



HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL
UNITED KINGDOM

The Hon. Ms Edna Molewa
Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs
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South Africa

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Dear Minister,

We, the undersigned organisations, wish to commend you for the broad-ranging actions that your Ministry has taken in an effort to protect your country's rhino populations.

As wildlife conservation NGOs with experience of both field-based conservation in Africa and of the extensive wildlife markets in East Asia, we are well aware of the forces that you are currently fighting.

Research recently carried out in Vietnam shows that prices for rhino horn in the traditional medicine pharmacies range from US\$36,000 to US\$83,000 per kg. The incentive to kill rhinos has never been higher.

You may be aware that a spate of rhino horn thefts has occurred in Europe in recent years. Since 2009, at least 28 rhino horns (many of them dating back to the 19th century) have been stolen from museums in countries such as the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Belgium. Europol has stated that these incidents show clear signs of being connected to organised crime. This is a new feature that we have not come across before, not even during the last rhino poaching crisis of the late 1980s and early 1990s, and it indicates to us that the demand for rhino horn has reached an all-time high.

While we appreciate the measures that you have already taken, and those that you plan to take, with regard to rhino trophy hunting in South Africa, we strongly encourage you to implement the rhino hunting moratorium mentioned in your statement of 29th August.

As you are aware, a significant proportion of the illegal killing of rhinos that has taken place in the past few years is directly attributable to the actions of greedy and unscrupulous hunters. Sadly, the South African courts, while rigorously pursuing the foreign nationals implicated in these illegal acts, have shown less rigour in the case of South African hunters, one of whom reportedly had his bail reduced significantly and was subsequently permitted by the provincial authorities to continue buying rhinos.

In our view, it would be entirely reasonable to implement a moratorium on hunting until such time as the potential effects of the new measures have been assessed and until it is clear whether or not the justice system is able to mete out adequate penalties for local rhino owners and hunters who have been implicated in illegal activities. From the point of view of the rhinos, a breathing space is much needed, particularly as there is no way of knowing how many more will be poached.

Celebrating Animals | Confronting Cruelty
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Once again, we appreciate all the measures that you have put in place for South Africa's rhinos and we urge you to introduce a hunting moratorium and tighten the legalisation concerning trade in rhino horn.

We wish you well in your deliberations

Yours Sincerely,

Mark Jones, Executive Director, Humane Society International/UK

Mary Rice, Executive Director, Environmental Investigation Agency

Joanna Cary-Elwes, Campaigns Manager, Elephant Family

Dr Kay H. Farmer, Chair of Advisory Council, Pan African Sanctuary Alliance

Belinda Wright, Executive Director, Wildlife Protection Society of India

Erika Ceballos, Founder and President, Campaign against the Cruelty to Animals

David Neale, Animal Welfare Director, Animals Asia Foundation

William W Rossiter, President, Cetacean Society International

Dr Shirley McGreal, Chairwoman, International Primate Protection League

Ashok Kumar, Vice Chairman and Trustee, Wildlife Trust of India

Dr Christoph Schmidt, Chairman, Pro Wildlife

Melanie Shepherd, Chief Executive, David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation

Marie Levine, Executive Director, Shark Research Institute

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