

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

Seventy-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 3-8 February 2025

Illegal trade and enforcement

RHINOCEROSSES (RHINOCEROTIDAE SPP.)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties retained Decision 18.116 and adopted Decisions 19.115 to 19.122 on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*, as presented in Annex 1 to the present document.
3. In addition, at its 77th meeting (SC77; Geneva, November 2023), the Standing Committee agreed to *inter alia* recommendations c) to f) as outlined in the SC77 summary record ([SC77 SR](#), agenda item 45), in which the Committee:
  - c) *requested the Parties to which Decisions 19.117, 19.118 and 19.119 are directed to take the comments and observations of the Secretariat in paragraphs 47 to 59 of document SC77 Doc.45, as relevant to them, into consideration in their implementation of these respective Decisions;*
  - d) *encouraged Angola and Namibia to review trends associated with the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens affecting them, and the measures and activities they are implementing to address these crimes, to ensure that these measures and activities are effective and adapted as may be needed to respond to any newly identified trends;*
  - e) *noted that Viet Nam submitted a report to the Secretariat on 3 November 2023, which is available as information document SC77 Inf. 29, and that Malaysia submitted a report to the Secretariat on 8 November 2023, which is available as information document SC77 Inf. 33, and requested the two Parties to take any comments and observations from the Secretariat in accordance with recommendation f) i) into consideration in their implementation of Decisions 19.118 and 19.119, as applicable to them;*
  - f) *requested the Secretariat to:*
    - i) *review the reports from Malaysia and Viet Nam available in information documents SC77 Inf. 29 and Inf. 33 and provide its comments and observations to these Parties;*
    - ii) *seek information from the Parties concerned by recommendations c) to e), on activities conducted and measures implemented in accordance with these recommendations; and*
    - iii) *report to the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee on the results of activities conducted in accordance with recommendations f) i) and ii), together with any recommendations the Secretariat may have;*

Implementation of SC77 recommendation f) i) to iii)

4. The Secretariat reviewed the reports from Malaysia and Viet Nam and provided its comments and observations on these reports to both Parties. The Secretariat also requested the Parties to submit a report

on their implementation of the relevant CoP19 Decisions, the SC77 recommendations, and Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19) on *Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses*. In response, reports were received from both Parties.

5. Furthermore, the Secretariat sought information from Angola, Botswana, China [including Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China], Mozambique, Namibia, Qatar, South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates on their implementation of the CoP19 Decisions, SC77 recommendation and Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19). The Secretariat received reports from Angola, Botswana, Qatar, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates which are compiled in Annex 2 to the present document, in the language and format they were received.
6. The Secretariat notes that no replies to its letters were received from China (including Hong Kong SAR of China), Mozambique and Namibia. However, Mozambique provided information that is relevant in its report on the implementation of its National Ivory and Rhinoceros Action Plan (NIRAP), found in document SC78 Doc. 33.13.1 and was used for the purpose of analysis in this document.
7. The Secretariat summarize key aspects reported by the Parties in their reports and provides some additional information that came to its attention in paragraphs 8 to 56 of the present document. The Secretariat provides its observations and conclusions in paragraphs 57 to 66 of the present document.

#### Implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19) and Decisions 18.116 and 19.115 to 19.119

##### *Botswana*

8. With regard to Decision 19.117 directed to Botswana, the Party provided details in its reports on its efforts to address wildlife crime, especially rhinoceros poaching. Botswana estimates its current rhinoceros population at 312 Southern white rhinoceroses and 25 black rhinoceroses, most of which are in private ranches. Rhinoceros poaching in the country declined over the past three years and, in 2024 (up to the date of reporting on 29 October 2024), no rhinoceroses have been poached in Botswana, compared to five rhinoceroses poached during the same period in 2023.
9. Botswana reported that its new National Anti-Poaching Strategy (NAPS) was aligned with the new Southern African Development Community Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching Strategy (SADC-LEAP) and that implementation of the NAPS, which strengthened inter-agency collaboration between the military, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, the police, and national intelligence services, is underway.
10. A risk assessment was conducted by its National Anti-Poaching Coordinating Committee, which led to the deployment of security details at all facilities holding rhinoceroses. A national Joint Command Center (JOC) and four district intelligence dissemination centers (DIDCs) are established and operationalized before the end of 2024. The DIDCs will provide the JOC with real-time information to facilitate rapid inter-agency deployment of patrols. Unmanned aerial vehicles, drones and camera traps are used for remote monitoring and surveillance patrols.
11. Botswana has bilateral and regional collaborations with Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe through initiatives such as a Joint Permanent Commission on Defense and Security structure or Bi-National Commissions. In addition, Botswana highlighted that a Community Based Natural Resources programme was established to ensure that communities benefit from wildlife resources, support conservation efforts, and become the first line of defense for Botswana in combatting wildlife crime. The Party further reported that its Rhino Management Strategy has been concluded and that its implementation is ongoing, noting that the Strategy clarifies the roles of different stakeholders to ensure effective engagement between the government and non-governmental partners.
12. Botswana reported on matters related to stockpile management and rhinoceros management interventions and confirmed the details of its national focal point in the [CITES directory of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn focal points](#).

##### *China (including Hong Kong SAR of China)*

13. As noted in paragraph 6 of the present document, no report was received from China. However, the Secretariat gathered information relevant to the implementation of Decision 19.118 during its mission on totoabas (*Totoaba macdonaldi*) to China from 3 to 7 June 2024 (see document SC78 Doc. 33.12.1) and

when it participated in the *International Forum on Combating Money Laundering and Transnational Organized Crimes* organized in Hong Kong SAR of China in December 2024.

