

TUSK TASK FORCE'S MISSION IS TO SPREAD THE MESSAGE THAT POACHING WILDLIFE PARTS IS NOT JUST ABOUT THE ANIMALS ANYMORE; IT'S NOW A GLOBAL SECURITY ISSUE SINCE POACHING FUNDS TERRORISM.

- **Every 15 minutes an elephant is killed for its tusk.** That's 4 an hour, 96 a day, 672 a week, 2,880 a month, and 34,560 a year. A total of 35,000 elephants were killed in 2013 alone.
- **Wildlife trafficking has an estimated \$23-billion-a-year market** according to the U.S. Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division (John C. Cruden, 02/11/14).
- **Rhino population is down at 97% since 1960 and one is killed every 13 hours, every day.** Rhino population figures include Black (<5,000), Southern White (<20,000), Greater One-Horned (<3,000), Sumatran (<100), and Javan (35-45). **The Northern White Rhino is now extinct.** Vietnam and China are the world's biggest consumers of rhino horn due to non-regulation and illicit trade.
- **Individual elephant tusks can sell for tens of thousands of dollars, and reports indicate that the substantial portions of these illegal profits are ending up in the hands of transnational organized crime syndicates that also conduct trafficking of humans, drugs, and weapons** and extremist groups like al-Shabaab in the Sudan and Somalia, Boko Haram in Nigeria, and Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda that use the proceeds to finance human rights abuses and terrorist activities.
- **Consumer demand, stimulated by the presence of legal domestic markets in many countries around the world, is elevating the price of ivory and driving elephant poaching.** Within the United States, assessed by some to be the second largest commercial market for ivory in the world, studies indicate that illegal ivory is frequently sold alongside legal ivory in shops across the country. It is impossible to distinguish legal ivory from illegal ivory without an expensive lab test. This renders enforcement of existing U.S. law extremely difficult, and **traffickers frequently exploit these regulatory loopholes in order to sell poached ivory in legal markets at the local/state level.**
- A September 2013 report issued by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime identified the **notorious al-Shabaab, the Somali-based affiliate of al-Qae'da** (and has been designated by the U.S. as a foreign terrorist organization) **raises \$600,000 a month from poaching to fund all of its operations that includes the Westgate shopping mall attack in Nairobi, Kenya on September 21, 2013.**
- **Supplies of ivory from Africa and elsewhere are usually purchased and distributed by Chinese mafia organizations** in Hong Kong, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States with those funds being recycled to purchase arms for poachers and terrorists to use.
- **Boko Haram, who kidnapped the 200 Nigerian school girls and beheaded hostages,** publicly declared that they will directly resort to poaching as a primary source of income since **"it is easier than kidnapping and extortion."**
- At a hearing at the UN General Council in September 2013, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations cited the link between terrorism and illegal ivory sales, citing the murder of park rangers and also saying **"Wildlife trafficking is increasingly associated with rebel and terrorist groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and al-Shabaab, an al-Qaeda terrorist cell in East Africa"** making ivory tusks as a primary resource for this organizations due to demand by global markets.

Sources: [World Threat Assessment of the Intelligence Community](#) (ODNI, 02/26/15); [National Security Strategy](#) (EOPOTUS, 02/06/15); [Ivory's Curse: The Militarization & Professionalization of Poaching in Africa](#) (Born Free USA/c4ads, 04, 2014); [A Rapid Response Assessment: The Environmental Crime Crisis/Threats to Sustainable Development from Illegal Exploitation and Trade in Wildlife and Forest Resources](#) (United Nations Environmental Programme/INTERPOL, 06/26/14)

IF CURRENT POACHING RATES CONTINUE OR INCREASE DUE TO DEMAND, ELEPHANTS AND RHINOS WILL BE EXTINCT WITHIN TEN YEARS.