



THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW CATCHES UP WITH IVORY TRAFFICKERS

In support of the ongoing wildlife enforcement efforts in Africa LATF coordinated multiagency trans-national investigations involving Kenya and Uganda leading to the arrest of seven (7) suspects responsible for trafficking of 106 pieces of elephant tusks weighing 1.8 tons which were seized by Singaporean enforcement authorities on 25th March, 2014.

The ivory, which was hidden in 15 wooden crates declared as coffee beans, originated from Uganda and was destined to Vietnam. The consignment found its way to Asia through the Kenya-Uganda border point of Malaba before being shipped out of Africa through the seaport of Mombasa in Kenya.

The six-month trans-national operation in Kenya (transit country) and Uganda (origin country) carried out from January to June 2017 brought to book the suspects responsible for the illicit consignment. The arrested kingpins comprise a financier, a customs officer who cleared the container without being subjected to scanning at Mombasa, and a clearing agent who escorted the container from its loading point in Uganda up to the Kenya/Uganda border point.

A few more suspects are still at large but are being pursued. Additional evidence is also being awaited from Singapore to support the ongoing prosecutions. LATF hopes that the suspects will be tried in accordance with the relevant national and international laws, convicted and eventually slapped with a deterrent sentence. If found guilty, the arrested suspects are expected to be jailed for a minimum of 20 years and /or a fine of Ksh 20 million (about US\$ 200,000).

“Without the goodwill of the two governments as well as the commitment and dedication of the officers who took part in the operation, these suspects who trafficked in such a large haul of ivory could not have been brought to book”, said Mr. Bonaventure Ebayi, the Director of LATF. “LATF, therefore, wishes to congratulate the governments of Kenya and Uganda, Kenya Wildlife Service, National Police Service, and Kenya Ports Authority for the pivotal role they played during this successful operation”, Mr. Ebayi concluded.

Appreciation goes to INL of the United States, through Freeland Foundation, for providing financial and logistical support during the operation. More assistance is required from such development partners to enable LATF to fast-track other outstanding trans-national cases which have stalled due to limited financial resources.

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