

Environmentalists Urge Tanzania's President To Crack Down On Elephant Poaching

Written by Australian Business

WASHINGTON, Sept. 18, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Environmentalists are calling on President Kikwete to pledge to crack down on the elephant poaching epidemic and rampant illegal ivory trade in Tanzania while he's in the United States for private conservation meetings. His visit comes just two months after President Obama's trip to Dar es Salaam, where he announced an [Executive Order](#) to combat global wildlife poaching and trafficking.

Part of the Executive Order involves the creation of a Presidential Task Force to fight international wildlife trafficking to support countries, such as Tanzania, devastated by illicit poaching and trade. Despite intensifying global efforts, President Kikwete consistently fails to tackle the growing poaching crisis that threatens to wipe out the East African nation's elephant population.

"The slaughter of Tanzania's elephants is threatening the billion dollar tourism industry and the thousands of jobs underpinned by revenue from United States tourists and others from around the world wishing to witness Tanzania's spectacular wildlife heritage," said Allan Thornton, president of the [Environmental Investigation Agency](#), an international campaigning organization based in Washington, DC and London. "We appeal to President Kikwete to urgently confront this crisis and put an end to the atrocities being inflicted on the nation's majestic elephant herds."

It's estimated that 30,000 elephants have been butchered in Tanzania's spectacular Selous Game Reserve between 2006 and 2009. In order to preserve the country's elephant population from extinction President Kikwete needs to order and effectively implement a comprehensive crackdown.

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The crackdown would include the removal of corrupt officials, enforcement of necessary wildlife crime laws, arrests and prosecutions of wildlife criminals, and effective blocks to trafficking, as well as education and outreach. Currently, criminal syndicates and corrupt government officials operate with relative impunity.

"President Kikwete has failed to crack down on powerful ivory syndicates behind elephant poaching in the country, despite the fact that large shipments of smuggled ivory tusks from Tanzania have been intercepted in recent years in many Asian countries." said Thornton. "President Kikwete needs to address the somber reality that high-level government corruption in the police, military, customs and wildlife departments is supporting the illegal ivory trade in Tanzania."

SOURCE Environmental Investigation Agency

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