- a) China provided information on regional and international operations it participated in, such as Operation Mekong Dragon in which China, Hong Kong SAR of China and Viet Nam worked closely together to respond to and address wildlife crime, including rhinoceros horn trafficking. China also noted during the mission that a further iteration of this operation was being planned. China further shared information on its participation in Operation Thunder, the global enforcement operation led by INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization. According to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China established cooperative relationships to combat wildlife crime with 18 countries and 11 international organizations.
- b) The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) (Management Authority of Hong Kong SAR of China) provided a briefing on activities undertaken to combat rhinoceros horn trafficking and information relevant to Decision 19.118. AFCD presented data from 2018 and 2019 that, respectively, 12 and 13 cases involving the seizure of rhinoceros horn took place in Hong Kong SAR of China, and that this declined to five cases in the period from 2020 to 2024. Based on intelligence received, three South African nationals were arrested in 2018 and 2019 for illegal importation of rhinoceros horns to Hong Kong SAR of China. Three parcels containing over 130 kilograms of rhinoceros horns transiting Hong Kong SAR of China and destined to Malaysia were seized in 2019. Some of these specimens were microchipped or had external markings or both, information which was shared internationally via INTERPOL Eco messages. AFCD reported that collaboration with authorities in South Africa continues and that samples from the seized rhinoceros specimens continue to be made available to authorities in South Africa for forensic analyses, as anticipated by Decision 19.115, paragraph a).

#### Malaysia

14. As noted in paragraph 4 above, the Secretariat reviewed the report from Malaysia available as information document SC77 Inf. 33. Malaysia has developed national risk profiles and indicators specific to wildlife trafficking, and participated in the Regional Investigative and Analytical Case Meeting (RIACM) on rhinoceros horn trafficking held in March 2023 to exchange information with authorities from South Africa, Qatar and Mozambique on rhino horns trafficking. The Secretariat also welcomed other relevant activities, such as the deployment of sniffer dogs and the establishment of the Wildlife Crime Bureau under the Royal Malaysian Police. The Secretariat encouraged Malaysia to build upon the engagement undertaken through the RIACM held in March 2023, and to continue its engagement with South Africa, Qatar and Mozambique, also expanding it to other countries associated with wildlife crime as it affects Malaysia, such as Hong Kong SAR of China and Viet Nam.
15. The follow-up report prepared by Malaysia in response to SC77 recommendation f) included detailed information on its activities to implement Decision 19.119 and other relevant Decisions on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)* summarized below. Malaysia regularly updated its risk profiles considering new information and emerging trends in wildlife trafficking and noted that this is an ongoing process to ensure that strategies remain relevant and effective. The Party engaged and collaborated with other Parties to address wildlife crime, including rhinoceros horn trafficking, including through a RIACM on ivory and rhinoceros horn trafficking and a RIACM on exotic species smuggling in January 2024; a Roundtable Meeting on Cross-Border Wildlife Trafficking between Malaysia and Thailand in May 2024; a Royal Malaysian Police Wildlife Crime Bureau delegation visit to the Viet Nam Environmental Police Department in Hanoi in June 2024 to discuss strengthening cooperation, intelligence gathering and exchange to combat wildlife crime; and a virtual meeting on Strengthening Collaboration to Combat Illegal Trade in Rhinoceros Specimens between Malaysia and Qatar in October 2024.
16. In 2023 and 2024, Malaysia participated in several international initiatives and operations, including the [7th Wildlife Inter-Regional Enforcement \(WIRE\)](#) meeting in November 2023, Operation Thunder 2023, [Operation Mekong Dragon VI](#) in 2024; [Operation Presidio III](#) in 2024 and others. Malaysia further reported on training activities, national level operations and work conducted through its National Wildlife Forensic Laboratory.
17. The last incident involving rhinoceros horn detected in the country occurred in July 2022. Two perpetrators involved in a 2021 case of rhinoceros horn trafficking are currently on trial and scheduled to appear in court in December 2024. Malaysia also reported on an ongoing national multi-agency operation named [Op Bersepadu Khazanah](#), which involves several governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations contributing to deterring wildlife traffickers by strengthening border control and intelligence-driven operations. Malaysia continues to deploy sniffer dogs at airports, seaports and land borders to detect and prevent wildlife trafficking, noting that 54 operations were carried out by its K9 unit from 2023 up to September 2024.

18. In addition, the Malaysia Checkpoints and Border Agency (MCBA) has been established and commenced its operations on 1 May 2024. The MCBA serves as the agency that oversees management and control of the country's borders and is expected to strengthen enforcement at Malaysian borders regarding wildlife specimens. Malaysia is developing strategies to integrate technology, particularly artificial intelligence, into border control measures to fortify governance and optimize operational efficiency.
19. In the context of Decision 19.116, Malaysia confirmed to the Secretariat the details of its national focal point in the *CITES directory of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn focal points*.

#### *Mozambique*

20. As noted in paragraph 6 of the present document, no report was received from Mozambique. However, the Party reported information relevant to Decision 19.118 directed to Mozambique in its report on the implementation of its NIRAP. Relevant elements are summarized below.
21. Mozambique has collaborated with South Africa and finalized a Joint Security Plan between the Kruger National Park (KNP) in South Africa, Limpopo National Park (LNP) in Mozambique, and the Greater Lebombo Conservancy (GLC) in Mozambique which is currently being implemented. Joint Operational Plans have been developed for the KNP- LNP-GLC, KNP-LNP and Pafuri-Sengwe areas in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA) and are being implemented, although additional funding is needed to continue implementation. From May 2022 to October 2024, nine law enforcement information sharing meetings were held between representatives from Mozambique's National Administration for Conservation Areas (ANAC) and the KNP in South Africa. Although no Joint Operations Protocols and Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) have been agreed between these two countries, each of them developed SoPs which are used during joint or concurrent operations. There are monthly security meetings between representatives from LNP and KNP to support collaboration, and a Joint Park Management Committees (JPMC) meeting is held regularly (every 3 to 4 months).
22. ANAC works in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Attorney General's Office of Mozambique and Viet Nam on collaboration to address wildlife crimes and share intelligence. Within the scope of this MoU and in collaboration with Viet Nam, three traffickers were detained, one in Mozambique and two in Viet Nam. Exchange of information on wildlife crime related matters is ongoing in accordance with the MoU and collaboration is maintained by focal points from both countries.
23. In accordance with an MoU between Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania, several meetings were held since 2021. Most recently, in 2024, consultation processes were conducted in both countries to develop a Master Integrated Plan (MIDP) for the Niassa-Selous Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA). Mozambique considers that the MIDP is fundamental for the development of the Niassa-Selous TFCA, including the implementation of institutional arrangements and collaborative actions.
24. A WCO-recognized customs training module to strengthen controls at its ports was developed for use in the country and a total of 509 customs officials were trained in 2023 and 2024. Joint Special Units comprising officers from the National Criminal Investigation Service, Environmental Protection Police, ANAC and customs are operational at both the Maputo port and Maputo International Airport. The work of these Joint Special Units is complemented by K9 unit sniffer dogs.
25. The Party also reported on training conducted between May 2020 to October 2024, which included online training to strengthen capacity regarding investigations into transnational wildlife trafficking between Mozambique and Viet Nam.

