

UK to give £5 million to fight illegal wildlife trade

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A rhino looks through the bars of the holding pens at the Kruger National Park on March 2, 2015

Britain is to give up to £5 million for projects that tackle the illegal wildlife trade, which threatens animals such as elephants, rhinos and tigers, the government is to announce on Wednesday.

"The [illegal trade](#) in animal products is putting some of our most iconic

species like [elephants](#), rhinos and tigers in severe danger," Environment Department minister Rory Stewart will say, according to released remarks.

"This funding will help to reduce the supply of illegal wildlife products by supporting local communities to find new ways of earning a living and stopping poachers and criminal networks from controlling this barbaric trade.

"It will also support action to reduce demand for these products."

The announcement comes following global outrage over the killing of Cecil the lion, who was being tracked by Oxford University researchers.

Several airline carriers announced they would no longer transport big game animals such as lions, leopards, rhinoceros or water buffalo amid outcry over the hunting of the lion in Zimbabwe by an American dentist.

Experts warn that rhinos are on the verge of extinction. Almost 1,300 rhinos were killed last year in a poaching crisis in parts of Africa, while 20,000 elephants were slaughtered in 2013.

The government funding is part of the [illegal wildlife trade](#) challenge fund announced in December 2013, which has already supported 19 projects to protect animals such as elephants, snow leopards and [rhinos](#).

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