

Blood Ivory: The Story of Illegal Poaching and its Global Influence

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Illegal animal product trade such as the trade of ivory and rhinoceros horn influence the entire world, not just the country it comes from and the country it goes to. Throughout history, from pre-colonial times to modern day, illicit trade in ivory and rhino horn have drastically affected Africa's development, eco system, and society. The decline in the rhinoceros and elephant populations on the African continent drastically effect vegetation, which directly correlates with agriculture and the health of people and animals. The history of the illegal ivory and rhino horn trade is complicated, and provides an essential context in order to understand the modern day situation. Scholarly works and current journalism works on poaching depict that illegal poaching and wildlife trade is a complicated web, and cannot be easily solved. Without the support of the local communities as well as the international nations, it is unlikely that illegal poaching will come to a halt.

Elephants are found in thirty seven of Africa's sub-Saharan countries. It is widely accepted that the high amount of poaching activities in the 1970s and the 1980s drove down the healthy elephant and rhino populations in Africa. According to the numbers researchers Andrew M. Lemieux and Ronald V. Clarke provide in their article, the 1979 elephant population on the African continent was 1.3 million, and by 1989 declined to a mere 600,000.<sup>1</sup>

Poaching has been around long before the late twentieth century, and has a long history on the continent of Africa. The ivory trade goes back to ancient civilizations, including the Egyptians and the Romans. The Egyptians hunger for ivory may be one of the reasons of the disappearance of the Northern African elephant population by 2750 BCE; however, this has not

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew M. Lemieux and Ronald V. Clarke, "The International Ban on Ivory Sales and its Effects on Elephant Poaching in Africa," *British Journal Of Criminology* 49, no. 4 (July 2009): accessed 17 April 2014, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost, 451-453.

yet been proved.<sup>2</sup> N. Thomas Håkansson also noted the Egyptians role in the early ivory trade, but they claim that the ivory the Egyptians got came from Nubia.<sup>3</sup> The Romans also participated in the ivory trade by trading with East Africa, but after the collapse of the Roman Empire, the ivory trade from East Africa declined significantly.<sup>4</sup> Examining the coast of Eastern Africa, Håkansson claimed that the elephants in the hinterlands were hunted first, and then once the hinterland population declined, poachers moved to the coastal elephants. Håkansson does not provide elephant population numbers from these early centuries, and he stated that the data was not available.

However, it can be safe to assume that the elephant populations must have not declined too steadily, as many scholars do not mention a population crisis regarding African elephants until the twentieth century. Håkansson stated that a decline in the elephant population does not occur in Southern and Eastern Africa until the nineteenth century, which he stated is directly related to the expansion of industrial capitalism and the rise in world market prices for ivory. At the end of the eighteenth century, Western Europe and the United States demand for ivory rose due to the increase in demand for luxury goods such as piano keys, combs, and billiard balls. Ivory during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries essentially became the plastic of the era, and was at an incredibly high demand.<sup>5</sup> Due to this increased demand, caravan trading was utilized in order to transport ivory more efficiently.<sup>6</sup> Due to the caravan trade, ivory trade and slave trade became interwoven, and a way for African traders to make even more money.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ronald I. Orenstein, *Ivory, Horn and Blood: Behind the Elephant and Rhinoceros Poaching Crisis*, (Ontario: Firefly Books, 2013), 31.

<sup>3</sup> N. Thomas Håkansson, "The Human Ecology of World Systems in East Africa: The Impact of the Ivory Trade," *Human Ecology: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 32, no. 5 (October 2004): date accessed 17 April 2014, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost, 564.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 565.

<sup>5</sup> Orenstein, *Ivory, Horn and Blood: Behind the Elephant and Rhinoceros Poaching Crisis*, 32.

<sup>6</sup> Håkansson, "The Human Ecology of World Systems in East Africa: The Impact of the Ivory Trade," 569.

<sup>7</sup> Orenstein, *Ivory, Horn and Blood: Behind the Elephant and Rhinoceros Poaching Crisis*, 32.

