

Capitalism Gone Wrong aka Wildlife Trafficking



By

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Just when you think we've heard it all, something even more disturbing comes to our attention!

The following was provided by Anthony Wanguru Stevenson Ruoro, a Kenyan wildlife conservation activist, in response to a few questions I'd posed him. As it was so eye opening I asked his permission to share it in this eBook format.

Anthony, well known in Kenya for his work, gleans his information via various sources within the supply chains, from Kenya in Africa to Taiwan, China, Thailand and Vietnam in the Far East. Some confided with serious risk to their lives.

He admits, that this is not an all-inclusive insight, but one of many scenarios that occur in this global business of wildlife trafficking.

This information is brought to you, as-is with no guarantee of accuracy, compliments of Nikela.

Please feel free to pass the link to this eBook on to friends and colleagues as you see fit.

Wildlife Margrit



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Illegal trade, organized crime, syndicates, and wildlife trafficking are all about the business of making money; supply and demand, myths and sales and insatiable human greed!

The third largest illegal crime business is wildlife trafficking! With an estimated value between \$5-20 billion* a year it ranks right up there with guns and drugs as the illegal capitalist's trade of choice. Next to habitat loss poaching for illegal trade is wildlife's greatest threat for survival according to the World Wildlife Fund.

*http://www.cites.org/eng/news/SG/2012/20120525_SG_US-Senate_testimony.php

For a business to thrive there needs to be buyers, sellers, and a cost effective system to connect the two. What follows is a description of the illegal trading of rhino horn as explained by Anthony Wanguru Stevenson Ruoro, Kenyan wildlife conservation activist.





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Supply and Demand for Wildlife “Products”

The Buyer

Currently, they are the nouveau riche in many Asian countries and other places. They may be young or old. What differentiates them from the majority, is they have money to spend on luxuries their fellow brothers and sisters do not have nor can afford. They use ‘exclusivity of wildlife’ which is not part of their national heritages, as a manner of showing their power and buying capability, in societies that have little of their own wildlife. They are actually helping eliminate the national heritage of other countries. This is where the myths about the rhino horn’s ability to cure cancer and impotence emanated from. Previously this was the traditional Chinese medicine TCM practitioners’ exclusive area of earning exorbitant sums of money on people’s medical ignorance. Perpetuating their practices and becoming rich and powerful in this mythical realm of medicine.

The Syndicate

The sellers of the smuggled illegal animal parts put forth a lot of effort to ensure their clients’ interests and the markets’ demand are kept high and well fed, similar to the drug kingpins. The very same who feed the addicts with more drugs or new varieties in order to stay in business. These are persons in countries who deal in other illegal business and may be involved in other related crimes.

There are many groups involved in the lucrative supply of illegal animal parts, they not only include citizens of nations such as Nigeria, Congo but even China and Vietnam, and not forgetting terror organisations on the peripheries assisting in logistics and security as well. Many syndicates originate and are controlled from within China, where Triads originate from local mafia groups that are very much involved in illegal wildlife trade. It is historically proven that the Chinese government has had a difficult task with policing these very powerful syndicates



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that have infiltrated many of the institutions in the country entrusted with ensuring these illegal acts do not occur. This contributes a lot to the many scandals involving human deaths and health risks from many fake and counterfeit medicines for example, as these syndicates are deeply rooted in these areas as well. Some well documented cases include children's milk formula laced with toxic chemicals and or human body parts, being some of the latest these groups have been known to be behind.

These syndicates control not only the selling but also the supply chain from the wildlife range countries. They send their people out on legitimate business ventures, which also include excursions to gather information and make contacts with local middlemen / women who facilitate their illegal business dealings.

To these groups this is "business as usual" and does not do any harm to their national heritage in their countries of origin. This is just another business fact-finding mission and whoever can supply wins in this battle for Africa's wildlife.





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The Front Business

In the countries where you have a lot of poaching and smuggling you have the local syndicate representatives. These may be involved in businesses that are legitimate, such as trading shops, restaurants, import/export companies etc. From these fronts businesses they establish contact with local groups who facilitate the poaching and co-ordinate the process by providing the poachers with orders and the necessary arms bought on the illegal arms market.

This is not to state that all such businesses carry out illegal activities. What the local enforcement agencies find difficult is to penetrate these groups on their own turf as they often do not speak the language of the foreign business people. Who many times also speak in coded form as in their home nations when transacting illegal business. Often this happens at the back offices of the stores, out of site from preying eyes.

In this circle you also find terrorist organizations involved in poaching. They may provide access to weapons, logistics in moving the illegal animal parts to companies and bonded warehouses for export. These terror or gang syndicates may also assist in ensuring the requisite authorities are paid and informed on which shipments to let pass through the system and leave undetected across national borders and more. Kenyas porous border with the former state of Somalia has been used as a passage route for some of the illegal animals or their parts that are shipped to the now captured port of Kismayu a bee hive of pirating and terrorist activities. This will possibly no longer be the case as this city was recently captured by African Union forces under the AMISOM command and together with the new Somali national defense forces. A very lucrative two way illegal business port is what this city once was. Where weapons being ferried in and other contraband from other east African nations finding its way out onto the global markets. Dubai and Sri Lanka are the destination ports for this contraband via Kismayu.



