

Rhino horns, elephant tusks seized in Vietnam

August 14 2015



Mozambican authorities watch as a pile of ivory and rhino horns, part of 2.6 tons of ivory and rhino horns seized in the past years from poaching in Mozambique, burns in Maputo on July 6, 2015

Police in Vietnam have seized more than 700 kilograms (1,500 pounds) of rhino horns and elephant tusks believed to have originated from Mozambique, state media said Friday.

The haul of prized animal parts was discovered hidden in two containers on board a ship carrying ground stones at the central port of Da Nang on Thursday, Tuoi Tre newspaper said.

"The [elephant tusks](#) weighed 593 kilograms and the rhino horn chunks weighed 142 kilograms," the report said, adding that the illegal shipment had come via Malaysia.

The final destination of the shipment was not reported but the boat was scheduled to stop in on Vietnam's northern Hai Phong port.

Communist Vietnam has long been accused of being one of the world's worst countries for [trade](#) in endangered species.

There have been a number of campaigns to warn Vietnamese not to use products from endangered animals but they have had little success.

Demand for rhino horn remains high with people mistakenly believing it can cure anything from cancer to hangovers despite an absolute dearth of scientific evidence.

Horns are made from keratin, the same substance that makes up finger nails and hair in humans.

Tusks and other body parts of elephants are prized for decoration, as talismans, and for use in traditional medicine.

The rhino horn trade was banned globally by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1977.

But the trade has flourished in recent years, particularly thanks to demand from Vietnam and China with devastating results for Africa's

rhino populations.

There are around just 5,000 black rhinos left on the planet and an estimated 20,000 [white rhinos](#), mostly in southern Africa.

In 2011, the western black rhinoceros, a subspecies last seen in Cameroon, was declared extinct.

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