



A DISTINCTIVE PATTERN OF IVORY TRAFFICKING IN AFRICA AND INDONESIA

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Elephant Killings

The demand for African ivory sharply increased during the industrialization of Europe and the United States in the 19th century. In 1970s, the demand for ivory escalated with around 991 tonnes of raw African ivory being exported, accounting for the death of an estimated 55,000 elephants in one year. In 1980, some 680 tonnes of ivory from approximately 37,500 elephants was exported from Africa. In the decade prior to 1989, East Africa has lost almost 400,000 elephants with only 155,000 elephants remaining. In 1977, the elephant population in Tanzania declined from 109,000 to 30,000. In Uganda, the elephant population fell from 17,600 to just 1,600. In Kenya, the population plummeted more than 80% between 1973 and 1989, from 120,000 to 15,000. Now, there is only 500,000 African elephants left in the wild. According to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), there may have been as many as 3 to 5 million African elephants in the wild in the 1930s and 1940s.

The number of Sumatran Elephant population in Indonesia was between 2,400 – 2,800 elephants. This species is only found in Sumatra Island, with moderate numbers in northern tip of Sumatra (Aceh). This number indicates a possible reduction of the population by 35% within the last 15 years. The exact number of elephant deaths is not known, but at least 44 elephants were killed in the last 5 years. Habitat loss is the biggest threat for Sumatran elephants. The entire elephant population in Riau and Lampung provinces has disappeared as a result of habitat loss from palm oil plantation over the past of 25 years. The elephant habitat has declined by more than 69% since 1930s. High frequency of Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) in almost all elephant habitat is a consequence of habitat loss for Sumatran elephants. HEC creates crop and property damage, and claim victims from both sides. Between 2007-2012, elephants claimed twelve human lives. Due to this, people become less tolerant of wild elephants and lead them to use various methods to kill or capture elephants such as poison or homemade gun.

Habitat loss and HEC are the main threats for the Sumatran elephant population, opportunistic hunters¹ remove the ivory tusk by killing the elephant, and groups of specialized hunters also track down HEC areas to kill elephants for their ivory tusks. Within the last five years, Indonesia is considered as a market country for ivory tusks. Sumatran ivory tusks have been used domestically in Indonesia and not exported abroad. However, the high demand for ivory in Indonesia outweighs the number of Sumatran elephants. This causes African ivory to flood the Indonesia market. Despite the price of hard ivory produced by forest elephants (Sumatran elephant) being more expensive than soft ivory produced by savannah elephants (African elephant), the various levels of consumers are not aware of the difference. Furthermore, the physical appearance between African and Sumatran ivory are almost similar and hard to identify through visual identification.

Demand on Ivory

An estimated 35,000 elephants are killed in Africa every year for their ivory, which are often sold as ornaments, jewelry, statues, bracelets, pendants, chopsticks and other gift items. China is a major importer of ivory, as are countries like Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Vietnam, and Singapore. Thailand has one of the largest unregulated ivory market in the world, and is second only to China as an ivory consumer. The price of ivory in China is around USD 2,100 per kilogram (2.2 pounds). As the demand for ivory rises across Asia, the price of ivory in China has increased three times in the past four years. Rising incomes are spurring even greater demands, and many wealthy Chinese are buying ivory statues and carvings as investments. In December 2012, the Malaysian authorities seized 1,500 elephant tusks in a \$20 million shipment that was believed to be China bound. In 2013, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) claimed the amount of illegal ivory confiscated in large-scale seizures was 41 tonnes, and the amount of ivory seized has tripled since 2003.

