



ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND

2018 OVERVIEW



2018 Overview

The fate of elephants in much of Africa still hangs in the balance, but extraordinary efforts by Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) grantees in 2018 saw increased numbers of poachers and ivory traffickers brought to justice and elephants protected.

Our partners made tremendous progress in reducing poaching in some key areas, though complex challenges remain in others. Significant strides are being made towards disrupting the organized crime networks behind much of the ivory trade; however, large amounts of ivory continue to reach Asia. The success of China in closing its ivory trade is a significant gain, but risks being undermined by the growing threat of underground markets. Despite the challenges, there are indications that the overall situation is improving.

The ECF is committed to protecting elephant populations in Africa and preventing any from going extinct due to ivory poaching. In 2019 we will be further scaling up our strategic investments directed towards ending the ivory crisis once and for all.



SUCCESSSES

- China, the world's largest end user of ivory, has closed its domestic ivory market.
- Hong Kong will close its ivory sales over a five-year period.
- Increasing numbers of ivory traffickers are being arrested and convicted; others are being closely pursued.
- The Akasha brothers—major Kenyan drug traffickers closely linked to the illegal ivory trade—pleaded guilty to drug-related charges in New York.
- Levels of poaching have reduced in some key elephant strongholds, including Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zakouma National Park in Chad, North Luangwa National Park in Zambia, and in much of Kenya, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.

CHALLENGES

- Ivory sales have shifted from China to Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam, where law enforcement is weak.
- Kenyan Feisal Ali Mohamed won his appeal against a 20-year ivory trafficking sentence.
- Large amounts of ivory are still moving from Africa to Asia.
- Elephant poaching is still rampant in the forests of Central Africa.
- The last desert elephants in Mali are under renewed threat, because of the reduced effectiveness of the army-led anti-poaching unit.

THE ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND


The ongoing elephant poaching crisis in Africa is driven by a complex, international ivory trade that thrives on poverty, insecurity, organized crime, corruption, and greed. To tackle this critical issue head on, Save The Elephants and the Wildlife Conservation Network created the Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF).

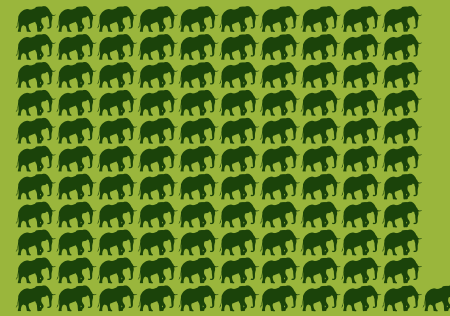
The ECF works with a coalition of individuals, scientists, conservation organizations and governments to stop the killing of elephants, prevent ivory from reaching markets, and reduce the profitability of the trade in ivory products.

The ECF supports the best initiatives in need of funds regardless of where they come from. The organizations able to make the most impact, whether they are tiny local NGOs or larger multinational institutions, get our support. A team of experts works to ensure strategic and effective allocation of the funds generously provided by our donors. The ECF is able to respond quickly and with minimum bureaucracy, deploying funds in as little as 24 hours when necessary. Uniquely, 100% of funds are used to support on-the-ground programs that save elephants—not a single cent goes to administrative fees or overhead.

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In just over five years, the ECF has deployed more than \$16.7 million to the best efforts by organizations large and small to save elephants and end the ivory crisis. With poaching, trafficking, and demand for ivory still at unsustainable levels, the ECF will not stop until the crisis has ended, and elephant populations across Africa are no longer under threat.

 = 1,000



111,000

Reduction in Africa's elephant population between 2007 and 2015.

220

Projects supported by the ECF since it started.

69

Organizations receiving grants from the ECF to date.

0%

Of your donation going to administrative fees or overhead.



52% of funding allocated to **ANTI-POACHING PROJECTS.**

37% of funding allocated to **ANTI-TRAFFICKING PROJECTS.**

11% of funding allocated to **DEMAND REDUCTION PROJECTS.**

35

Countries with ECF investments.

