



May 15, 2024

Dear Member of Parliament,

A coalition of organizations co-signed a letter written by the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime, September 2023, addressing the need to strengthen the international legal framework to tackle the illegal wildlife trade (IWT). The letter was sent to the Hon. Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change and copied to the Hon. Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Hon. Arif Virani, P.C., M.P., Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, asking for ways to better understand Canada's views on how best to tackle wildlife trafficking at the international level.

Despite the scale and impact of IWT - one of the largest illegal markets in the world - a global agreement covering this topic still does not exist. We are writing to request that you help support this initiative by encouraging the Canadian Government to further consider the merits of a global agreement, taking the form of an additional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). As stated in the [letter](#):

“The size and scale of wildlife trafficking is truly a global challenge and one that demands urgent action. The value of illegal trade has been estimated at between \$7 and \$23 billion per year.” A report by FINTRAC acknowledges, “illegal wildlife trade not only affects Canada, but poses a serious threat internationally”. Canada has signaled that this is a priority issue to address, both at home and abroad, and we were pleased to see the inclusion of the subject in the December 2021 Mandate Letter for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) committing Canada to “work with partners to curb illegal wildlife trade”.

In the same mandate letter to Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault, the Canadian Government mandated an end to the elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn trade in Canada. We were very pleased to see these regulations enacted November 20<sup>th</sup> 2023. It is now time to deliver on the third item in this part of the mandate letter: new actions to combat the illegal wildlife trade.

Additionally, in December 2023, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released an updated report containing the views of 73 States and the European Union on the potential of an additional Protocol to the UNTOC covering wildlife trafficking. UNODC did not produce an analysis of the report, but the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime - at the request of Angola - did and concluded that around 78% of the responding States are either in favour of a

Protocol or open to discussing it:

[PRESS-RELEASE-07-DEC-UN-report-shows-clear-majority-of-States-now-favour-a-new-global-agreement-against-wildlife-trafficking-.pdf \(endwildlifecrime.org\)](https://endwildlifecrime.org/press-releases/press-release-07-dec-un-report-shows-clear-majority-of-states-now-favour-a-new-global-agreement-against-wildlife-trafficking-.pdf)

February marked the 10th anniversary of a declaration signed by Canada and 41 other countries at the first London conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade, 2014, to implement actions to:

- (1) improve law enforcement,
- (2) improve legal frameworks against IWT
- (3) reduce demand for illegal wildlife and
- (4) support alternative livelihoods.

<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/news/sundry/2014/london-wildlife-conference-declaration-140213.pdf>

As a Member of Parliament you have an important role to play in the future of our planet and the wildlife that we are intrinsically tied to for our own survival. The illegal wildlife trade undermines governance, corrupts, and weakens security within a country, as well as threatens its economies and biodiversity. Canada is putting together its action plan for the Global Biodiversity Framework to show action on Kunming-Montréal convention prior to CoP 16 in the fall. Because the illegal wildlife trade is a direct threat to biodiversity the inclusion of a new protocol under UNTOC would be proactive to add to its strategy on how best to curb biodiversity loss. A protocol under UNTOC would also help bring other countries up to Canadian standards for wildlife trade.

It is imperative we end wildlife trafficking to cease the destruction of global biodiversity, help mitigate climate change, avoid future pandemics, and protect communities and economies that are reliant on the use of sustainable natural resources.

Please bring this topic forward to the Environment Minister and other members of Parliament and the House of Commons as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,

  
Fran Duthie  
President Elephanatics