



The Committee Secretary  
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**Subject: Submission for total ban on Australia's domestic ivory and rhino horn trade**

I write to you from the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO). We are India's apex animal rights group. As the collective voice of the animal rights movement in India, FIAPO enables education, research, mobilisation, networking, training and direct action. Created for the movement, by the movement, FIAPO has 83 members and over 200 supporter organisations, active in 70 cities across the country.

I would like to thank you for considering a ban on domestic trade of ivory and rhino horn in Australia and I express FIAPO's support for a total ban on the same.

African Elephants are vulnerable to poaching for their tusk and the overall African Elephant population has plummeted mainly due to poaching for ivory. Although there is a ban on international ivory trade under CITES, large quantities of ivory are smuggled into countries especially the ones where domestic trade in ivory is legal. Legal ivory markets are used as a cover to launder illegal ivory, thereby continuing to perpetuate the cycle of supply and demand. A legal domestic market provides the opportunity for traffickers to slip illegally obtained ivory into the legal supply. Moreover, according to 2017 CITES 'Report on the conservation status of African and Asian elephants, trade in elephant specimens, the African Elephant Action Plan, and MIKE and ETIS', poaching continues to pose a risk to the survival of African elephants, with the overall poaching trends in 2016 suggesting more elephants continue to die from poaching than from natural causes.

In the last two years, China (one of the world's largest hub of illegal wildlife trade), United States and United Kingdom have decided to shut down the domestic trade market of ivory. Moreover, even Hong Kong has moved to ban all ivory trade by 2021. From 1990 since the international ban on ivory trade there has been a growing consciousness towards the protection of elephants. However, until and unless the demand for ivory is completely stopped, elephants worldwide will not be secure and banning all

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sorts of trade in ivory – domestic and international – is the only way to curb the demand and thereby stop the illegal poaching of the elephants.

Similar is the case with rhinos, who are in dire peril because of poaching for their horns. South Africa alone has experienced a wave of poaching since 2008. Recently, on March 20<sup>th</sup> 2018, the world mourned the death of the last male northern white rhinoceros which again highlighted how the rhino poaching for their horns has dramatically increased over the past decade.

As already pointed out, a legal market for the trade of elephant ivory and rhino horn has encouraged and will continue to encourage poaching and illegal trade rather than regulate or curb it. A strong step to ban the trade altogether is the need of the hour especially for critical animals like elephants and rhinos.

I therefore urge you to ban the domestic trade of ivory and rhino horn in Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Varda Mehrotra

Director, Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO)