

Emergency appeal to combat militant elephant poaching in DRC

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As poaching in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) escalates, Fauna & Flora International seeks urgent public support to help ranger teams.

Warning: this story includes some graphic descriptions and images of an extremely distressing nature.

Fauna & Flora International (FFI) has launched an emergency appeal for funds to tackle an upswing in poaching activity in Garamba National Park in DRC – a World Heritage Site that has been listed as 'in danger' by UNESCO.

The appeal is being run through the Rapid Response Facility (RRF) which provides urgent funding for priority conservation areas during times of crisis.

Unprecedented attacks on Garamba's elephants

World Heritage Sites are those that have been identified as important to humanity and thus 'no go' areas for exploitation. As well as being a highly important site in its own right, Garamba is home to a critical population of elephants whose genetic make-up is unlike that found anywhere else on earth.

Unfortunately, however, Garamba National Park is at the centre of a very unstable region – caught between guerrilla gangs to the south and west, and civil war to the north and east. To make matters worse, the high price of ivory makes it an extremely lucrative source of income for rogue militias, who exploit the ivory trade to support their ongoing activities.

In May, FFI reported an unprecedented and disturbing poaching incident in which an entire herd of nine elephants (including calves) was shot and killed from a helicopter. Since then, another hundred elephants have been killed, making a major dent in this unique population.



Alarmingly, young elephants have also been targeted in these latest attacks.
Credit: African Parks.

Like the first incident, these subsequent attacks have targeted not just adult elephants with tusks, but also their young, whose genitals (and, in some cases, brains) had been removed. In the past, calves have generally been ignored by poachers as they offer no commercial value, so this little-understood and new aspect to the poaching crisis in Garamba makes it even more concerning.

Take action now, before it is too late

The RRF team has been working with local partners Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) and the African Parks Network (APN) to tackle this worrying situation and supporting ranger

teams through emergency grants; however more funding is urgently needed.

Please donate now to help us give Garamba's dedicated rangers the vital resources they need to protect the park's [elephants](#) from highly-organised, militarised poaching.

These herds are irreplaceable, and we need to tackle the problem NOW, before it is too late. We want to make sure that a short term conflict isn't responsible for the loss of these magnificent and unique creatures forever.

Provided by Fauna & Flora International

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