While ivory was in high demand, so was rhino horn. Rhino horn is not as luxurious as ivory, but holds many other appeals. Rhino horn is usually used to construct handles for swords, walking-sticks, and gun handles, but is also thought in some cultures to cure certain medical ailments. Rhino horns were also surrounded by many myths. Ancient Greek historian Ctesias reported that a drinking cup crafted from the horn from a One-horned Rhinoceros will detect if poison is poured into the cup.<sup>8</sup> Rhinos are also responsible for encouraging the European myth of the unicorn from the explorers who traveled to Asia.<sup>9</sup> Rhino horn is mostly desired in Asian countries due to its use in medicine, but surprisingly one of the biggest imports of rhino horn is Yemen. Due to changes in society, more men were allowed to carry a jambiya, which is a broad, bladed dagger with a hooked tip. Jambiya's were seen as a symbol of prestige, and with the changes in society, more men were able to buy them and wear them. The demand for rhino horn in Yemen exploded, and between the 1970s and 1990s, Yemen became the largest consumer of rhino horn in the world, with almost all of the rhino horn being purchased in markets in Sana'a, Yemen.<sup>10</sup> North Yemen banned the rhino horn trade in 1982 in response to international pressure and the declining rhino population, and by 2001, the Yemeni rhino horn market collapsed. The market collapsed due to the Westernization of the Yemeni culture. Men began to wear trousers instead of their traditional robes, and the symbol of the jambiya began to fade away.<sup>11</sup>

However, the damage the Yemeni rhino horn trade did to the rhino populations did not recover as quickly as the symbol of the jambiya faded away. Black rhino populations fell from 650,000 to 15,000 between 1970 and 1990. By 1986, the population had fallen to fewer than

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 42.

4,500.<sup>12</sup> Attempts were made to try and protect the rhino populations. By 1977, all rhinos were placed on Appendix I by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). CITES is an agreement between nations or parties to regulate international trade of wildlife. There are three appendices, but for the purpose of this paper, only Appendix I and Appendix II require further detail. Appendix I lists species threatened with extinction, and trade is forbidden. Appendix II lists species that numbers are low, and need to be closely monitored. Trade is still allowed, but needs to be heavily regulated.<sup>13</sup> By 1977, rhino products were not allowed to be traded. Obviously, this still continued in Yemen, as well as other countries such as Vietnam. CITES apologizes for their actions, stating they did not act quickly enough to help save the rhino populations, and that they had failed in keeping the rhino populations under control.<sup>14</sup>

The populations fell at alarming rate, leading even to extinction in the case of the Northern White Rhinoceros. In 1960, there were 100,000 Black Rhinos, and 2,250 Northern White Rhinos. Now, the Northern White Rhinos are extinct, and the Black Rhino population took a hit from the 1960s-1980s. The population fell from the 1970 figure of 65,000 to 3,450 by 1991. By the 1990s, the Black Rhinos had disappeared from the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Malawi, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda. Zimbabwe held the largest numbers of Black Rhinos on the continent at the end of the 1980s, but due to poachers from Zambia, their numbers fell to 430 from 1,400 in 1991.<sup>15</sup>

Where is all this rhino horn going today? As previously stated, Yemen used to be the number one consumer of rhino horn until 2001, but today it is the Southeast Asian countries,

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>13</sup> Lemieux and Clarke, "The International Ban on Ivory Sales and its Effects on Elephant Poaching in Africa," 453.

<sup>14</sup> Orenstein, *Ivory, Horn and Blood: Behind the Elephant and Rhinoceros Poaching Crisis*, 67.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 68.

specifically Vietnam. Rhino horn is a symbol of luxury in Vietnam and rhino horn powder is often used to cure hangovers. Whether or not it actually cures a hangover is unknown, but rhino horn powder is something only the wealthy can afford, and therefore there is a certain stigma attached to rhino horn powder. Vietnamese also believe that rhino horn powder cures cancer, but once again, whether it is successful is unknown, but doubtful. While rhino horn trade is illegal in Vietnam, it is not enforced and therefore incredibly easy to obtain through the black market.<sup>16</sup> Vietnam being the number one modern day consumer of rhino horn, and yet not enforcing their laws against the trade means that rhino poaching will most likely not slow down.