16.7 MILLION

USD Granted to **STOP THE KILLING OF ELEPHANTS** and **STOP THE TRAFFICKING** and **DEMAND FOR THEIR IVORY.**



Anti-Poaching Update

Garamba National Park, in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo, is under assault from many armed groups, including the Lord's Resistance Army. Elephant numbers declined from about 10,000 in the 1990s to little more than 1,000 today, and the last wild northern white rhinos in the world were lost from Garamba in the early 2000s. African Parks took over management of the park in 2008. When the park director was badly injured and two rangers were killed during a contact with armed poachers in 2016, African Parks decided to respond with a major surge in law enforcement. The ECF has been supporting law enforcement efforts in Garamba since 2015. We are pleased to report that this investment is bearing fruit. There has been a massive decline in elephant poaching since 2016, with 96 lost in that year, 50 last year, and only two poached this year to-date.

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The elephant population in Garamba National Park remains one of the largest in the region despite heavy poaching in previous years.
© Chris Thouless

This year 127 calves under the age of five were counted in Zakouma, compared to only one in 2011.

This year there has been good news from Zakouma National Park in Chad, which was also previously massively affected by poaching. By 2010 there were only 450 elephants, down from 5,000 in 2002. The remaining elephants were so traumatized that they stayed in a single group and did not breed. Thanks to close protection by African Parks rangers, guided by ECF-funded elephant tracking collars, the elephants have started to breed again and range more widely. This year 127 calves under the age of five were counted, compared to only one in 2011.



The Zakouma National Park elephant population has stabilized thanks to African Parks' efforts, including close protection by anti-poaching teams.
© Chris Thouless

After the discovery of many elephant carcasses during an official aerial survey in Botswana in August, there was much press coverage of a supposed massacre of elephants. However, these elephant carcasses were not the result of a single dramatic incident, but of a gradual increase of poaching in Botswana; an increase that is not yet seriously impacting the overall population, which is the largest in Africa. The ECF has been providing support through Space for Giants to increase the investigative capacity of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks. We also support anti-trafficking work in neighboring countries through which Botswana's ivory passes.

The iconic desert elephants of Mali are in trouble again. After heavy poaching in 2015-16 which resulted in the loss of about a third of the population, a new anti-poaching unit supported by the Mali Elephant Project and Chengeta Wildlife became operational in 2017. Despite tough conditions, with the elephant range controlled by Islamist rebels, no further elephants were killed for about a year. Unfortunately, when the personnel of the unit were changed, capacity was much reduced and twelve more elephants were killed in 2018. Only an estimated 100 to 200 remain. While work on the ground must continue, we are striving to create the stronger political support that is needed to save the elephants of the Gourma.



The Gourma anti-poaching unit in Mali works under constant threat of attack from Islamist rebels.
© Nigel Kuhn

The forest elephants of Central Africa continue to be in critical peril. The last two strongholds of Gabon and Congo are under severe assault. The National Parks Agency in Gabon, the Wildlife Conservation Society and African Parks in Congo, and the Zoological Society of London in Cameroon are heavily engaged in elephant protection despite the challenges of operating in such hostile environments and over vast areas. There are some signs of hope, but what is clear is that substantial investment is needed to secure forest elephant refuges.

Anti-Trafficking Update

The campaign against the illegal ivory trade faced a severe setback when Feisal Ali Mohamed, who was convicted of possessing two tons of ivory in Mombasa, Kenya in 2016 and sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment, won his appeal and was released in August 2018. The circumstances around the success of his appeal are murky, but the weakness of the original prosecution case was a major issue. This emphasizes the need to build stronger cases against ivory traffickers. To do this, the ECF will continue to support WildlifeDirect, a Kenyan organization that has pursued the Feisal Ali Mohamed case and related ones at considerable personal risk. We are also funding investigative mentors within the Kenya Wildlife Service through the International Centre for Asset Recovery and the Wildlife Justice Commission.



Feisal Ali Mohamed during his appeal hearing in Mombasa in August 2018.

Feisal Ali Mohamed's acquittal emphasizes the need to build up stronger cases against ivory traffickers.

There has, however, been significant success prosecuting senior figures in Feisal Ali Mohamed's wider network. The Akasha brothers, notorious drug dealers from Mombasa, linked to Feisal and to ivory trafficking, have pleaded guilty to drug charges. They were arrested in 2016 and fought extradition for two years before being transferred to the Southern District of New York. The Akasha case should provide evidence on wildlife trafficking networks and result in their disruption.

