

Dr F U Mangwanya
Director General
PARKS AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY
CITES – Zimbabwe

Dr Patience Gandiwa
Ecologist ZimParks and Wildlife Management Authority

Timothy Daniel John
Head of Wildlife and CITES Management Division
Nigeria

The Endangered Species Import and Export Management Office
Of the People's Republic of China
CITES
Wildlife Conservation Department
of National Forestry and Grassland Administration

Mr Wu Zhimin
Director General
The Endangered Species
Import and Export Management Office of the People's Republic of China
Wildlife Conservation Department of National Forestry and Grassland Administration

Cc: His Excellency Emmerson Mnangagwa
President of Zimbabwe
Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC)
Munhumutapa Building

Cc: His Excellency Mr Li Keqiang
Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China

Cc: Sofie H. Flensburg
Legal Officer, Legal Affairs and Compliance
CITES Secretariat
International Environment House

Cc: Thomas De Meulenaer
CITES Secrétariat
Chief Science Unit

Cc: Ivonne Higuero
Secretary General CITES



- Cc: Honourable President Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo
Chairperson of the African Union**
- Cc: Benson Okita and Robert Slotow
Co-chairs IUCN SSC
African Elephant Specialist Group**
- Cc: His Excellency President Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo
Chairperson of the African Union**
- Cc: IUCN SSC African Elephant Specialist Group
co-chairs Benson Okita, Robert Slotow**
- Cc: Co-chairs of the African Elephant Coalition**
- Cc: His Excellency President Lazarus Chakwera
Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community (SADC)**
- Cc: Azzedine Downes
CEO International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)**
- Cc: African Wildlife Foundation**
- Cc: Peter Fearnhead
CEO and Co-Founder of the African Parks Network**
- Cc: Hugo van der Westhuizen
Frankfurt Zoological Society**

04 August 2021

STATEMENT FROM THE PRO ELEPHANT NETWORK

ZIMBABWE DENIES PREPARATION UNDERWAY FOR EXPORT OF ELEPHANTS TO CHINA VIA NIGERIA

The Pro Elephant Network (PREN), is an international network of diverse individuals, organisations and specialists. At the beginning of July 2021, members of PREN received what they considered to be reliable information suggesting that preparations were being made in Zimbabwe to capture wild elephants for export, and that holding bomas were being prepared to receive these elephants.



On the 10th July 2021, PREN members sent an urgent letter of concern¹ to, amongst others, the Zimbabwean government, and the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), to which Zimbabwe is a Party.

The PREN members noted specifically, in the communication, that there was a possibility that the aforementioned elephant capture operation might be disguised as an in-situ conservation programme agreement between **two African countries**. The information received further indicated that the captured elephants were destined for final captivity in zoos in China.

At the 18th Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP18) held in Geneva in August 2019, Parties agreed² that the only 'Appropriate and Acceptable destination' for live elephants exported from Zimbabwe or Botswana should be "*in-situ conservation programmes or secure areas in the wild, within the species' natural and historical range in Africa*".

The co-ordinator for PREN received a response from a representative of the CITES Secretariat via email on the 23rd of July. Assurance was given that CITES was "looking into the matter".

The co-ordinator of PREN engaged with a CITES Secretariat representative via email on the 29th of July and requested a credible, on-site investigation be conducted in Zimbabwe and for the Secretariat to make a public statement in this regard.

Furthermore, PREN members asked the Secretariat to comment on the legality of any trade of live elephants between Zimbabwe and China.

On the 30th of July, a representative of the CITES Secretariat responded via email, stating that Zimbabwe refutes the information that was provided to members of PREN. "Zimbabwe also stated that they were not considering the export of live African elephants to **Nigeria** or any such exports anytime soon."

During the 31st meeting of the CITES Animal Committee (AC31), which took place online in June 2021, the Zimbabwean delegate Rosaline Mandisodza, Chief ecologist at ZimParks stated, in respect of live elephant exports, that "We are no longer trading outside of range. We are guided by the animals committee and the secretariat". She also indicated that Zimbabwe would be seeking to establish "what happened to the [previously exported] elephants now" and mentioned the need "to talk about reports and work with recipient countries".

According to the CITES trade database, between 2012 and 2019, Zimbabwe exported 140 juvenile elephants to captive facilities in the People's Republic of China, and another four to the United Arab Emirates³. Of these elephants, 22 are confirmed or are presumed to have died. Reports indicate that others have died in the process of capture and preparation for export.