#### *Qatar*

26. Qatar reported that it has a comprehensive legal framework in place to protect and regulate legal trade in wildlife, and prevent smuggling. Coordination among its national authorities, including law enforcement, customs and judicial authorities were enhanced. Special security measures such as covert operations and increased inspections have been mobilized, particularly at Hamad international Airport, a major international transit point. Regular and comprehensive training programmes for law enforcement officers have been implemented to ensure effective enforcement of CITES provisions and to enhance their ability to prevent and detect wildlife trafficking.
27. Based on intelligence gathered on rhinoceros horn trafficking, Qatar undertook a comprehensive review of its risk management practices and developed detailed risk profiles to target high-risk shipments, luggage,

and passengers for optimal cost-effectiveness. Qatar undertakes periodic reviews of its risk management practices to identify areas for improvement and to ensure alignment with international best practices. Qatar mobilized advanced screening techniques at its ports, including x-ray screening and sniffer dogs.

28. To strengthen collaboration, Qatar has established direct communication channels with law enforcement agencies and wildlife authorities from some Parties affected by rhinoceros specimen trafficking. Qatar included as an Annex to its report the minutes of its online meeting on strengthening collaboration to combat the illegal trade in ivory and rhinoceros specimens in October 2024 in which representatives from Malaysia, Uganda and the United Arab Emirates participated. The meeting addressed topics such as information sharing regarding suspected illegal shipments, the need for dedicated points of contact for faster exchange of intelligence and capacity-building initiatives, including training and joint operations. Participants also reviewed existing risk management practices and shared updates on their respective strategies. The meeting minutes outline action points and next steps in relation to information sharing, risk profile development, capacity-building, legislative reviews, strengthening customs and border controls, and long-term collaboration, with a follow-up meeting proposed to assess progress.
29. Qatar reported that the enhanced measures implemented had a significant positive impact and that over 769 kilograms of ivory and rhinoceros horn were seized during inspections. Qatar also included in its report a compressive list outlining rhinoceros horn confiscations made in the country in the period from 2014 to 2018, as well as images of confiscations in 2022 and 2023.
30. It was also reported that Qatar Airways successfully implemented a comprehensive awareness programme and training for its staff, noting that this initiative ensures that airline personnel are well-equipped to recognize and respond to potential instances of wildlife smuggling. Qatar Airways also developed a range of multimedia tools to raise awareness among passengers about the illegal wildlife trade, particularly regarding illegal trade in rhinoceros horn and ivory.
31. Qatar's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has taken steps to enhance awareness about enforcement efforts to combat illegal trade in wildlife, with the implementation of a proactive communication strategy ensuring that wildlife seizures and CITES matters receive comprehensive traditional and social media coverage in the country.
32. Qatar noted that challenges remain despite significant progress and recognized the need for ongoing international collaboration and further capacity-building. Qatar intends to further expand its cooperation with other Parties and stakeholders in combating illegal wildlife trade. It is also investing in new technologies to improve its detection and interdiction capabilities and plans to launch further public awareness campaigns to educate travelers and cargo operators about the risks and penalties associated with illegal wildlife trade.

#### *South Africa*

33. Regarding Decision 19.117, South Africa reported that it is implementing a National Integrated Strategy to Combat Wildlife Trafficking to address crimes involving rhinoceroses and other wildlife. Implementation of this strategy is monitored through a National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure Priority Committee on Wildlife Trafficking. The South African Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE) Environmental Enforcement Fusion Centre (EEFC) continuously reviews trends associated with crimes involving rhinoceroses affecting South Africa to improve their responses.
34. Regarding Decision 19.118, the Deputy Minister of DFFE met with Viet Nam's Deputy Minister of Public Security in Hanoi, Viet Nam. During this meeting, South Africa emphasized that wildlife crime, particularly crimes affecting rhinoceroses, remain a significant concern. They discussed matters related to biodiversity protection, combatting wildlife crime and enhancing cooperation to address wildlife crime and reviewed the implementation status of relevant agreements on these matters. In February 2024, South Africa's Deputy Minister of Police and Viet Nam's Deputy Minister of Public Security met again in South Africa and agreed to strengthen cooperation in addressing wildlife crime.
35. Regarding Decision 18.116, South Africa is publishing a revised National Biodiversity Management Plan for Rhinoceros which addresses *inter alia* demand management. Regarding Decision 19.115, South Africa is collecting samples from all rhinoceros horns seized within the country for forensic analysis. When importing DNA samples from Parties where illegal consignments of rhinoceros horns were seized, South Africa uses the simplified procedures provided for in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Permits and certificates*, as anticipated by Decision 19.115, paragraph b).

36. Regarding Decision 19.116, South Africa often draws upon the *CITES directory of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn focal points* to establish contact with relevant agencies in different countries and confirmed the details of its national focal point in the directory.
37. On its implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19), South Africa highlighted matters such as seven Integrated Wildlife Zones (IWZ) established across the country to facilitate better communication, coordination, deployment of resources and collaborative responses to threats identified. Within these zones, cooperation between different stakeholders resulted in the apprehension of various rhinoceros poachers and syndicate members and successful convictions in court. The rhinoceros protection efforts across the country are consolidated through the EEFC. The EEFC coordination has standardized these efforts leading to enhanced tactical level anti-poaching, integrated information-led enforcement and investigations, and strengthened collaboration between different authorities to gather, analyze and share information on wildlife trafficking and address it. Thanks to the experience of EEFC analysts, the DFFE can support investigating officers in matters such as profiling, association, cell phone, social media, crime scene and financial analysis. A Digital Forensic Laboratory which forms part of the EEFC has been established to assist in extraction of information from digital devices to support criminal prosecutions.
38. South Africa reported that a total of 229 rhinoceroses were poached in the country during the first six months of 2024, mostly in the country's Kwazulu-Natal Province. A significant decrease in poaching numbers were observed from May to the end of September 2024. This reduction could likely be attributed to the dehorning of rhinoceros populations in KwaZulu-Natal, specifically in Hluhluwe iMfolozi Park, where over 1,000 rhinoceroses were dehorned since April 2024.