The role of Vietnamese crime networks in ivory and other wildlife trafficking was revealed by the Environmental Investigation Agency in their report 'Exposing the Hydra'. The report also showed the increasing importance of Malaysia and Laos in trans-shipment. As a result of this investigation, the ECF is starting to support direct law enforcement action in these countries.



EIA report 'Exposing the Hydra'.
© Environmental Investigation Agency

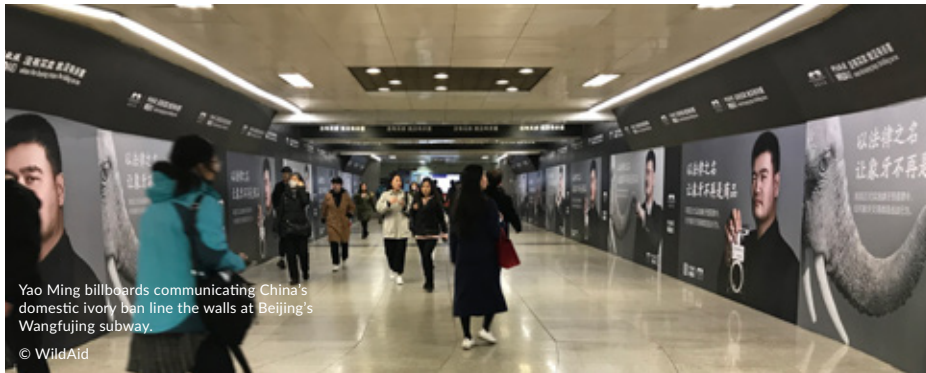


Vincent Opyene of Uganda's Natural Resource Conservation Network at the Tusk Trust Awards with HRH The Duke of Cambridge.
© Getty images

Our support to partners in Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Cameroon, and Zambia has led to large numbers of arrests of ivory traffickers, mostly low and mid-level operators. Achieving arrests and convictions of higher-level traffickers, who may never actually handle ivory, is much more difficult. Some of our grantees are deeply engaged in investigating networks extending across Africa, painstakingly collecting evidence that will lead to strong prosecutions. In recognition of his contribution, Vincent Opyene, who leads the Natural Resource Conservation Network (NRCN) in Uganda, was awarded the Tusk Award for Conservation in Africa by HRH The Duke of Cambridge in November. The ECF has been a major supporter of NRCN since 2015.

The ECF is supporting United for Wildlife's financial crime taskforce, which aims to make information from the financial sector available for use by wildlife crime investigators. Financial investigations are seen as a new and powerful tool for tackling wildlife crime; this was highlighted at the Illegal Wildlife Trade conference in London in October.

Demand Reduction Update



Yao Ming billboards communicating China's domestic ivory ban line the walls at Beijing's Wangfujing subway.

© WildAid

The ivory sales ban in China went into full effect at the beginning of the year. There are still questions about its implementation and some of the potential loopholes, such as the cultural artefacts exemption. It appears that legal ivory outlets have closed, but there is still much ivory for sale at illegal outlets and on the internet. The Natural Resources Defense Council is working with the Chinese government to help resolve these issues and WildAid launched an outreach campaign in Asia to reinforce the message that buying ivory is now illegal.

Hong Kong also agreed to ban its domestic ivory sales, ahead of schedule. WWF Hong Kong and WildAid helped to ensure that the vote in the Legislative Council was overwhelmingly in favor of the ban, through an outreach campaign and lobbying of legislators. The ban will only be implemented in five years to allow traders to exhaust existing ivory stocks, and our partners are working to ensure that Hong Kong is not used to launder illegal ivory in the meantime.

In China there is still much ivory for sale at illegal outlets and online.

There is increasing evidence that illegal sales of ivory have been displaced from China to neighboring countries, particularly Myanmar, Vietnam, and Laos, with Thailand and Cambodia also countries of concern. We funded a major report to shine a spotlight on the illegal ivory trade in Myanmar, following a visit by Lucy Vigne and Esmond Bradley Martin—Esmond's last piece of work before his tragic death earlier this year. This confirmed Mong La, in the Golden Triangle bordering China, as a continued problem for illegal ivory sales. Law enforcement will be

challenging as this area is not under central control; a possible approach would be to tackle the problem from the Chinese side.