¹ [EXPERTS ONCE AGAIN FEAR FOR YOUNG ZIMBABWE ELEPHANTS – PRO ELEPHANT NETWORK](#)

² [E-SC69-Inf-36.pdf \(cites.org\)](#)

³ TWITTER VIDEO OF A JUVENILE ELEPHANT TRYING TO ESCAPE FROM CEMENT AND METAL CELL [Jinfeng Zhou on Twitter: "The Beijing Zoo is ignoring the elephant's health, both physically and mentally. This little elephant Huahua is developing stereotypical behaviors, and the Zoo is not letting him out or doing any enrichment work. CBCGDF is trying to contact the officials of the zoo #animalwelfare https://t.co/KAHW1iXjq1" / Twitter](#)



PREN members cautiously welcome the information that Zimbabwe is not considering the export of live African elephants to Nigeria or any such exports anytime soon provided by the CITES Secretariat via the Zimbabwean CITES Management Authority.

PREN members thank the Secretariat of CITES and welcome any relevant information from the Zimbabwean wildlife authorities or NGOs working in Zimbabwe in the environmental or wildlife conservation sectors.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stefania Falcon', is positioned above the printed name.

Stefania Falcon

On behalf of PREN

stefania@proelephantnetwork.org

Mobile +27 (0) 73 301-21-07



www.proelephantnetwork.org

This statement is for urgent distribution

SIGNING MEMBERS:

Owais Awan	Advocate High Court, Islamabad
Suparna Bakshi-Ganguly	President and Co-Founder, Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation Center, Bangalore, India
Dr Brett Bard	Veterinarian, South Africa
Dr Jessica Bell Rizzolo	Postdoctoral Researcher, the Conservation Criminology Lab, Dep of Fisheries and Wildlife, Michigan State University
Janey Clegg	Committee Member, SPCA Mutare, Zimbabwe
Professor David Bilchitz	Director, South African Institute for Advanced Constitutional, Public and Human Rights and International Law - South Africa
Megan Carr	Founder, Rhinos in Africa
Lenin Chisaira	Founder, Advocates 4 Earth – Green Law Connect, Zimbabwe
Dr Betsy Coville	Wildlife Veterinarian – USA
Nomusa Dube	Founder, Zimbabwe Elephant Foundation
David Ebert	Advocate, Founder Director of The Animal Defense Partnership – USA
Stefania Falcon	Co-Founder, Future 4 Wildlife – South Africa



Daniela Freyer	Director, Pro Wildlife – Germany
Michele Franko	Captive Elephant Caregiver and Advocate – USA
Chief Stephen Fritz	Indigenous Leader, South Peninsula Khoi Council – South Africa
Dr Toni Frohoff	Ethologist and Behavioral Biologist, Founder of TerraMar
Dr Marion E. Garai	Elephant Behavior Specialist - South Africa
Rachel Harris	Managing Director, Elephant Human Relationship Aid, Namibia
Dr Ross Harvey	Environmental Economist, Botswana
Heike Henderson-Altenstein	Director, Future 4 Elephants e.V.
Alok Hissarwala Gupta	Elephant Specialist, Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organizations
Iris Ho	Senior Wildlife Specialist, The Humane Society International
Peter Hodgskin	Founder, Hands-off Fernkloof, South Africa
Lynne James	Independent, Elephant Conservation, Zimbabwe
Dr Mark Jones	Veterinarian, Born Free Foundation - UK
David Kabambo	Founder Director of Peace for Conservation – Wildlife Management - Tanzania
Dr Paula Kahumbu	WildlifeDirect, Kenya
Professor Mohan Kharel	Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal
Nuria Maldonado	Ecologist, Environmental Science, Max Plank Institute
Jim Karani	Advocate, Lawyers for Animal Protection in Africa – Kenya
Dr Winnie Kiiru	Founder, Conservation Kenya
Brigitte Kornetzky	President and Founder of Elefanten in Not - Switzerland / India
Kahindi Lekalhaile	Africa Network for Animal Welfare, Kenya
Dr Smaragda Louw	Director, Ban Animal Trading, South Africa
Dr Keith Lindsay	Conservation Biologist, Amboseli Trust for Elephants – Kenya; Fondation Franz Weber
Giorgio Lombardi	Warden Vogelgat Private Nature Reserve, South Africa
Linda Masudze	Advocate 4 Earth, Zimbabwe
Varda Mehrotra	Environmentalist, Climate Crisis Researcher – India
Dr Nurzhafarina Binti Othman	Founder: Seratu Aatai, Elephant Conservation and Research Coordinator at HUTAN-KOCP - Malaysia
Sharon Pincott	Elephant Behavioural Specialist, ex-Hwange, Zimbabwe
Michele Pickover	Director, EMS Foundation, South Africa
Dr Yolanda Pretorius	SA Wildlife College, Elephant Behavioural Specialist, South Africa
Ingo Schmidinger	Elephant Husbandry – Co-Founder iScapes
Dr Jan Schmidt-Burbach	Veterinarian, Head of Wildlife Research and Animal Welfare, World Animal Protection International
Antoinette Van de Water	Director, Bring the Elephant Home, South Africa
Vasanthi Vadi	CEO – Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations – India
Prof Dan Wylie	Rhodes University, South Africa