

Large ivory haul seized in Togo

January 28 2014



Part of the 700kg of ivory seized on August 6, 2013 by the Togolese police, as they are exhibited for journalists in Lome on August 9, 2013

Togo police have seized about 1.7 tonnes of ivory loaded in a container in the port of Lome, the country's minister of environment and forest resources said on Tuesday.

"Five hundred and fifty [ivory](#) pieces and 77 complete pieces of ivory weighing 1,689.45 kilogrammes were hidden in sacks inside a container loaded with wood destined for Vietnam," said Andre Johnson.

"The ivory stock was discovered by a joint security task force checking containers in the port of Lome.

"A clearing agent was arrested. Investigations are under way to find members of the ivory traffickers' network."

The seizure is one of the largest ever recorded by the police in the west African nation.

Last August, the police impounded 700.5 kilogrammes of ivory—mostly from Chad—from a shop in Lome belonging to a 58-year-old Togolese national.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) banned [international trade](#) in ivory in 1989.

But trafficking has been on the increase in recent years following a high demand in the Middle East and Asia where elephant tusks are used for the manufacture of decorative objects and in traditional medicine.

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