The ivory trade slowed during the 1990s, but in 2002 picked up again. Even though CITES banned the ivory trade in 1989, ivory prices rose and the trade became alive once again in the early 2000s. Ivory is found by customs officials in both Malawi and Singapore in 2002, and in 2006, Japanese customs agents seize 2.8 tonnes of ivory, the largest seizure of ivory ever reported in Japan. Ivory prices continued to rise on the black market, and between 2007 and 2009, ivory prices doubled.<sup>17</sup> Central Africa is where poaching was the worst, and Liemieux and Clarke examine why poaching is higher in countries in Central Africa such as the Central African Republic, DRC, Tanzania, Sudan, and Zambia, all of these countries lost over 100,000 elephants each on the 1980s and continue to have high poaching rates today.<sup>18</sup> Since the 1989 ban, countries such as Kenya and Tanzania elephant population raises by 140,000; but in countries like Central African Republic, Zambia, and Angola, populations continue to decline. Liemieux and Clarke argued that Central Africa lost and continue to lose high numbers of elephants because of unregulated trade, corruption, and civil war. Of the six countries, more than three have unregulated markets. Liemieux and Clarke also state that on average, countries

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 88-89.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>18</sup> Liemieux and Clarke, "The International Ban on Ivory Sales and its Effects on Elephant Poaching in Africa," 458.

experiencing a civil war experienced a three percent decrease in their elephant population, compared to the average 62% increase that countries not experiencing civil war saw. These researchers believe that civil wars may lead to armies shooting elephants for meat, as well as in both civil war and corruption ridden countries, poaching is easier because it is not enforced due to the other problems the country is experiencing. Liemieux and Clarke offered some suggestions based on their findings. This pair suggested the closure of logging roads, use of pilot-less drones, gun-shot detectors, and concealed metal detectors in trails, DNA coding of ivory, and the provision of technology to customs officials that would help them identify ivory.<sup>19</sup> They also state the importance of the support from the local communities. Poaching is allowed by the local communities because they do not see the value in the elephants other than for their meat and their ivory. If these local communities could see the value in elephants other than for their ivory, there would be more local resistance to poaching, which would hopefully bring the poaching numbers down. Some countries, such as Kenya, receive a lot of money from tourism, in which elephants play a crucial role. However, local communities do not see that money, so they do not benefit from the tourism the elephants bring in. Liemieux and Clarke stress the importance of the support of the local communities, as well as the cooperation of international nations, but note that the poaching problem in Africa, especially Central Africa, will not be easily solved.<sup>20</sup>

In order to understand why poaching is such a major problem today, it is important to understand how rhinos and elephants help shape the African continent's eco system. Elephants and rhinos are not only beautiful creatures, but they also play a significant role in the vegetation system. Swedish researcher N. Thomas Håkansson declared that no other mammal other than

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 465.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 466.

humans influence the environment it lives in as much as the elephant.<sup>21</sup> Elephants help to maintain open grassland by eating plants. Research has been conducted showing that once elephants have left grasslands, woody vegetation began to grow. For example, in Queen Elizabeth Park in Uganda, the population of elephants declined from four thousand to a mere few hundred. The result was that the sprawling grasslands became a heavily forested area. This may not seem to be a huge problem, but Håkansson explains that heavily wooded areas in the African continent are home to the tsetse fly. This fly carries the deadly sleeping sickness, which affects horses and cattle. A healthy elephant population maintains the grasslands, which in return provides a safe grazing place for cattle and horses, as well as a healthier environment overall.<sup>22</sup>

As previously stated, poaching has held such a long history in Africa, but recently became fatal to the elephant and rhino populations as of the twentieth century. Much of this is due to the weaponry and the training the poachers received in the modern day. In the 1960s, as African nations began to gain their independence from colonial powers, weapons flowed into the African countries from the U.S. and the Soviet Union. These weapons were not only used in warfare against human populations, but against the wildlife population as well. These weapons stepped up the poaching game to an all-out slaughter fest. By replacing traditional hunting weapons for cross-bows and AK-47s, poachers were able to kill these enormous animals with deadly precision and in alarming numbers in a smaller amount of time. These poachers are usually militarily trained, and combined with their knowledge of military training and their knowledge of the African environment, the animals do not stand a chance at survival from these guerilla poachers.<sup>23</sup> Weaponry and military training is not the only contributing factor to the

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<sup>21</sup> Håkansson, "The Human Ecology of World Systems in East Africa: The Impact of the Ivory Trade," 571.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 572.