To attract Chinese buyers, these carved pendants on sale in Yangon in Myanmar are tied with red string. Red is an auspicious color in Chinese culture, often used for merchandising.

© Lucy Vigne

Looking Ahead: Plans for 2019

The threats faced by elephants are complex and ever-shifting. Investment by the ECF has allowed the coalition of organizations that we support to close the net on poachers and traffickers. However, as law enforcement has become more effective in some areas criminals are concentrating on remaining soft targets, such as the forest elephants of Central Africa. We look ahead at the year to come with renewed determination to confront the many issues still facing elephants, and to continue our unswerving ambition to end this crisis, particularly focusing on the following areas.

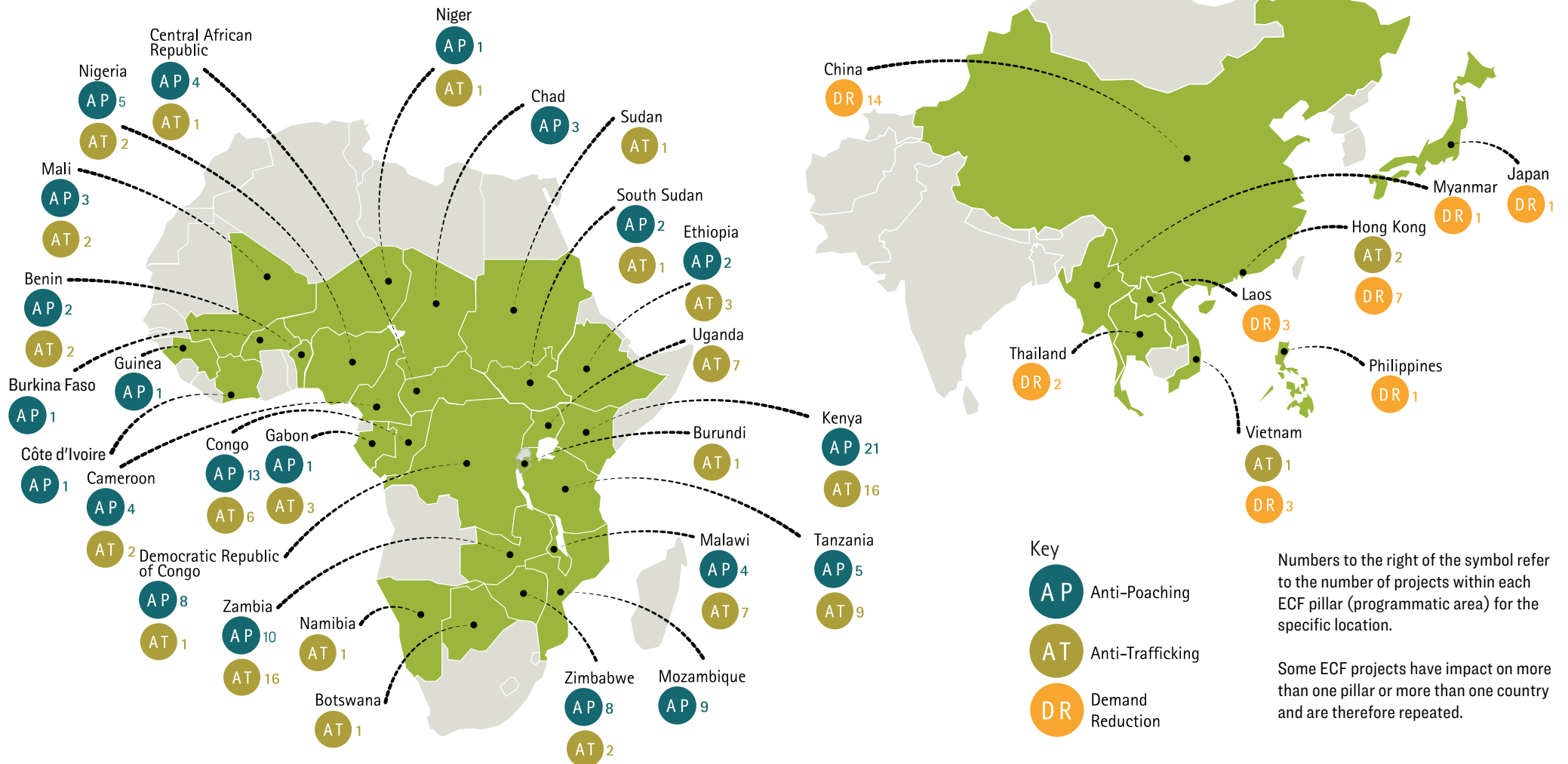
- Increase support for law enforcement to protect forest elephants in Central Africa, especially in Gabon and Congo.
- Continue supporting anti-poaching operations wherever there is a significant current or emerging threat to elephants.
- Bring senior members of transnational crime syndicates to justice.
- Pursue ivory trafficking investigations from Africa to Asia.
- Provide advice to the Chinese government to close the loopholes in the domestic ivory ban.
- Encourage the Hong Kong government to make wildlife crime fall under the Serious Organised Crime ordinance, ensuring that there are substantial penalties for trafficking in wildlife parts and products.
- Conduct more frequent ivory market monitoring in Asia to guide demand reduction campaigns and law enforcement action.
- Continue and extend the use of financial investigations to address wildlife crime.