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The Pawn

The actual poachers are many times impoverished people from the country but not necessarily from the area where the poaching occurs. In Kenya for example it will be individuals who are not resident in those areas but can enter undetected during night and stay out in the field until they meet the quota of whatever their middlemen have requested and paid for in part. The poachers only poach and deliver to a designated party and do not get involved in the actual logistics. So if caught and interrogated they really do know nothing.

The Runner

The next group are the runners, and speed is of the essence, as they ensure the rhino horn, elephant tusks or other wildlife parts are delivered for shipping, which is again passed on to others in the major port, exit city or area. These intermediaries may include either local nationals or as in Kenya returning or recruited Chinese nationals who at times may carry the illegal wildlife body parts as personal luggage on their way back to China.





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How to find the “Bad Guys”

As in many other business operations one needs only to follow the money trail to find the key players. This is not as easy as it may seem as the bribery, corruption and intimidation happens at so many levels from the poacher, game ranger, local business owner, revenue service, and custom officials on up.

Corruption and impunity greatly threaten the very future existence of Africa’s wildlife which is fueled largely by the demand from exclusive buyers wanting something their fellow citizens cannot afford or have. The disastrous result of this thoughtless greed is the exploitation and utter destruction of the national heritage of other countries. For as the supply (wildlife) dwindles a few will be rich and healed from whatever ailment they believe wildlife parts can cure.

What a price to extract?

What a price to pay?

What a loss for Africa, our planet, if this form of capitalism gone so very wrong, that we know as illegal trade or trafficking, is not stopped.

Although the situation looks pretty grim there is much being done by those activists, officials, law enforcement agents and others that are on the ground and in the trenches.

*Wildlife traders exploit the national heritage
of other nations,*

*Unaware of the carcasses and orphans left behind in
the wake of **POACHING wildlife for profit.***



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Righting the Wrong

Thanks to inter-agency efforts more smugglers are being caught at the international airports of Jomo Kenyatta International in Nairobi and Moi International in Mombasa. This is improving due to better vigilance and provision of much needed support both in manpower and equipment at these border exit points. Also the national wildlife agency KWS is enacting a more proactive and "no-tolerance" mindset and attitude towards poaching and those dealing with illegal animal parts locally.

It would be very welcome news to see the same enforcement enacted in other African nations and in particular South Africa, Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Wildlife under threat of a slow march towards extinction as one African nation often puts the national heritage of the others at greater risks when little or nothing is done to stop the poaching and smuggling.

The wildlife of these nations sadly supplies the demand that is rising in the Far East. The same efforts are needed in the Far East nations where the rising demand is reaching levels where Africa's vulnerable wildlife can never meet their demand for a product that has no proven medicinal purposes at all. This is where the pro-trade lobby want CITES to change the rhino status. To allow a more open and similar trading as is done within the Kimberley Process, to stem the flow of blood diamonds into the legal system. To allow trade of Africa's national heritage and make wildlife a commodity will be another means of signing their death sentences and bringing them closer to extinction. More awareness and education is needed both in nations with the wildlife and those who crave their illegal parts.

We are all in some way responsible for the continued protection and preservation of Africa's wildlife, if not for present more so for future generations as well. We owe this to them and to the voiceless wildlife heritage we have been gifted with.



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Finally world leaders are beginning to understand the importance of stopping poaching and illegal animal parts trafficking. Let's hope they will do much more to stop this decimation of many nations national heritage.

Poaching and the illicit trafficking of wildlife products were raised on the floor of the United Nations General Assembly for the first time recently during discussions on strengthening national and international governance. World leaders gathering in New York for the global body's 67th annual meeting highlighted wildlife trafficking along with other severe threats to the rule of law such as corruption and drug running.

In a written statement, permanent Security Council member United States highlighted *"the harm caused by wildlife poaching and trafficking to conservation efforts, rule of law, governance and economic development."* The rapidly-growing illicit international trade in endangered species products, such as rhino horn, elephant ivory and tiger parts is capitalism gone wrong, very wrong.

Read: UN recognizes Wildlife Crime as a threat to Rule of Law

http://reawr.com/2012/10/02/un-recognizes-wildlife-crime-as-threat-to-rule-of-law/?fb_source=pubv1





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What we can do to HELP

REPORT

Pay attention for any type of suspicious behavior, people and situations. And report the details of what and where immediately. Don't worry if it's valuable or not, let these folks decide.

Reporting options

Dept. of Environmental Affairs (DEA):

Call toll free **0800 205 005**

HAWKS:

Email AntiPoaching@sanparks.org

Anti Poaching Intelligence Group Southern Africa:

Call +**27822691364**

Email AntiPoachIntelligence@gmail.com

INTERPOL:

Email EnvironmentalCrime@interpol.int

LOBBY

Lobbying against illegal trade, poaching and smuggling of wildlife parts by all is needed. This lobbying does not have to be only in the countries affected. The wildlife are the preserve and responsibility of us all. We cannot be silent as the wildlife are voiceless and we are their voices. Their survival depends on us humans. If there is no more wildlife it will not be long before we humans turn against each other.

Educate along the way as many don't have a clue as to the harm they are doing by buying certain products or supporting certain businesses.



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Thank you for reading this, we trust you feel motivated and empowered to do something to help save our planet's wildlife regardless of where in the world you may live.

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