The biggest demand for ivory in Indonesia is mainly in Jakarta. An internal Source of Information (SoI) recorded more than 600 ivory pipes and trinkets were traded openly every week at the Rawabening market. The source of raw ivory tusks from Sumatran elephants mostly come from Aceh, Riau, and South Sumatra. Almost 70% raw ivory tusks from Sumatran elephants were transported to Jakarta to be processed. Some well-known African and Sumatran ivory carver are located in Way Jepara (Lampung), Jakarta, and Bali (Sukowati). African ivory tusks started to flood the Jakarta market in 2010 through illegal smuggling via Jakarta and Batam seaport. At least 50-60% ivory pipes and trinkets sold in Jakarta originate from African ivory tusks. A small number of ivory tusks trade from Sumatran elephants were found in South Sumatra (Medan), Lampung, and Riau provinces.

Ivory Trade Regulation

In 1989, CITES² banned all international trade in ivory from African elephants. However, the countries that have effective elephant conservation programs do not support the bans. They argue that a total ban on the ivory trade will hamper their capacity to fund conservation. In 2010, CITES upholds the nine-year moratorium on legal ivory sales and does not approve proposals by Tanzania and Zambia to downlist their elephants to allow

¹ Opportunistic hunter means they will kill the animal if it is available and inconvenient, not as primer job, and most of them are just hunting in their close surrounding.

² CITES is an international agreement between nations, or parties. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. There are 178 parties to the Convention, all of which have committed to help protect more than 30,000 species of plants and animals.

them to sell ivory stocks. Depriving China of access to legal ivory until 2018 stimulates a surge in poaching. Samuel Wasser, of the University of Washington, calculated that elephant death rate from poaching is currently at 8 percent, higher than the 7.4 per cent rate which led to the international ivory trade ban in 1989. Dr. Wasser and fellow researchers warned that without public pressure to ensure a strengthening of anti-poaching measures, most remaining large groups of elephants would be extinct by the end of next decade. The population in the 1980s was around 1 million, with around 70,000 elephants being killed a year. The total number of African elephant population is now less than 470,000.

Sumatran elephants are protected by the Indonesian Act No. 5 year 1990³. All persons are prohibited from killing, injuring, trading, transporting, or keeping protected wildlife and its products. The punishment for the offender is imprisonment not exceeding 5 years and fine not exceeding USD 10,000. As a party of CITES, Indonesia must follow the bans for both the African and Asian ivory tusk trade in the international level. However, Indonesian Act No. 5 year 1990 only regulates Indonesian species. Non-native species⁴ or products made from alien species such as African ivory tusk, are not regulated under the Indonesian law. Therefore, Indonesia is considered as a potential market and for laundering African ivory. Over 600 souvenirs from African ivory, mostly for smoking pipes, bracelets, pendants, or chopsticks were freely traded in a souvenir mall in Jakarta within a week. The African ivory mixed with Sumatran ivory and creates a classic problem for Indonesian authority to identify whether an ivory is of Sumatran elephant origin. In 2012, Kenyan Mombasa port authority published a confiscation of 6 tones raw ivory tusks headed to an export-import company in the Batam Free Trade Zone in Indonesia.

Corruption and political interest

Organized crimes take a front seat in the illegal killing of elephants. The most notorious poachers in Africa are armed militias who supposedly kill elephants to fuel their own conflict. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), originating from northern Uganda is the most notorious group thought to be caught up in the trade of ivory. Operating throughout South Sudan, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic (CAR), Sudan, and Chad, the LRA has reputedly decimated elephant populations in these areas. It cannot be denied that ivory poaching is definitely part of the LRA's modus operandi. LRA could use ivory to bribe local officials to protect them, or to procure weapon or basic food and medical supplies to keep the group alive. The New Scientist wrote in early 2014 that ivory poaching funds most war and terrorism in Africa where terrorist groups like the Lord's Resistance Army and Boko Haram engage in ivory poaching and trafficking. The Al-Qaeda-linked al Shabaab terrorist organization may well be involved too. The outfit controls large swathes of the southern part of Somalia and several reports in the Kenyan press have suggested that it is connected with the ivory trade, although details remain sketchy. However, the Kenya Wildlife Service has claimed that al-Shabaab is involved in the ivory business. A group of armed horsemen from Sudan rank among some of Africa's most notorious elephant poachers. From their equipment that was

³ Article 21 Section (2d) states, "Any and all persons are prohibited to trade, keep or possess skin, bodies, or other parts of a protected animal, or goods made of parts of the animal, or transfer from one place in Indonesia to another, within or outside Indonesia". The offenders who violate Article 21 Section (2d) shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a maximum of 5 years in prison and a fine not exceeding USD 7,500.