#### *United Arab Emirates*

39. In the context of Decision 19.119 directed to it, the CITES Management Authority (MA) of the United Arab Emirates, the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to coordinate meetings with diplomatic missions and embassies of Parties known to be affected by crimes involving rhinoceros specimens, i.e. Angola, Mozambique and South Africa as source countries of rhinoceros specimens transiting the United Arab Emirates; China and Viet Nam as destination countries; and Malaysia and Qatar that play a role as transit countries. These meetings are intended to facilitate discussions on enhancing mutual efforts to combat illegal trade in rhinoceros horn, establishing mechanisms for information and data exchange, and knowledge-sharing and capacity-building in wildlife enforcement. The Party also held a meeting between its CITES MA and the CITES MA of Qatar, also mentioned by Qatar in its report (see paragraph 28 above).
40. The national legislative revision of the United Arab Emirates is ongoing to enhance penalties facilitating deterrent sanctions. It is actively exploring opportunities to share samples from rhinoceros horn seized within its territory for forensic analysis, as anticipated by Decision 19.115.
41. The United Arab Emirates provided information on operations conducted, such as the Green Justice Operation coordinated under the International Initiative for Law Enforcement for Climate (I2LEC), a programme led by its Ministry of Interior. This operation targeting cross-border environmental crimes in the Amazon Basin took place from 24 to 30 June 2024, with participation from law enforcement agencies in Brazil, Colombia and Peru, alongside the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Advanced technologies such as AI-powered analytics were used to map wildlife crimes. The operation resulted in the exposure of wildlife trafficking networks and the confiscation of over 2.4 tons of terrestrial and marine wildlife products. The United Arab Emirates also led Operation Forest Shield that targeted illegal activities in the Congo Basin in collaboration with seven African countries. This operation conducted over 14 days resulted in numerous arrests and seizures of illegal wildlife specimens.
42. The United Arab Emirates also elaborated on training and capacity-building activities in relation to addressing wildlife and other environmental crimes, such as a I2LEC virtual training programme in September 2024, bringing together over 500 participants, including law enforcement officials from Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as experts from Europol and the United Nations. The Party's MA planned further training sessions to be delivered in 2024, to enhance to enhance the skills of border checkpoint staff and other stakeholders responsible for enforcing CITES regulations and national wildlife protection laws.

#### *Viet Nam*

43. As noted in paragraph 4 of the present document, the Secretariat reviewed the report from Viet Nam available as information document SC77 Inf. 29. The Secretariat noted the information provided on legislative

reforms and a new government Decree that was being pursued. The Secretariat encouraged Viet Nam to include information in its follow-up report on any further developments in this regard and on implementation of the relevant legislation, including any new updated information on seizures, arrests, prosecutions and penalties imposed for cases involving rhinoceros specimens. The Secretariat further noted information on international operations in which Viet Nam participated and the collaboration, coordination and engagement this facilitated, as well as extensive work on demand reduction and community awareness that responded directly to Decisions 19.118 and 18.116. The Secretariat considered that there was room for improvement regarding the bilateral collaboration between Viet Nam and Parties associated with wildlife crime affecting Viet Nam and highlighted that, as stated in document SC77 Doc. 45, Angola is emerging as an exit point for illegal rhinoceros horn and ivory consignments destined to Viet Nam. Viet Nam was therefore encouraged to also engage in activities to strengthen its engagement with Angola.

44. The Secretariat noted with concern that, although rhinoceros horn seizures were made in Viet Nam, information document SC77 Inf. 29 indicates that there is no record of seizures that involved rhinoceros specimens originating from South Africa during the period from 2022 to October 2023 and therefore no exchange of samples has taken place during this period. The Secretariat indicated to Viet Nam that the majority of rhinoceros horns found in illegal trade originate from South Africa because it has the largest rhinoceros population in the world. The Secretariat further highlighted that although these horns may originate from South Africa, criminal networks often export them from other countries in Africa to avoid detection. The Secretariat encouraged Viet Nam to review its implementation of Decision 19.115 and Resolution Conf. 19.14 (Rev. CoP19) as it relates to the collection of samples from rhinoceros horn seized within its territory and sharing it. The Secretariat encouraged Viet Nam to consider sharing samples obtained from its seizures in the RhODIS Rhino DNA Indexing System maintained by South Africa, which stores rhinoceros DNA profiles from multiple African countries in a single continental database. RhODIS enables the comparison of DNA samples collected from seized rhinoceros horns and crime scenes against thousands of DNA profiles and has assisted in successful prosecutions in Eswatini, Kenya, Namibia and South Africa. Viet Nam was requested to include information in its report on any activities conducted in this regard.
45. Viet Nam submitted a comprehensive follow-up report to the Secretariat that included detailed information on relevant legislative provisions and Decrees in place in the country to respond to and address wildlife crime, including rhinoceros horn trafficking. They are submitting for governmental approval a new revised draft Decree on the implementation of CITES. The new revised draft Decree will provide for stricter CITES implementation measures whilst facilitating simplified administrative CITES permitting formalities.
46. Regarding enforcement, Viet Nam indicated that a total of seven seizures of rhinoceros specimens and eight related arrests were made in 2023 and 2024. Two of these cases involved illegal imports, one involved illegal online trade within Viet Nam, and the other involved domestic trading and transportation. In 2023 and 2024, ten offenders involved in rhinoceros horn trafficking were convicted and sentenced, strict penalties ranging from three to 13 years imprisonment.
47. Viet Nam participated in several international operations, including different iterations of Operation Mekong Dragon and Operation Thunder. Viet Nam customs, as co-initiator, actively participated in [Operation Mekong Dragon VI](#) held from 15 August to 16 September 2024. The operation targeted illegal trafficking in drugs and wildlife specimens. Viet Nam also outlined activities conducted during Operation Thunder, including information gathering and exchange, coordination between different authorities and targeting illegal cross border movements of wildlife specimens. Viet Nam will provide an update on the results of the most recent Operation Thunder 2024 at the present meeting.
48. With regard to capacity development for law enforcement agencies, during the period from 2019 to 2024, the MA of Viet Nam organized training and capacity-building interventions on CITES implementation and identification of wildlife species, including rhinoceros specimens, for approximately 1,500 officers from provincial forest protection agencies, customs, the environmental police and other agencies. A US-funded project *Strengthening CITES compliance and law enforcement capacity* supported by the Secretariat includes a series of training interventions involving various of its national enforcement agencies. These interventions will address matters such as CITES implementation, species identification and implementation of legislation to combat wildlife crime, amongst others.
49. In the context of Decision 19.115, Viet Nam reported that no seizures of rhinoceros specimens originating from South Africa were made in the period from 2022 to July 2024, and therefore no exchange of samples has taken place during this period. Although there is no evidence or indication that rhinoceros horns seized in Viet Nam originated from South Africa, Viet Nam is willing to exchange samples from horns seized with South Africa upon request.

