

Zimbabwe vows to export elephants despite criticism

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Zimbabwe vowed on Wednesday to shrug off international pressure and forge ahead with the export of live elephants to raise funds for conservation and curb the animals' population.

The government's stance came in the wake of condemnation by animal

rights groups over plans to export at least 62 baby elephants.

"Despite the misplaced concerns about [animal rights](#) and welfare issues, Zimbabwe will continue capturing and translocating live animals to approved appropriate and acceptable destinations," Environment Minister Saviour Kasukuwere told lawmakers.

He said the exports were legal and followed Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) procedures.

The government says Zimbabwe is home to 80,000 elephants but can cope with only 42,000.

"Zimbabwe has currently opted for non-lethal methods such as capture and relocation including live sales and exports," Kasukuwere said.

He added that zoos in the United States, Germany and Australia all had [endangered species](#) such as elephants exported from Zimbabwe.

Last month US-Canadian actress Pamela Anderson appealed to Zimbabwe to stop the export of dozens of baby elephants to China and the United Arab Emirates.

At least 300 elephants died last year in Zimbabwe's Hwange national park after poachers poisoned their watering holes with cyanide.

Park authorities said lack of funds had limited patrols by game rangers leave animals at the mercy of poachers.

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