

Wildlife body calls for less talk, more action on poaching

June 23 2014



The carcass of a male Sumatran elephant, its head and trunks mutilated and ivory tusks missing, in Aceh Jaya district on Indonesia's Sumatra island on July 14, 2013

A wildlife protection agency has demanded less talk and more action against the poaching of elephants and other animals, saying it was time for the same "frontline" tactics used against human traffickers and drug gangs.

"Unprecedented demand, [wildlife crime](#) and loss of habitat is destroying entire species and the building blocks of the ecosystem that we all rely upon," said John Scanlon, head of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

He was speaking at the start of a global conference of 1,200 delegates in the Kenyan capital Nairobi organised by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to discuss a range of green challenges.

"Ultimately, this fight will be won or lost on the frontlines, whether in the field, the courtroom, or the market place -- not in a conference room," Scanlon said.

CITES warned Africa was suffering a "surge in poaching, in particular of elephants", and called for "even stronger law enforcement and demand-reduction efforts across multiple countries, to reverse the current dangerous trends."

Organised [crime syndicates](#) and rebel militia increasingly use poaching to fund insurgencies, reaping the benefits of multi-billion-dollar demand for ivory in China where it is used as decoration and in traditional medicines.



Kenyan police officers look on June 5, 2014 at 302 pieces of ivory, including 228 elephant tusks, found and seized the day before in a warehouse during a raid in the port city of Mombasa

"We are fighting highly organised crime groups that target wildlife for profit. These groups are driven by greed and the scale of their activities can in some places threaten entire ecosystems," said Ben Janse Van Rensburg, head of enforcement for CITES.

"It remains vital for countries to recognise wildlife crime as a serious crime, to deploy the same tools and specialised techniques that we use to fight other organised crimes, such as human and drug trafficking."

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