50. In the context of Decision 18.116, Viet Nam elaborated in detail in its report on activities conducted regarding demand reduction and community awareness. Viet Nam raised awareness about CITES and relevant legislation among business owners; conducted research on the use of medicinal plants and herbs as an alternative to rhinoceros horn; implemented project *Saving Threatened Wildlife* in pursuit of behavior change among traditional medicine practitioners and tourists; and deployed the *Rhino Horn Demand Reduction Campaign* with communication videos broadcasted on social media and on flights operated by Viet Nam Airlines. Viet Nam also raised awareness among tourism authorities, travel agencies and tour guides, and on ecommerce trade platforms.
51. Viet Nam also reported on the management of its rhinoceros horn stockpile and the destruction of rhinoceros horn and other wildlife specimens.

#### Implementation of SC77 recommendation d)

52. In document [SC77 Doc. 45](#), the Secretariat noted with concern that Angola seems to be increasingly used as an exit point for illegal rhinoceros horn and ivory consignments from Africa to Asia, and that official information shows that [Namibia experienced a significant increase](#) in rhinoceros poaching in 2022.
53. The Committee agreed recommendation d) outlined in paragraph 3 of the present document, encouraging Angola and Namibia to review trends associated with the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens affecting them, and the measures and activities they are implementing to address these crimes, to ensure that these measures and activities are effective and adapted as may be needed to respond to any newly identified trends.

#### *Angola*

54. Angola noted that it has developed a National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) and is carrying out several activities, including capacity-building and inspections, and is exchanging information on experiences within the Southern African Development Community and with other Parties to combat wildlife crime. Angola provided data about rhinoceros specimen seizures made in the country from 2018 to 2024. During this period, Angola seized over 58 kg of rhinoceros specimens, mostly consisting of rhinoceros horns, but also some worked pieces such as bracelets and others. For all seizures, the nationality of offenders is shown as Vietnamese. For all seizures, Angola indicated that samples were not shared for forensic analyses as anticipated by Decision 19.115. In the context of Decision 19.116, the Party indicated that officers from the CITES MA of Angola serve as focal points and provided the names of these officers.
55. Angola noted that it will provide further reporting on activities conducted in other reports such as its CITES implementation report and its report on progress with NIAP implementation to the present meeting.

#### *Namibia*

56. As noted in paragraph 6 of the present document, the Secretariat did not receive a report from Namibia. The Secretariat notes however that an April 2024 [press release by the Namibian Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism](#) (MEFT) states that 28 rhinoceroses were poached in Namibia in the period up to 1 April that year. According to the press release, 19 of these animals were poached in Etosha National Park, of which 10 were discovered during dehorning operations in March 2024. An assessment was being undertaken in the park to establish the full extent of the problem and MEFT called for an urgent high-level meeting with relevant security clusters to discuss the matter. The release also elaborated on rhinoceros poaching incidents that occurred elsewhere in the country.

#### Implementation of Decision 19.122: Observations and conclusions of the Secretariat

#### *Botswana*

57. At SC77, the Standing Committee welcomed the reduction in poaching observed in Botswana in 2022 and 2023 compared to previous years and encouraged the Party to rapidly progress implementation of its 2023 to 2028 NAPS. Reporting provided by Botswana for the present meeting confirms that implementation of its NAPS is underway, and that numerous other measures and activities have been mobilized and are being implemented in response to Decision 19.117. Information provided by Botswana shows that rhinoceros poaching in the country continues to decline, and that no rhinoceroses have been poached during 2024, up to 29 October 2024 when the Party submitted its report. The Party is commended for its efforts that are delivering positive results.



## *China*

58. The lack of reporting from China impeded the ability of the Secretariat to fully understand how SC77 recommendation b) has been taken into consideration by the Party and which measures and activities have been implemented accordingly. China may wish to provide additional information at the present meeting. The Secretariat notes however that the collaboration between China, South Africa and Viet Nam as outlined in paragraph 13 of the present document aligns well with the provisions of Decision 19.118. China is encouraged to build upon this existing collaboration to further strengthen and expand engagement in support of joint investigations, operations and information and intelligence exchange.

## *Malaysia*

59. The Secretariat welcomes Malaysia's report. Malaysia is encouraged to continue its work in this regard, maintaining and as needed further expanding its engagement and collaboration with Parties associated with wildlife crime as it affects Malaysia. In addition to the work conducted through its National Wildlife Forensic Laboratory, the Party is also encouraged to consider sharing samples taken from seized rhinoceros specimens, most notably with South Africa which maintains the RhODIS Rhino DNA Indexing System. Although Parties might have their own laboratories that could assist with the identification of species, there is still significant value in also submitting samples to South Africa for comparison against the RhODIS database.

