving

2007: around 470.000

2008: CITES agrees  
one off ivory sale to CN/JP  
➤ Massacre ensued  
(10s of thousands killed p/y)

## Hong Kong makes largest ivory seizure worth \$3.4m



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21 October 2012 Last updated at 02:33 GMT

Hong Kong customs officials say they have confiscated nearly 400 tonnes of smuggled ivory - their largest seizure of products from endangered species.

Hong Kong authorities have confiscated two massive shipments of elephant tusks, totaling 1,209 tusks, stemming from Kenya and Tanzania. Representing over 600 poached elephants, the shipments are estimated to be worth \$3.4 million on the black market. African elephants are being decimated for their tusks in recent years with heavily-armed and well-connected poachers—backed by criminal syndicates—killing off whole herds in some cases.

## NEARLY 450 ELEPHANTS KILLED IN CAMEROON

Elephants have been slaughtered by groups from Chad and the Sudan in recent weeks, taking advantage of the dry season.

Wed Feb 29, 2012 09:21 AM ET  
Content provided by AFP

# Elephants Dying in Epic Frenzy as Ivory Fuels Wars and Profits



The Ivory Wars: Heavily armed platoons of rangers at Garamba National Park in the Democratic Congo wage war against elephant poachers.

By JEFFREY GETTLEMAN  
Published: September 3, 2012 | 566 Comments





### AFRICAN RHINO

- 2008: 17,475 white, 4,230 black rhinos
- 2012: nearly 500 rhinos killed
- 2011: 448 rhinos killed, 2007: 13 rhinos
- Value: \$ 60,000/kg (gold: \$ 55,000/kg)

16 October 2012 Last updated at 15:03 GMT

**South Africa: Rhino Poaching - Organised Crime and Economic Opportunity Driving Trade**

## South Africa rhino poaching: More killed than ever

Poachers have already killed a record number of rhinos in South Africa this year, with 455 slaughtered so far, the government has said.

Only 13 rhinos were killed in 2007 but this rose sharply to 448 in 2011 - more than in any previous year.



# Thailand arrests lorry driver transporting tiger cubs

**Vietnam police seize tiger carcass, bones**  
Last Updated: Tuesday, July 31, 2012 09:05:00



The cubs were taken after their seizure Friday to be cared for by wildlife officials

Thai authorities have arrested a lorry driver after 16 tiger cubs were discovered in the back of his vehicle.

The man was stopped near the checkpoint.

**Bodies of 14 rare Sumatran tigers seized in Indonesia**

12:22 pm | Friday, July 20th, 2012 ... paid 15,000 baht (\$490; £30)

Thailand is one of the centres of the illegal trade in tigers. Tiger parts are prized in many parts of Asia for their reputed medicinal properties.

## TIGERS

- Around 3200 tigers left in the wild
- Minimum of 100 tigers killed for trade each year
- 2012: illegal trade increasing again
- Tiger farms fuel illegal trade



### Statistics

#### Tiger Mortality

| 2011                   | 2012                   |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 54                     | 55                     |
| <a href="#">Detail</a> | <a href="#">Detail</a> |

#### Seizure of Tiger body parts

| 2011                   | 2012                   |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 09                     | 13                     |
| <a href="#">Detail</a> | <a href="#">Detail</a> |

# Why is this happening?



Willingness to buy &

Ability to buy



# Why is this a problem?

- It's serious crime:
  - Involvement organised crime networks
  - Involves fraud, corruption, violence, money laundering
  - Connection with other types of crime
  - Funds terrorist movements
- High profits: \$ 5 billion per year globally
- Low risk: prosecutions rare and ineffective



# Why is this a problem?

- Impact on species and ecosystems
- Impacts on society
  - Abuse of the poorest
  - Fuelling armed conflicts
  - Crimes against nature = crimes against humanity
- Impact on economy: black markets, revenue loss
- Affecting integrity of governments
- Dangers to human/animal health + wild populations

# Why are we failing to tackle it?

- ❑ Lack of political will
- ❑ Lack of capacity
- ❑ Lack of collaboration & information exchange
- ❑ Local/national focus
- ❑ Corruption



# Some noteworthy developments

- INTERPOL and UNODC stepping up
- Increased attention of international organisations
  - Sept 2012: UN General Assembly: discussed wildlife poaching and trafficking for first time
  - Sept. 2012: APEC declaration – wildlife trafficking
  - Oct. 2012: UN Convention against transnational organized crime: environmental crime = transnational organised crime
  - April 2013: UN Commission on crime prevention and criminal justice

# Why an international judicial process

- National criminal justice systems inadequate
  - Impunity of kingpins in national courts
  - Countries 'unable' and/or 'unwilling' (Rome Statute)
- Currently, individuals cannot be held accountable before an international court
- Wildlife crime = international crime
  - > requires an international approach based on global jurisdiction
- International Criminal Court?



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# Only part of the puzzle

- Other interventions remain vital in short and middle term:
  - Changing consumer behaviour
  - Raising the profile of wildlife crime
  - Tackling corruption
  - Strengthening national criminal justice systems



# Thank you!

▣ Questions?

