




Teacher Backgrounder

This summary provides the **why** and **what** of the campaign in a single, digestible page for busy educators and administrators.

Developed by Elephanatics in partnership with World Elephant Day to support global action against wildlife crime.

 The UNTOC Protocol	A Teacher Backgrounder
Organization	Elephanatics - World Elephant Day
Policy Focus	The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) Protocol
Objective	Urge the Government of Canada to actively support the establishment of a global agreement against wildlife trafficking.

1. The Core Problem: Organized Wildlife Crime

Fact	Connection to Civics/Global Issues
Scale of Slaughter	Approximately 20,000 elephants are killed annually for their ivory, driving species toward extinction. The African forest elephant is now Critically Endangered .

Crime Status	The illegal wildlife trade is valued at over 100 billion USD per year , making it the 4th largest organized crime globally. This is not a conservation issue alone; it is a serious financial crime issue.
The Legal Gap	There is currently no single global treaty that requires countries to treat wildlife trafficking as a <i>serious crime</i> with mandatory severe penalties. This gap allows criminal syndicates to operate with low risk and high profit.

2. Canada's Role: Past Victory, Next Challenge

- **Past Victory:** In November 2023, the Canadian government enacted historic new regulations that **severely restrict the import and export** of elephant ivory and rhino horn, including banning hunting trophies.
- **Next Challenge:** While grateful for the new regulations on trade, Canada must now exert leadership on the international level. The magnitude of the crime requires a global, unified legal response. **This action is urgent, as global policy decisions will be made at the UNTOC Conference of the Parties (CoP13) in October 2026.**
- **Advocacy Angle:** Students' letters support the principle that wildlife crime should be treated as an act of transnational organized crime, which is the exact problem the UNTOC Protocol solves.

3. The Solution: The UNTOC Protocol

The UNTOC Protocol is a proposed legal tool that would require all signatory countries to treat wildlife trafficking as a serious transnational crime.

- **Mandatory Penalties:** It would automatically enforce a **maximum penalty of at least four years imprisonment** for organized wildlife crime—a powerful deterrent for syndicates.
- **International Cooperation:** It unlocks global cooperation mechanisms, including shared intelligence, coordinated investigation, extradition, and asset forfeiture (seizing criminal money).
- **Public Health & Security:** Wildlife crime fuels armed groups (like the LRA) and increases the risk of **zoonotic diseases** (transmitted from animals to humans, like SARS and COVID-19), making this a national security and public health issue.

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