

Key Progress on Illegal Ivory Trade Suppression in Thailand

Thailand attaches utmost importance in combating wildlife trafficking, closely cooperates with international organizations and actively participates in actions to terminate ivory trade in Thailand. According to the latest analysis of the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS analysis), Thailand's status on illegal ivory trade has been upgraded from the 'primary concern' to the 'secondary concern' by CITES which was announced at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP17) in 2016. This positive development was highly complimented by CITES Secretary-General. The upgraded status comes as a result of the progress made under Thailand's National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) in regulating ivory trade in the market.

During the 69th Meeting of the CITES Standing Committee (SC69) in December 2017, Thailand was recognized as a country that substantially achieved NIAP process with various measures having been implemented to combat domestic illegal ivory trade through legal reform, law enforcement and international cooperation. **The Standing Committee also agreed to consider whether Thailand should exit the NIAP process at SC70 to be convened in Sochi, Russia in October 2018.**

Significant progress made in combating illegal trafficking of Ivory Trade by Thailand are as follows;

Legal Reform

- **The Wild Animal Reservation and Protection Act B.E. 2557 (2014):** The amendment, imposes the prohibition of trade in African elephant ivory in Thailand. The violation of this Act shall result in imprisonment of up to 4 years.
- **The Elephant Ivory Act B.E. 2558 (2015):** The amendment aims to control the possession and ivory trade derived from domesticated elephants in Thailand. Possession of ivory, whether as personal effects or commercial purposes, must be registered. Domestic traders are required to apply for the trade permission. Trade, import and export of ivory without permission will result in imprisonment of up to 3 years and/or a maximum fine of 6,000,000 Baht (or USD 185,000).
- **NCPO Order on preventive measures to bring wild elephants to subrogate as domestic elephants:** The Order of the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) No. 60/2559, which has taken effect since 28 September 2016, increases the protection for all domestic elephants by ways of the issuance of certificate and ID and the blood collection for DNA of the elephants. If the owners did not comply with this regulation, the elephants shall be taken as the property of the State.
- **The National Ivory Action Plan 2018 and its Indicators** which are developed to comply with recommendations made by the CITES Standing Committee, focusing on (1) Legislations and regulations (2) National level enforcement action and inter-agency collaboration (3) International and regional enforcement collaboration (4) Outreach, public awareness and education (5) Reporting. The significant implementations including additional measures and activities that reinforce the efforts and operations to terminate illegal trafficking of ivory trade will be submitted to the CITES Secretariat within 1 July 2018 for Thailand to exit the NIAP process.
- **The Action Plan on Illegal Ivory Trade Suppression** was declared by the Royal Thai Police in February 2018. Under the Action Plan, the inspection teams in 18 provinces where the remaining 117 authorized ivory shops are located, are appointed to inspect such shops at least

once a month. The inspection site will also include international airports, seaports and risky areas exploited as an import or transit of the illegal trafficking of Ivory trade to monitor these threats and leverage the efficiency of the protection and suppression of Illegal trafficking of Ivory Trade in Thailand.

Enforcement

- **Ivory registration system:** The execution of the robust ivory registration system leads to an outstanding reduction of ivory products trading in the local market. Currently, the number of ivory shops decreases to 117 shops, significantly dropped from 215 shops in 2015.

- **Import and export preventive enforcement:** Enhancement of law enforcement focuses on detects and deters illegal import and export of ivory in targeted routes. Passengers' belongings including cargo at borders, airports, seaports, and postal shipments from targeted countries are thoroughly inspected. This effort leads to the arrest of various major cases of ivory smuggling in 2017. Proactive intelligence exchange among Customs Department, CITES Management Authority and other CITES members leads to additional seizures such as:

- Seizure of 330 kg. of 422 pieces of cut ivory at Suvarnabhumi International Airport on 3-4 March 2017
- Seizure of 73.9 kg. of 16,720 pieces of cut ivory at Suvarnabhumi International Airport on 12 October 2017.

Human Resources Development

Law enforcement officers of the Department of National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation has been trained on how to control the illegal Ivory Trade in various provinces across the country. Also, there're programs to disseminate information regarding the control of illegal ivory trade in Thailand for tourism businesses, tour guides and tourists at the airports, famous tourist spots and immigration check-points.

Raise Awareness Campaign

The "I am #IvoryFree" campaign by WildAid has been executing to deter the purchase of ivory in Thailand. The Campaign invited Thai public to join in showing their support by creating their own Ivory Free photo at www.ivoryfreethai.org and posting the image to their social media profiles with hashtags #IvoryFree. This campaign aims to raise awareness against buying, owning or accepting ivory as gifts, while acknowledging that ivory belongs only to elephants.

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