⁴ Non-native species means animals that are non-native to an ecosystem. African elephant is native in Africa but it does not exist in Indonesia.

retrieved, photographs from their mobile phones show elephant massacres. These are Chad nationals working with corrupt officials in the Sudanese army and police.

Another notorious attack on elephants in 2012 was conducted by helicopter in Garamba that highlighted the involvement of the Ugandan Air Force. Twenty-two elephants died. No helicopter was seen on the day, only one registered to the Ugandan Air Force was photographed flying very low over Garamba on two subsequent occasions on the day of the elephant killings. However, the Ugandan authorities have declined to explain what they were doing in the park. The fingers have also been pointed at criminal elements within the military of the DRC and South Sudan. In 2012, the head of the DRC's army was dismissed due to selling arms to militia groups and his involvement in elephant poaching.

In Indonesia, ivory ornaments or smoking pipes are widely used by mid-class, wealthy people, or high-level government staffs. Therefore, prosecuting them provides an extra challenge for law enforcement officers in the attempt to reduce the demand for ivory in Indonesia.

Hunting Methods and Syndicates Chains

The LRA, Boko Haram, and al-Shabaab are believed to be killing elephants in Sudan. Therefore, there are also armed groups other than groups of armed horsemen from Sudan who rank among some of Africa's most notorious elephant poachers. Operating during the dry season, the groups travel more than 1,000 km westwards in large raiding parties, reputedly trains of camels in tow to transport ivory back. The horsemen are responsible for the death of a massive number of elephants, decimating population in countries such as Chad and CAR. They use horses and heavy-calibre rifles and herd the animal towards marksmen. They kill a lot of animals and wound many more, sometimes including elephant calf. The poachers are well-equipped with mobile phones, satellite phones, and solar chargers. In a span of two weeks to two months they collect a vast quantity of ivory and pay local couriers with horses and camels to transport it out. Some insecticides such as Temic, are used to kill elephant groups in Zimbabwe. Temic are put inside oranges and then placed where elephants are known to come. Waterholes are sometimes also poisoned. The Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) reports similar incidents in Gonarezhou (Zimbabwe) where elephants have been poisoned using wild melons and marula fruit laced with toxin. In 2012, the African Wildlife Foundation also reported killing of elephants using poison near the Tarangire National Park in Tanzania.

Despite concerns over elephants dying for bushmeat, the primary motivation for poaching –representing more than 90% of respondents, was ivory. Over half of the elephant hunters said they were paid by others to kill elephants. The person who gives an order (*leader*) or subsidize the hunts are often influential government or military officers, businessmen or even clerics. The leader orders the hunt and provides money, food, and other goods to the lead hunter. The leader also often supplies the weapon and ammunition. In return, the leader receives ivory tusks. One group of elephant hunters typically include around seven men and takes up to two weeks. At the bottom of the money chain lie poor, rural people many of whom live on the borders of national parks and nature reserves. Financial rewards of poaching for the local poachers are tangible and tantalizing. The poachers are well known among the community. The cash give them immediate status and they become the role models for young people, who see only the immediate benefit by killing elephants. The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) investigation in Tanzania and Zambia revealed some poaching groups enter the reserve for periods of up to two weeks and kill as

many as 10 elephants each trip. The poached ivory is then hidden, buried at a remote location on the edge of the reserve until it sold to traders, usually from Dar es Salaam. The transactions take place in villages that have become known hotspots for ivory trading.

