

Botswana's First Elephant Hunt to be Auctioned in Canada

Canada shockingly still allows elephant ivory trade

VANCOUVER January 22, 2020 – Amid global recognition of the threatened survival of elephants, a hunting club in Calgary is poised to auction off the first licence for a foreigner to hunt elephant in Botswana. The Ivory-Free Canada Coalition, a partnership of Canadian non-profit organisations, including: Humane Society International/Canada, Jane Goodall Institute of Canada, World Elephant Day, Elephanatics, and the Global March for Elephants and Rhino-Toronto, has petitioned the federal government for two years to ban the import, domestic sale, and export of all elephant ivory, including hunting trophies.

The Ivory-Free Canada Coalition believes a full elephant ivory ban in Canada is more important than ever, as the Calgary chapter of Safari Club International is shockingly set to award the elephant hunt to the highest bidder at their 27th Annual Fundraiser on January 25 (provided the bid is over \$84,000 CAD). Botswana President Mokgweetsi Masisi lifted a ban on elephant hunting in May last year, inciting worldwide outrage. He previously gifted stools made from elephant feet to regional leaders during a meeting to discuss the animals' fate. The ban was installed six years ago by Ian Khama, Botswana's previous president.

Michael Bernard, Deputy Director – HSI/Canada, stated: "It is absolutely appalling that in this day and age Canada is still complicit with the slaughter of elephants for trophies. We are urgently calling on the Canadian Government to ban all trade in elephant ivory and end Canada's role in further endangering these magnificent creatures."

Fran Duthie, President of Elephanatics, added: "Statistics have shown large-tusked elephants are in decline and need to be protected from trophy hunting and poaching. With the increase in illegal trade in ivory the need to ban trophy hunting is even more necessary."

Patricia Sims, Founder of World Elephant Day and President – World Elephant Society, also stated: "The trophy hunting of elephants is atrocious and needs to be banned worldwide. Elephants are a vital keystone species, they are the caretakers of their habitats and climate change mitigators in their role of maintaining biodiversity. Killing elephants ultimately destroys habitats and Canada needs to take a stand now to ban elephant ivory and protect elephants for their survival and the health of our planet."

A staggering 20,000 African elephants are killed each year. Scientists anticipate they will be extinct in the wild within 20 years if threats continue. While poaching is the main threat to elephants, legal trophy hunting only exacerbates the threat and drives up the demand for elephant ivory.

Both the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Flora and Fauna (CITES) and members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) have asked

all countries to ban their domestic trade of ivory to save elephants. At least nine countries and 10 US states have done so. At the last IUCN Congress, Canada – along with Japan, Namibia and South Africa – refused to support the motion on domestic ivory trade bans.

Over 100 African elephant tusks were imported into Canada as hunting trophies over the past decade, according to the data Canada reported to CITES in its annual trade reports. Yet, exporting countries reported that over 300 African elephant tusks were exported to Canada in this same time period. The reason for the discrepancy is unknown.

Botswana was previously considered one of the last safe havens for elephants. It is home to 130,000 elephants which is almost a third of Africa's total population.

In order to press the Canadian government into action, the Ivory-Free Canada Coalition launched a petition to ban elephant ivory and hunting trophies at change.org/ivoryfreecanada. With over 517,000 signatures, it is one of the largest Canadian petitions on Change.org for 2019.

For interviews and/or more information, please call or email the media contact below.

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Media contact: Christopher Paré, director of communications, HSI/Canada – office: 514-395-2914 x 206, cell: 438-402-0643, email: cpare@hsi.org

Media contact: Tessa Vanderkop, Director of Strategic Relationships and Advocacy, Elephanatics – cell: 604.789.8886, email: elephanaticsinfo@gmail.com, www.elephanatics.org

The Ivory-Free Canada Coalition is a partnership of non-profit organizations petitioning the Canadian government to ban the import, domestic trade and export of all elephant ivory, including hunting trophies. The coalition includes Elephanatics, Global March for Elephants and Rhinos-Toronto, World Elephant Day, Humane Society International/Canada and the Jane Goodall Institute of Canada. Sign the Petition: www.change.org/ivoryfreecanada

Humane Society International/Canada is a leading force for animal protection, with active programs in companion animals, wildlife and habitat protection, marine mammal preservation, farm animal welfare and animals in research. HSI/Canada is proud to be a part of Humane Society International which, together with its affiliates, constitutes one of the world's largest animal protection organizations. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty worldwide and on the web at hsicanada.ca.