© Roy Terlien

GLOBAL INVESTMENTS TO END THE IVORY CRISIS

ECF PROJECTS BY COUNTRY AND TYPE OF PROJECT



* The ECF has also funded one anti-trafficking project that spans East Africa and twelve that impact multiple regions in Africa. In addition, the ECF has funded one anti-trafficking project and three demand reduction projects in the USA.

We are honored to support the following inspirational partners, each playing a critical role in stemming the poaching of elephants, trafficking of and demand for ivory. Their dedication and courage, often under very challenging conditions, is both commendable and crucial as we fight to secure a future for wild elephants.

OUR PARTNERS

ADM Capital Foundation	Mara Elephant Project
African Parks	Mareja Community Conservation Project
Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux, Gabon	Natural Resource Conservation Network
Big Life Foundation	Natural Resources Defense Council
Biocarbon Partners	Northern Rangelands Trust
Born Free Foundation	PAMS Foundation
Centre on Illicit Networks and Transnational Organised Crime	Save The Elephants
Chengeta Wildlife	Southern Tanzania Elephant Project
Conservation Justice	Space for Giants
Conservation Lake Tanganyika	Stop Ivory
Conservation Lower Zambezi	Tashinga Initiative Trust
Conservation South Luangwa	The WILD Foundation
East African Wildlife Society	The Zambezi Society
Elephants Alive	Tikki Hywood Trust
Elephant Voices	Tsavo Trust
Environmental Investigation Agency	Uganda Conservation Foundation
Fauna and Flora International	University of Utah IsoForensics
Focus Africa	University of Washington
Focused Conservation Solutions	Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust
Forgotten Parks Foundation	WildAid
Frankfurt Zoological Society	WildlifeDirect
Freeland	Wildlife Action Group Malawi
Game Rangers International	Wildlife Conservation Global
Global Wildlife Conservation	Wildlife Conservation Society
Gorongosa Restoration Project	Wildlife Crime Prevention
International Centre for Asset Recovery, Basel Institute on Governance	Wildlife Justice Commission
International Fund for Animal Welfare	Wildlife Traxx Consultancy
Legal Assistance Centre, Namibia	Wildlife Works Elephant Protection Trust
Lilongwe Wildlife Trust	Wings for Conservation
Lukuru Wildlife Research Foundation	Working Dogs for Conservation
Maisha Consulting	WWF
	Zoological Society of London



THANK YOU

You make it all happen.

The successes that the ECF and our partners have achieved, and our strong belief that the crisis can be conquered with continued, persistent effort, could not be sustained without your financial support and ongoing commitment to our vision. On behalf of Save the Elephants, the Wildlife Conservation Network, our partners in the field, and the elephants themselves, we express our sincerest gratitude.

Alongside our many private philanthropists, we are particularly grateful for the innovative backing that we have received from our major institutional supporters – the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, #knotonmyplanet, and Tiffany & Co.



SAVE THE ELEPHANTS



elephantcrisisfund.org



WCN

Wildlife Conservation Network