



GOVERNMENT SHOULD REVERSE ITS DECISION ON ELEPHANT TROPHY HUNTING

By Simiso Mlevu Posted April 23, 2021 In Campaigns, Front

The Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) has noted with grave concern the continued placement of 500 hundred elephants under the hunting quota by the Government of Zimbabwe. Zimparks, the wildlife management authority says the money to be raised will be used to support conservation. The Government of Zimbabwe has been placing 500 elephants under a hunting quota for the past 30 years. This translates to about 15000 elephants being killed by government licensed animal killers since 1991. Poaching has continued unabated despite trophy hunting under the guise of funding conservation.

As CNRG, we believe that animals do not need to pay with their lives to ensure that their species are protected. It is the responsibility of the government to avail funds for the protection and conservation of biodiversity.

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Trophy hunting is an unethical practice that agitates elephants and other animals; and also leads to increased incidences of human-wildlife conflict. Whilst elephants are generally peaceful animals, they retaliate if a member of their family is attacked, killed or injured. Elephants move as herds and they defend and protect each other like any other animal species that live as families. Killing one elephant has serious repercussions and can cause huge emotional distress to the entire herd. Whilst trophy hunters, armed with guns, are well trained and also enjoy extra protection from rangers and evacuate after their temporary hunting escapades, it is the locals who bear the brunt of wildlife vengeance. The locals do not have anything to defend themselves with when elephants attack. In 2020 alone at least 60 people were killed while 50 others were left injured by wild animals in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (Zimparks) received 1500 distress calls in the same period. Elephants were responsible for 50% of the killings.

Hunters are merciless killers who target the biggest and grown elephants for their trophies. Thus, trophy hunting decimates impressive specimens leaving small and dwarfish ones. The placement of Zimbabwe's 500 elephants under a hunting quota exposes the country to the risk of remaining with inferior species which are unimpressive even to the tourists.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the revered African Elephant is now on the Red List of Threatened Species because of unilateral and undemocratic decisions like the one made by the Government of Zimbabwe. Whilst Zimbabwe boasts of a large elephant herd, estimated to be over 80 000, the population is at the mercy of government officials selling off baby elephants, poachers, climate change-induced droughts, diseases and government-licensed killers.

CNRG calls on the government of Zimbabwe to:

- Rescind its decision to open the country to trophy hunters
- Seek the support of international conservation organizations in finding additional resources to improve conservation
- Be transparent, democratic and accountable with decision-making processes that affect Zimbabwe's natural resources and the country's standing in the international community

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