## *Mozambique*

60. It is not evident from Mozambique's report how recent activities were conducted, i.e. the collaboration under the MoU with Viet Nam that resulted in arrests. The Party reported on an online training aimed at strengthening capacity regarding investigations into transnational wildlife trafficking between Mozambique and Viet Nam, but does not provide details on the nature of this training and on whether it resulted in strengthened engagement. Mozambique did not provide information on collaboration with other Parties often associated with illegal rhinoceros horn trade from Mozambique. The Secretariat encourages Mozambique to expand its engagement with other Parties affected by illegal rhinoceros horn trade from Mozambique, such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

## *Qatar*

61. The Secretariat welcomes the report provided by Qatar. The online meeting with representatives from Malaysia, Uganda and the United Arab Emirates with the aim of strengthening collaboration to combat the illegal trade in ivory and rhinoceros specimens is in particular relevant to Decision 19.119. The Party is commended for the initiative taken to convene this meeting and is encouraged to build upon this work by initiating similar undertakings to expand its engagement with other Parties known to be associated with illegal rhinoceros specimens transiting its territory, most notably South Africa, Mozambique, and Viet Nam. Qatar is also encouraged to consider sharing samples from seized rhinoceros specimens as anticipated by Decision 19.115, most notably with South Africa which maintains the RhODIS system.

## *South Africa*

62. The Secretariat welcomes the report from South Africa and the engagement between South Africa and Viet Nam. The Secretariat notes that fewer rhinoceroses were poached in South Africa during the first 6 months of 2024 compared to figures reported during the same period in 2022 and 2023, suggesting that efforts made in South Africa prevent rhinoceros poaching numbers from escalating. However, it also shows that the threat posed to rhinoceroses by poaching and trafficking persists. It is therefore essential that authorities in South Africa remain vigilant and continue to deploy measures and activities to respond to these crimes, including by continuously reviewing trends as anticipated by Decision 19.117 and pursuing engagement and collaboration as envisaged by Decision 19.118. South Africa is invited to take note of the reporting from Viet Nam and to follow up with Viet Nam, as needed, in the context of Decision 19.115.

## *United Arab Emirates*

63. The Secretariat welcomes report from the United Arab Emirates and the engagement with Parties affected by rhinoceros specimen trafficking and known to be associated with illegal rhinoceros specimens transiting the UAE. However, the report does not clearly indicate whether these activities have already been conducted or must still be undertaken. The United Arab Emirates might wish to provide an update. The operations initiated and coordinated by the United Arab Emirates and the training and capacity-building activities

undertaken are also welcomed. The Party is encouraged to explore opportunities to mobilize similar operations with a focus on rhinoceros specimen trafficking and on Parties affected by this illegal trade. Lastly, the Secretariat welcomes the Party actively exploring opportunities to share samples from rhinoceros horn seized within its territory for forensic analysis as anticipated by Decision 19.115, and also draws the attention of the United Arab Emirates to the RhODIS Rhino DNA Indexing.

#### *Viet Nam*

64. The Secretariat notes that Viet Nam is also implementing a NIRAP (see document SC78 Doc. 33.13.1). Document SC78 Doc. 33.13.1 concludes that Viet Nam remains one of the primary destination countries for illegal ivory and rhino horn consignments and that although numerous activities have been implemented that must be recognized, illegal trade in ivory and rhinoceros horn affecting Viet Nam persists. Although Viet Nam reported that it is willing to exchange samples from horns seized with South Africa upon request, reporting from Viet Nam in the context of Decision 19.115 remains of concern. It seems that Viet Nam is taking a passive approach on this important matter and the Secretariat again encourages the Party to review its implementation of this Decision and to actively reach out to South Africa and pursue collaboration regarding the sharing of samples from seized rhinoceros horn specimens. The Secretariat also reiterates that there is further room for improvement regarding bilateral collaboration between Viet Nam and Parties associated with wildlife crime affecting Viet Nam, in particular Angola as an exit point for illegal rhinoceros horn and ivory consignments destined to Viet Nam. Viet Nam is invited to take note of the reporting from Angola as highlighted in paragraph 54 of the present document and to undertake activities to strengthen its engagement with Angola.

#### *Angola*

65. The Secretariat encourages Angola to initiate activities to strengthen its engagement with Viet Nam. Reporting from Angola also shows that there is much room for improvement in the implementation of Decision 19.115 and encourages the Party to share samples from rhinoceros horn seized within its territory with the RhODIS Rhino DNA Indexing System for forensic analysis. Document SC78 Doc. 33.13.1 on the implementation of Angola's NIAP concludes that continued monitoring of ivory and rhinoceros specimen trafficking affecting the country, as well as potential bilateral law enforcement collaboration with Viet Nam, is warranted to better understand and address this illegal trade. Angola is also encouraged to conduct risk assessments to develop risk profiles for illegal trade in ivory and rhino horn which is also essential in the context of SC77 recommendation d). The Secretariat updated the *CITES directory of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn focal points* with the details of the focal points identified by Angola and Parties are encouraged to draw upon the directory as needed.

#### *Namibia*

66. In document SC77 Doc. 45, the Secretariat reported a gradual increase of rhinoceroses poached in Namibia between 2021 and 2023. Rhinoceros poaching in Namibia remains of concern, although the lack of reporting from Namibia impeded the ability of the Secretariat to fully understand how Namibia implemented SC77 recommendation d). The Party may wish to provide an update on the current situation and its implementation of SC77 recommendation d).
67. The Secretariat notes that Decision 19.122 has been implemented and can be deleted.

#### Implementation of Decision 19.120

68. The Secretariat regrets that, due to its significant workload, Decision 19.120 could not be implemented to date. At the time of writing the present document, the Secretariat is putting in place arrangements for the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force (Task Force) meeting to be convened during the first half of 2025. The Secretariat thanks the European Union, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America for their funding support in this regard.
69. The Secretariat notes that a comprehensive report on rhinoceroses is being prepared for the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties in accordance with paragraphs 7 and 8 of Resolution 9.14 (Rev. CoP19). In accordance with paragraph 9. c) of Resolution Conf 9.14 (Rev. CoP19), based on the report prepared, the Secretariat will formulate draft decisions for consideration by the Conference of the Parties. The Standing Committee may therefore wish to request the Secretariat to take into consideration the outcomes of the Task Force meeting in its report to CoP20. Should the Committee agree to this proposal, Decision 19.121 can be considered as implemented and proposed for deletion.

## Recommendations

70. The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a) request the Parties to which Decisions 19.117, 19.118 and 19.119 are directed to take the observations and conclusions of the Secretariat into consideration in their implementation of these respective Decisions;
- b) encourage Angola and Viet Nam to strengthen their engagement and to pursue information and intelligence exchange, as well as joint operations, to address rhinoceros specimen trafficking affecting them;
- c) request Namibia to continue reviewing trends associated with the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens affecting it, and the measures and activities being implemented to address these crimes, to ensure they are effective and adapted to respond to any newly identified trends;
- d) request Parties to actively scale up efforts to collect samples from rhinoceros horn seized within their territories for forensic analysis and to fully implement Decision 19.115;
- e) request the Secretariat to take into consideration the outcomes of the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force to be convened in its report to CoP20; and
- f) recommend to the Conference of the Parties the deletion of Decisions 19.121 and 19.122, as they have been implemented.

## DECISIONS ON RHINOCEROSSES (RHINOCEROTIDAE SPP.)

### **Directed to Parties where illegal markets for rhinoceros horn exist**

**18.116** Parties in which illegal markets for rhinoceros horn exist are encouraged to develop demand reduction programmes targeted at key identified audiences, taking into consideration the provisions in Resolution Conf. 17.4 (Rev. CoP19) on Demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species and taking advantage of the experience and expertise developed in other jurisdictions and by other organizations. Parties are urged to close those markets that contribute to poaching or illegal trade.

### **Directed to Parties**

**19.115** Parties are encouraged to:

- a) scale up efforts to collect samples from rhinoceros horn seized within their territories for forensic analysis, as anticipated by paragraph 1 g) of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19) on Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses;
- b) use the simplified procedures provided for under the Regarding the use of simplified procedures to issue permits and certificates in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19) on Permits and certificates for law enforcement purposes, to facilitate the exchange of rhinoceros horn samples for DNA analyses; and
- c) use the [Form for collection and sharing of data on rhinoceros horn seizures and on samples for forensic analysis](#) available in the Annex to Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19), as appropriate, to facilitate exchange of information and samples for analyses.

**19.116** Parties are encouraged to:

- a) draw upon the [Directory of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn focal points](#) maintained by the CITES Secretariat, as may be needed, to facilitate contact between relevant agencies in different countries on matters related to rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros specimen trade; and
- b) if included in the directory, immediately inform the Secretariat if the details of their national focal point should be updated.

### **Directed to Botswana and South Africa**

**19.117** Botswana and South Africa are encouraged to review trends associated with the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros' specimens affecting them, and the measures and activities they are implementing to address these crimes, to ensure that these measures and activities are effective and adapted as may be needed to respond to any newly identified trends.

### **Directed to China, Mozambique, South Africa and Viet Nam**

**19.118** China (including Hong Kong SAR of China), Mozambique, South Africa and Viet Nam are encouraged to further strengthen their engagement, undertaking joint operations and further strengthening information and intelligence exchange, to build upon collaborative efforts, progress made and successes achieved, and further expand their collaboration to address illegal rhinoceros horn trade.

### **Directed to Malaysia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates**

**19.119** Malaysia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are encouraged to scale up their collaboration with Parties known to be associated with illegal rhinoceros specimens transiting their territories, and to

*review their risk management practices, developing rhinoceros specific risk profiles targeting cargo, luggage and passengers from and destined to these Parties.*

**Directed to the Secretariat**

**19.120** *Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall:*

- a) *convene a follow up CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force meeting consisting of representatives of national enforcement agencies, including those involved in combating organised crime from Parties affected by rhinoceros poaching and illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens and, as appropriate, other Parties and experts to develop strategies to further strengthen responses to address rhinoceros poaching and rhinoceros specimen trafficking, taking into consideration the key poaching and trafficking challenges and responses outlined in Annex 4 to document CoP19 Doc. 75, and the outcomes of the October 2013 CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force meeting presented in the Annex to Notification to the Parties No. 2014/006 of 23 January 2014, and any other relevant matters; and*
- b) *report to the Standing Committee on the results of the Task Force meeting, together with any recommendations it may have.*

**Directed to the Standing Committee**

**19.121** *The Standing Committee shall consider the reports of the Secretariat in accordance with Decisions 19.120 and 19.122 and make recommendations to the Parties and the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties as appropriate.*

**Directed to the Secretariat**

**19.122** *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *examine the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19) and Decisions 19.117, 19.118 and 19.119 regarding measures to address the illegal killing of rhinoceros and trafficking of rhinoceros horn, and;*
- b) *report to the 77th and 78th meetings of the Standing Committee.*

RHINOCEROSSES (RHINOCEROTIDAE SPP.)

**Responses from Parties to letters of the Secretariat inviting them to report on their implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19), as well as Decisions and Recommendations on *Rhinoceroses* (Rhinocerotidae spp.)**

**Angola**

**SUBJECT: Implementation of decisions and Recommendations on Rhinoceroses.**

Dear Sir/Madam,  
Our best compliments.

We acknowledge receipt of the notification with **Ref.: EA /04/07/2024/BvR**, from the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), regarding the submission of the Report of the activities carried out and the measures implemented in accordance with the recommendation of SC77 on the Rhinoceros.

It should be noted that in Angola there are no updated records on the existence of rhinos, however, within the scope of the implementation of CITES in Angola in the fight against illegal trade in ivory and other wildlife specimens (poaching), of the National Action Plan on Ivory (NIAP), Angola has carried out several activities of capacity building, inspection, workshops, exchange of experiences within SADC, and also with Countries that are Parties to CITES, to effectively combat wildlife crimes.

Accordingly, Angola is preparing its CITES implementation report on the activities carried out this year (2024), as well as the export and import reports, the report on seizures of ivory and other wildlife specimens and the NIAP report to be submitted to the Convention Secretariat in due course. However, we are submitting the report on rhinoceros seizures for the period 2018 to 2024, which was extracted from the general report on seizures for these years.

Due to the lack of data on the existence of Rhinos in Angola, we believe that there is no need to appoint a specific focal point, however, issues related to CITES are the responsibility of the National Institute for Biodiversity and Conservation Areas of the Ministry of the Environment (CITES Management Authority in Angola), represented by its Director General **Miguel Xavier** and **Violante Pereira** - National Focal Point of CITES in Angola.

We looking forward to hearing from you and please accept the assurance of our highest consideration.



## **Botswana**

Dear Sir

**BOTSWANA'S REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION 19.116 &  
19.117 ADOPTED BY THE 19<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP  
19, PANAMA, 2022)**

This letter serves to respond to CITES letter dated 10 July 2024, Ref. EA/05/07/2024/BvR and also updates the 78<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee on progress made so far on the measures put in place by Botswana to address illegal killing and illegal trade of rhinoceroses in alignment with the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19) and below decision 19.117.