<sup>23</sup> Liza Gross, "In the Shadows of the Congo Basin Forest, Elephants Fall to the Illegal Ivory Trade," *Plos Biology* 5, no. 4 (2007), accessed 17 April 2014, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost, 0687.



more efficient style of poaching. As poaching entered the modern day, educated and connected individuals got involved, including military personnel, police officers, government civil servants, and even wildlife management. For a cut of the profit, these connected professionals would help the poachers find the animals, smuggle the goods out of the country, and keep the poaching activities quiet.<sup>24</sup> This group of illicit professionals is what Orenstein class “khaki-collar criminals.” This type of corruption is one of the types of corruption that Liemieux and Clarke refer to in their article. When poaching involves a network of high ranking officials who are profiting from it, it is incredibly difficult to bring poaching to a halt. Poaching results in quick money, which also makes it appealing. Once the ivory or the rhino horn is taken from the animal, the product runs through a series of “runners,” who communicate by cell phone in order to get the animal product to markets, usually located in Asia. On average, the ivory or rhino horn reaches the Asian markets in less than twenty four hours.<sup>25</sup>

According to Orenstein’s numbers, China is the number one consumer of ivory in the modern times. Ivory, like rhino horn in Vietnam, is a symbol of power and wealth in China, and as a result, there is a high demand for it. Unfortunately, due to China’s investment in many of the African countries, they are highly involved in the poaching process and are able to get ivory easily due to their presence in these countries. China gives halfhearted attempts to regulate the ivory trade within their country, but unfortunately illegal ivory trade continues.<sup>26</sup>

Orenstein recognizes the importance of regulated big game hunting. While it seems ironic, regulated hunting actually helps keep elephant and rhino populations at healthy numbers. By allowing private owners to buy rhinoceros and elephants at government state auctions to keep on

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<sup>24</sup> Owens, Mark and Owens, Delia. *Secrets of the Savanna: Twenty-Three Years in the African Wilderness, Unraveling the Mysteries of Elephants and People*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006), 9.

<sup>25</sup> Orenstein, *Ivory, Horn and Blood: Behind the Elephant and Rhinoceros Poaching Crisis*, 87.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

their estates to live and breed on, the government allows the older animals who cannot breed anymore to be shot by approved big game hunters. This provides incentive for wealthy estate owners to help conserve the rhino and elephant populations, because they are the ones who receive the profit from the hunters. However, with help from corrupt officials, some black market sellers are taking advantage of the big game hunting licenses. Certain hunters will apply for a big game hunting license, proudly register their trophy with the African nation it was shot in, and take it home and sell either the ivory or the horn off their trophy. Due to incidents such as this, the South African government is heavily limiting the amount of licenses they grant per year. They have also implemented policies where the horn or the tucks need to be micro chipped before they are shipped out of the country, but these poachers in disguise find corrupt officials to help them get around this.<sup>27</sup>

Poachers and black market consumers have proven time and time again that they are willing to take the risks it takes to obtain ivory and rhino horn. This is why the poachers continue to work, and continue to work at great risks to themselves. Poachers will continue to poach as long as there is a demand and money in it for them. But what are the solutions to this incredibly complicated problem? Liemieux and Clark offer some in their article, but this problem goes further than closing logging roads and getting the local community involved, and has truly become a global issue, in which every nation is involved.

Poaching is popular in almost every nation's media, but each country's media displays poaching and the severity of the situation in a different way. The United States media generally tends to view poaching as a severe problem that does not have a clear solution. CBS News published a short article by Danielle Elliot in December 2013 using United Nations numbers to describe the severity of the poaching situation. According to UN numbers Elliot used, in 2012

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 105.

22,000 elephants were killed from poaching, which was a decline from the 2011 figure of 25,000. Elliot quotes World Wildlife's Richard Carroll as saying it was not enough of a decline. "Any elephants being poached are too many elephants being poached," Carroll was quoted as saying. The article continues, stating how the U.S. destroyed more than six tons of illegal ivory, and stating that China was the number one consumer of ivory in the world. The rest of the article is devoted to the history of the ivory trade, which is discussed in detail in this paper. While the article used sound facts, the tone of the article read as the U.S. was contributing to stopping the ivory trade, and the rest of the world needed to do their part. Elliot ends her article bleakly, with another quote from Carroll stating that poaching was nowhere near its end.<sup>28</sup>