In Indonesia, a group of hunters usually consist of 5-7 persons mostly equipped with homemade guns, USD 200 for two weeks of logistics, machetes, and axes. An ivory buyer who funds this activity is known as a *cukong*. Hunters track the elephant routes, climb trees and shoot elephants directly on the head. Some hunters use poison (timex), mixed with corns or pineapple when they locate elephants in farming areas. Using poison will conceal their activity and create scenarios to portray as if the elephants were killed by local villagers who want to protect their crop. The hunters are mostly come poor, rural people, many of whom live on the borders of national parks and nature reserves.

Depending on the quality, the value of a Sumatran raw ivory tusk weighing 10-15 kg is pretty expensive. A *cukong* pays each hunter USD 200-300 upon receiving an ivory tusk. The ivory tusk will be hidden, usually buried in remote place for a couple months to reduce detection from the police or forest rangers.

Smuggling Routes And Transit Point

On December 2012, Malaysian authorities seized 1,500 elephant tusks in a \$20 million shipment that was believed to have been headed to China. Customs official Azis Yacub says inspectors at Port Klang harbor found 24 tons of unprocessed tusks hidden in secret compartments in containers of timber. The shipment originated from Togo and sailed to Spain, where it was transferred to another ship before arriving in Malaysia. Shipping routes of tusks are often tortuous and difficult to trade. The 1,500 tusks were intercepted in Malaysia after they left the West African port of Lome in Togo and transited in Algeciras, Spain, before moving on to Malaysia. All the large-scale ivory seizures seem to be heading towards China. Since law enforcement officers targeted containers coming from Africa, the ivory smugglers try to get containers into Malaysia, change the documentation so it looks like the consignment originates from Malaysia, and then send it on to China.

The Kenya Wildlife Services stated that the ivory was seized in 2013 and had been declared as 240 bags of peanuts. Kenyan revenue officials also warn that ivory smugglers are becoming smarter and have devised means to beat scanners. In 2013, the ivory seized stank of fish and to repel sniffer dogs. The officials say the ivory is often chopped into small pieces, polished and neatly cut into small cubes and circles that disguise the ivory's shape during the scanning process. In 2014, the Kenyan revenue officials said the ivory was worth more than \$700,000, making it the biggest seizure so far this year. Mombasa's port seized a substantial consignment of illegal ivory disguised as sundried fish marked for export to Malaysia. More suspicious containers — one from Uganda and the other from Congo — were due for verification. Most of the ivory impounded likely came from Botswana, South Africa, Congo, Cameroon, and Mozambique. If most of the ivory was being smuggled from countries other than Kenya, it suggests Mombasa's port is becoming a favorite for ivory smugglers and traders. Three clearing agents at Mombasa have since been arrested over their alleged involvement in the illegal ivory trade. Kenyan officials have intercepted six major ivory consignments being smuggled through the port in the last three years. They were destined for Hong Kong, Cambodia, United Arab Emirates, China, Thailand and Malaysia.

Both Laos and Cambodia are becoming important transit routes of tusks. In April 2011, the 707 ivory tusks were seized inside Vietnam's border with China, its destination. While

Malaysia or Vietnam are primarily transit points, China and Thailand are the main markets since the demand in Japan has really fallen off. Thailand owes its dubious notoriety to its own legislation, which sanctions trade in ivory from domestic, working elephants, although not wild Asian elephants. This industry is wholly unregulated, so there are no checks into the origin of the ivory, which can legally be displayed and sold in Thai markets. Thai traders and smugglers have thrived because the ban never addressed the domestic markets, and without DNA testing, it is difficult to tell where origin of the ivory. The consequence is Thailand creates perfect conditions for laundering African ivory into the market, which mixes it uncurbed with that from local elephants. It is different with China where it is consumed by the Chinese and will stay in China for the most part, most buyers in Thailand are European, North American, and Australian tourists. With many foreign visitors, a healthy percentage of the seizures made in the United States, Europe, and Australia are souvenirs from Thailand.

