

Belgium destroys 1.5 tonnes ivory stockpile

April 9 2014



Seized ivory stacked prior to its destruction at the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Brussels, on April 9, 2014

Belgium crushed 1.5 tonnes of ivory, its entire stockpile of seized ivory tusks and statuettes, as a global campaign to save the world's elephants gathered pace.

"Not only are we losing an elephant every 15 minutes but the [ivory trade](#) is undercutting law and order... and enriching organised [crime syndicates](#)," said Azzedine Downes, who heads the International Fund for Animal

Welfare (IFAW).

As the ivory seized by customs was heaped into a crusher to be turned into dust, Health Minister Laurette Onkelinx said the idea was to send "a strong signal" to elephant poachers.

The European Union is organising talks this week on new measures to fight such trafficking, which claims the lives of some 36,500 [elephants](#) each year, killed for their ivory.

The ivory ash is to be used for a monument denouncing the trade.

The Philippines likewise recently decided to build an elephant monument from the ashes of five tonnes of seized tusks it destroyed in a landmark action against the ivory trade.

The country had been criticised for its role as a transport hub for African ivory being smuggled into other Asian countries where it is used in statues, trinkets and other items to showcase wealth.

In February, France too fired a volley in the world's uphill battle against African elephant poaching, crushing three tonnes of illegal ivory with a street value of one million euros (\$1.4 million) at the foot of the Eiffel Tower.

It was the first major crushing ceremony of ivory in Europe since a global [ivory](#) ban was imposed in 1989.

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