CNN provided a sympathetic account of the poaching that threatens the forest elephants in the Republic of Congo. Reporters Arwa Damon and Brent Swails interviewed Mathieu Eckel, leader of an anti-poaching unit in the Odzala-Kokoua National Park. Eckel described an exciting chase through the Congo forest, in which his unit confiscates the bush meat and the ivory the poachers procured from several forest elephants.<sup>29</sup> Eckel stated that the poachers used an ax to chop off the tusks, and Damon and Swails followed this quote stating statistics that Central Africa has lost 62% of its forest elephants to poachers in the past decade. The reader learns that the park, roughly the size of Connecticut, is protected by only 76 anti-poaching officers. Eckel explains that even though their numbers are small, their knowledge is invaluable because 40 of them used to be poachers themselves, and were granted amnesty and the patrol job if they surrendered their weapons and admitted their crimes. Still, the lack of patrol is an enormous problem, despite the article's inspiring title. Eckel explained to the CNN reporters how

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<sup>28</sup> Danielle Elliot, "Poachers killed 22,000 African Elephants in 2012, study shows," CBS News, December 2, 2013, 1-2.

<sup>29</sup> Arwa Damon and Brent Swails, "Poachers are the prey in a Park in the Republic of Congo," CNN, January 6, 2014, 1.

government and military corruption plays a huge role in poaching's future. The guns he and his unit found on their raid were military weapons, and could only be issued out by the military. Eckel continued to explain to the reporters that it was difficult to trust government and park officials, because it was hard to know who was involved in the illicit circle of poaching.<sup>30</sup> This article, while its title seems inspiring, does an excellent job of showing the violence in poaching, and how it does not just affect the animals. Some of Eckel's men are attacked by gang members connected to the poachers the anti-poaching unit caught, and are wounded and sent to the hospital. The reporters end their article with this honest statement, "Out here, the war on ivory trading is violent and personal."<sup>31</sup> CNN's article presented the facts and provides an exciting account through Eckel's stories, but also makes the reader sympathize with the forest elephants.

The Washington Post published an article written by Juliet Eilperin in July 2013 regarding President Obama's aims to bring initiative to wildlife trafficking in Africa. This article expressed what a major launch this was, stating that poaching was being taken seriously in the United States at the highest level of government. This article agrees with the CBS article and states that Asian countries are the number one consumer of rhino horn and ivory. However, nowhere in this article does the reporter state how the U.S. plans to interact with African and Asian nations to stop poaching. This would be an important point to add in the article, as poaching can only be stopped if all of the international communities agree to work with one another.<sup>32</sup>

However, U.S. State Department documents state different points and ideas than private media outlets. One State Department article, written by Charlene Porter in February 2014, noted

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>32</sup> Eilperin, Juliet. "Obama to Launch Major Wildlife Trafficking Initiative in Africa." The Washington Post, July 1, 2013, 1-2.

the United States negative role in the poaching crisis. While the U.S. banned ivory trade in 1990, it still allowed national trade within the country. However, as Porter stated, this still supports the ivory trade, and needs to be stopped as well. Porter also noted the U.S. as being one of the big consumers of ivory, unlike the other articles. Since this is a State Department article, Porter has different information and different statistics, but it is noteworthy that she notes the U.S. and their negative role in the ivory trade. The article also noted solutions to the problem, including national and international cooperation and enforcement, increased restrictions, and strengthening partnerships globally. While these alone may not bring down illicit poaching, they will help the global community begin its journey to ending illegal poaching and animal product trade.<sup>33</sup>

In another State Department article, titled, “Togolese Efforts to Combat Wildlife Trafficking,” recounts how Secretary Kerry called Togolese President Faure Gnassingbe to commend him on his efforts to rid Togo of illicit poaching. Togo has begun to crack down on criminals involved in poaching, arresting poachers and seizing their ivory. The article states that Togo is sending a message to the world that wildlife conservation is important and that hopefully the other African nations will follow its example. This article, while short, is important because it show the Western world that African nations are actively trying to stop poaching, and it is important for the Western countries to form a partnership with these African countries in order to work together to stop poaching.<sup>34</sup>

Great Britain is also concerned about the number of animals per year that are killed due to poaching. BBC journalist Rebecca Morelle reported in February 2014 about a meeting that the Zoological Society of London was going to be hosting in order to address new ways to protect wildlife with other international leaders. The Zoological Society of London has recognized that

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<sup>33</sup> Charlene Porter, “Africa: Ivory Sale Ban is Core of U.S. Anti-Trafficking Strategy,” United States Department of State, February 12, 2014, 1.