In Indonesia, three important seaports namely, Batam, Tanjung Priok, and Bakauheni are well-known as ivory smuggling points. Sumatran elephant ivory tusks were smuggled from Sumatra to Jakarta through Bakauheni seaport. Some small fisheries landing areas for fishermen in western coastal of Lampung and Banten province were identified as exit and entry points of small-scale local ivory smuggling. African ivory entry points are located in Batam and Tanjung Priok seaport. The smugglers take advantage of the Batam Free Trade Zone to reduce container inspection by seaport authority. Seaport authority will minimize the inspection to avoid container traffic at the seaport. Therefore, without strong evidence of ivory shipment, the seaport authority would not inspect the containers. Increasing inspection in seaports and airports force the smugglers to change strategy by using cargo/courier expedition to send ivory.

There is less inspection for cargo expeditions that operate through Indonesia, so it has been used to smuggle ivory from Sumatra to Java and vice versa. In 2013, there was information on African ivory smuggled from Togo to Indonesia by utilising diplomatic channels. The shipment was claimed as souvenirs from Togo government for their Indonesian counterparts. The airport destination of the shipment was Halim Perdanakusuma.

Combating Ivory Trade

Since ivory trafficking is considered as an enormous organized crime, fighting its activity should be focused on many aspects, specifically to reduce demand, breaking the syndicate chain, increasing protection in smuggling routes and hubs, combating corruption, and strengthening habitat or park protection from poaching actions. Creating links between areas where ivory is poached, transit countries, and demand countries is the best formula to reduce illicit trade of ivory both in source and market's countries. Now, protecting elephants is becoming a greater priority in Africa. More rangers are being deployed on the ground and many of them are better equipped. Army troops in Chad, Gabon, Cameroon, Bostwana, and Namibia has been called as a supplement for anti-poaching efforts. The number of park staff in Gabon has reportedly increases four times, and the Cameroon government sent 600 member of Rapid Intervention Batallion to protect Bouba N'Djida National Park, Bostwana also increased the number of park soldiers and polices to do patrol in protected areas, and Namibian Defense Force enlisted to track poachers. African range countries must pay the cost of protection even though the countries are not drivers behind increased trade of ivory.

The growing number of ivory seizures in Kenya was the result of greater surveillance by wildlife and revenue officials, who increasingly have to physically search suspicious

containers. In 2013, Kenya's customs commissioner, announced new regulations to curb ivory trade through the port of Mombasa that include full scrutiny of all goods destined for the Middle East and Asia. The new procedures also call for all exports there to be packed under the supervision of a joint team of wildlife and revenue officials, police, and others.

Combating corruption is crucial. Corruption is a major challenge in Africa and Indonesia. Around 85% of poachers and ivory traffickers identified in Africa were not arrested because of corruption in many African countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Tanzania. National task forces should be established with a strong backing from the government to combat corruption in wildlife trafficking cases. The punishment must be appropriate to the crime. In Africa and Indonesia, ivory poachers or traders were mandatory crimes and nothing more than a petty offence. The sentence was too light compared with the crime. One and a half year to two years in jail is not enough to create a deterrent effect to the offenders or people who want to kill elephants and trade ivory tusks. Uganda is currently amending its Wildlife Act so that poaching carries a minimum fine of USD 75,000 and 10 years prison sentence. The Republic of Congo will establish a Presidential decree to create a National Prosecuting Unit on endangered species, with a dedicated prosecutor empowered to arrest any perpetrators, regardless of their position. Similarly in Indonesia, the General Attorney will establish a prosecution guideline to handle wildlife cases. Trained prosecutors will have sufficient skills to handle wildlife cases, enabling them to correctly assess the damage to the environment and species caused by poaching and illegal trafficking, as well as to increase punishments to create deterrent effects.

Coordinating cooperation among source countries (African) and target countries (Far East) are urgent. Trafficking relies on porous borders, corrupt officials, and strong networks of organized crime. Ivory trafficking is a global challenge that spans continents and must be addressed with partnerships. Cross border law enforcement agency or association countries such as Interpol or ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) must be aware and take substantive steps to enhance the enforcement.

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