



Conservation | Education | Action

March 14, 2018

The Honourable Catherine McKenna, PC
Minister of Environment & Climate Change
Centre Block, Suite 433C
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister,

Re: Canada and the Protection of Elephants

Elephanatics, a Canadian elephant advocacy organization, on behalf of the undersigned Canadian and international conservation and animal protection groups, scientists, Canadian Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assemblies, urges the Canadian government to take a global leadership role in the conservation of African and Asian elephants by closing Canada's domestic elephant ivory trade.

In addition to the 95 signatories below, we have an online petition with well over 120,000 signatures of concerned citizens urging the government to take this step. A hard copy is available on request and the petition is at: <http://bit.ly/ivoryfreecanada>. This proves that even though elephants are not native to Canada, elephants are still important to many Canadians.

Results from four recent and independent scientific studies underline our concern about the survival of both Asian and African (savanna and forest) elephants.

- **Savanna** elephant populations **declined by 30%** between 2007 and 2014. The rate of decline accelerated during these years. At least 93% of savanna elephants in 18 countries were surveyed.¹
- **Forest** elephant numbers **declined by 62%** between 2002 and 2011 and lost 30% of their range.² Minkébé National Park in Gabon used to hold the most forest elephants in Central Africa. Scientists recorded a 78 - 81 % decline in numbers between 2004 and 2014 due to poaching.³
- The **Asian** elephant population has **declined by at least 50%** in the last 60-75 years.⁴

Every year approximately 20,000 African elephants are killed for their ivory.⁵ Conservationists and scientists agree that they will disappear across much of their current range within our lifetimes if demand for their tusks is not reduced. The flow of illegal ivory through legal domestic markets is well documented. Japan's largely unregulated domestic ivory market is contributing to illegal international trade, as documented in a 2017 report released by TRAFFIC (the wildlife trade monitoring network).⁶

There are excellent precedents that Canada can follow to close the domestic trade in elephant ivory. At the 2016 meeting of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) congress, it was overwhelmingly decided that globally, governments must close their legal domestic markets for elephant ivory as a matter of urgency. In August, 2016, France became the first European country to ban its domestic trade. Shortly thereafter China stunned the world by announcing a close of domestic trade by

December 2017, which it has done. The United Kingdom recently solicited feedback on a proposed domestic ivory trade ban and was overwhelmed by more than 70,000 responses and 85% of them supporting the ban.⁷

In January 2018, Hong Kong's legislature voted in favour of banning all ivory sales by 2021. Taiwan will soon announce a ban on domestic ivory sales starting in 2020. Singapore is considering a full ban. Because the US Administration over-turned their ban on elephant trophy imports last week, there is additional onus on the rest of the world to increase their efforts to protect elephants.

While Canada may not represent the largest market for elephant ivory, by banning the domestic trade it signals to the international community that Canada is committed to leading the fight to save the world's most iconic keystone species.

We request the support of elephant conservation through the closure of all loopholes for the transit of elephant ivory into and throughout Canada. More specifically we ask the government to:

1. ban all **domestic trade** of elephant ivory; and
2. make the import, export and re-export of **all** elephant ivory illegal, including raw ivory, worked ivory, ivory obtained through trophy hunting and ivory acquired prior to 1990.

Thank you for your consideration of our letter on this important issue. We would like to request a telephone meeting to discuss this further. If you have any questions or require further information in order to take action, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Signed,



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cc Dr Stephen Lucas, Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada

Canadian Organizations



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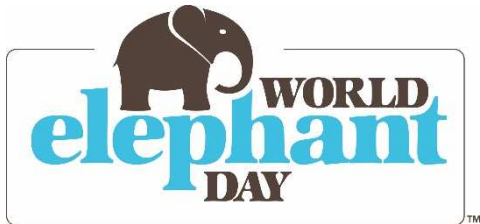
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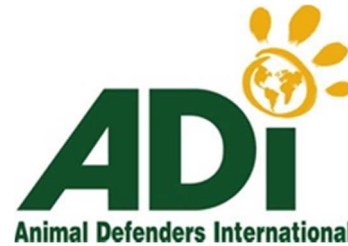
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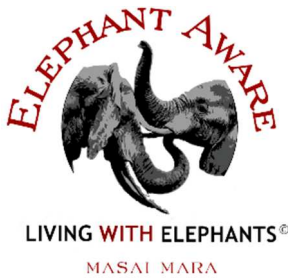
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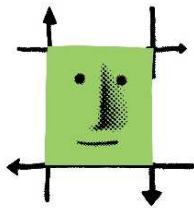
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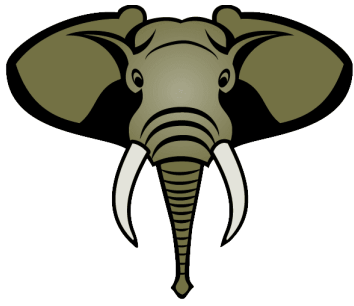
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References

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