<sup>34</sup> “Togolese Efforts to Combat Wildlife Trafficking,” United States Department of State, February 6, 2014, 1.

their current efforts are not working, and that there needs to be something else done in order to protect these animals. Morelle wrote about the meeting with great enthusiasm and positivity, and stated figures that would make the reader realize that the wildlife population is in grave danger, for example, the fact that South Africa lost 1,004 rhinos in 2013, when in 2007 it had lost 13. These numbers are alarming, and prove that something needs to be done in order to bring the poaching numbers down. Also discussed at the conference will be how the demand for wildlife products can be eliminated.<sup>35</sup>

Another UK news outlet, CapitalFM, noted the relationship between terrorism and poaching. Reporter Jemimah Wangui stated that terrorists have become involved in poaching in order to fund their terrorist activities. This is a terrifying thought, but makes sense to criminals, because of the amount of money that rhino horn and ivory bring in. A rhino horn now sells for more money than gold or platinum and is more valuable on the black market than diamonds or cocaine. That is incredible when one considers how much gold, platinum, diamonds, and cocaine are worth. The article does not give any more information about terrorist poachers, but it is something that should be carefully monitored.<sup>36</sup>

African media sources report on the poaching crisis as well, and one article defends Tanzania from false claims that a British paper makes. According to the Tanzania Daily News, the British media source the Daily Mail accused President Jakaya Kikwete of turning a blind eye to poaching and not enforcing his anti-poaching policies. The article noted that a statement from the Directorate of Presidential Communications claimed that not only was this statement false, but completely distorted the truth and principles of journalism. Tanzanian officials urge the reporter to reprint his story with the correct facts as well as looking at the matter from the view

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<sup>35</sup> Rebecca Morelle, "Animal Trafficking: Wildlife Trade Crisis Talks Held," BBC News, February 10, 2014, 1-2.

<sup>36</sup> Jemimah Wangui, "Kenya: Poaching Could Fund Terrorism, Warns UK Envoy," CapitalFM, 10 February 2014, 1.

point of the Tanzanians. The Tanzanian government rebuttals that there has been major strides made in wildlife conservation under President Kikwete.<sup>37</sup> This article was particularly interesting, especially after reading the Western media. Perhaps this is a matter that goes back to colonialist ideology. Perhaps the Western countries believe that the African nations cannot control poaching alone, and that the West must swoop in and save Africa from itself. Of course, this is only speculation, but from how the Western countries view the African nations still to this day as helpless and backwards, this theory may be correct in how the West views its role in the poaching crisis.

Regardless of how certain countries' media outlets examine the poaching crisis, it is nearly unanimous that poaching is a global issue that has spiraled out of control and requires immediate attention. Unfortunately, according to these articles, it does not appear that a happy ending for these animals is in sight. National Geographic recently published that South Africa experienced it's highest poaching rates in the year 2014; 1,215 rhinos were poached in 2014, a twenty-one percent increase from 2013.<sup>38</sup> An African wildlife specialist was quotes in the article, saying that if poaching rates do not decline, it could drive rhinos to extinction within the next decade or two.<sup>39</sup> BBC confirms the National Geographic claims of the loss of the South African rhino population, and received a quote from the WWF director stating that the South African park rangers were doing all they could to stop poaching.<sup>40</sup>

Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a clear solution to the poaching issue in the future. Poaching has become a way of life for many citizens living under corrupt governments as a way to make quick and easy money, and as a result, these people have become dependent on

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<sup>37</sup> "Tanzania Dismisses British Paper Elephant Poaching Claims," Tanzania Daily News, 12 February 2014, 1.

<sup>38</sup> "South Africa Sees Record Year for Rhino Poaching," National Geographic, 22 January 2015, 1.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> "SA Rhino Poaching Record," British Broadcasting Corporation, 22 January 2015, 1.

poaching as a way to survive. With this dependence, corruption in the government, and large parks that are hard to monitor, it is doubtful that poaching will come to a complete halt in the foreseeable future. Different countries have different outlook on the poaching situation, but it is unanimous that poaching is a global problem that requires a global effort to stop. Hopefully with global support and African government's cooperation, poaching rates can be slowed and eventually halted.



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