**Decision 19.117** directed to: Botswana and South Africa

*Decision "Botswana and South Africa are encouraged to review trends associated with the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros' specimens affecting them, and the measures and activities they are implementing to address these crimes, to ensure that these measures and activities are effective and adapted as may be needed to respond to any newly identified trends".*

Rhino poaching has been declining for the past three (3) years. Botswana government has invested heavily on combatting wildlife crime especially Rhino poaching. With regard to poaching in the year 2024, nil Rhinos have been poached this far compared to five (5) during the same period in 2023.

Outlined below are some the key interventions adopted by government.

### **1. Implementation of the National Anti-Poaching Strategy (NAPS)**

The new National Anti-Poaching Strategy (NAPS) was implemented during the period under reporting. This was after it was accordingly aligned to the new SADC Law Enforcement and



Anti-Poaching Strategy (SADC-LEAP). The reviewed strategy strengthened and enhanced inter-agency collaboration, especially between the Army, Department of Wildlife and National Parks, the Police, and National Intelligence.

Further, a risk assessment was done by National Anti-Poaching Coordinating Committee, which led the deployment of security details at all rhino holding facilities including private ones. Consequently, a dramatic decline in Rhino poaching incidents occurred across the country.

A national Joint Command Center (JOC) was also concluded during the period through private partnership, and will be commissioned before the end of the year. Similarly, four (4) district intelligence dissemination centers (DIDC) were also finalized and will be commissioned before the end of year as well. The DIDCs will feed the JOC with information on to up-to-date and real-time basis for inter-agency rapid deployment of patrols.

## **2. Innovative technology and surveillance equipment**

Technology in the form of UAV/drones and camera traps have been adopted for remote monitoring and surveillance patrols. This has enhanced the detection of illegal activities raising situational awareness with regard to the Rhinoceros on a daily basis.

## **3. Strengthening Bilateral and Regional collaborative relationships**

Poaching and illegal wildlife trade are organized transnational crimes transcending from the source through various nations to the consumer. In that regard, Botswana has been working closely with her neighbours through the Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security (JPCD&S) structure, or Bi-National Commissions; Botswana/Namibia, Botswana/Zambia, Botswana/Zimbabwe and Botswana/South Africa. Other *fora* fostering regional and international collaboration include the SADC, KAZA, and INTERPOL.

As a result, Botswana regularly participates on national and regional operations coordinated by the structures stated above especially UNDOC, INTERPOL and BI-NATIONAL COMMISSIONS which advocates for joint border patrols, joint operations and intelligence sharing.

## **4. Community Based Natural Resources (CBNRM) beneficiation program.**

Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) has established more than forty (40) community trusts that are drawing tangible benefits from both consumptive and non-consumptive use of wildlife resource that they share space with. The purpose of CBNRM program is to ensure that communities do benefit from wildlife resources so that they can support conservation efforts in this case by particularly becoming our First Line of Defense (FLoD) in combatting wildlife crime. This is feasible as long as communities view wildlife in a positive light not as a liability.

## **5. The Rhino Management Strategy**

The Rhino Management Strategy has been concluded and implementation is on-going. For example, the Botswana Rhino Management Committee has been resuscitated and is meeting regularly to advise the Department of Wildlife and National Parks. The Strategy also clarifies roles of different stakeholders to ensure effective engagement between Government and non-governmental partners.

## **6. Rhino population**

The current population of rhinos in Botswana is estimated at three hundred and twelve (312) Southern White rhinoceros and twenty-five (25) black rhinoceros. Most of the rhino populations are in private ranches.

## **7. Management Interventions**

As management interventions, translocation activities continue to be undertaken across the country for conservation purposes. Around thirty-nine (39) animals were moved between the ranches for breeding purposes. Furthermore, dehorning of rhinos is an exercise that is being undertaken by ranches to reduce the incentive to poach. About 15 rhinoceros were dehorned during the reporting period.

## **8. Stockpile Management**

The Department of Wildlife and National Parks, which is the authority for stockpile management, has enhanced the security of the national ivory storage by equipping the storage with CCTV and Access Control System to ensure there is no leakage of stockpile.

## **9. Decision 19.116 paragraph b**

Furthermore, in the context of Decision 19.116, Botswana confirms that the details record in the directory of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn focal points are current.

## **10. Conclusion**

There are zero incidences of poaching that happened in this reporting period, it shows that the intervention put in place are effective in reversing the trends of illegal killings of rhinoceros. Botswana is committed to review the trends of rhinoceros poaching and is willing to work with partners and other range States together with the CITES Secretariat to reverse the previous trends permanently.

**Malaysia**

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON RHINOCEROSES (RHINOCEROTIDAE SPP.)**

### **MALAYSIA'S REPORT TO THE 78<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE (SC78)**

#### **Background**

At its 19<sup>th</sup> meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties retained Decision 18.116 and adopted Decisions 19.115 to 19.122 on Rhinoceroses (*Rhinocerotidae spp.*). The decision directed to Malaysia is as follows:

Directed to Malaysia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates

19.119 Malaysia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are encouraged to scale up their collaboration with Parties known to be associated with illegal rhinoceros specimens transiting their territories, and to review their risk management practices, developing rhinoceros specific risk profiles targeting cargo, luggage and passengers from and destined to these Parties.

This document serves to report on actions taken by Malaysia in response to the above-mentioned decisions and the comments and observations made by the CITES Secretariat on document SC77 Inf. 33 from Malaysia during SC77 in 2023.

Malaysia has taken the effort to strengthen our enforcement and collaboration with parties known to be associated with illegal trade of rhinoceroses, as well as reviewing our risk management practices and updating risk profiles.

#### **1. National risk profile and indicators to combat rhino horns trafficking**

Following the workshop on the development of risk profile for wildlife trafficking (1 - 3 September 2022) to formulate national risk profile to combat wildlife trafficking including rhino horns, Malaysia continues to update our risk profile from time to time with any new information and emerging trends in wildlife trafficking exploiting airport, seaport and land border. This ongoing process ensures that our strategies remain relevant and effective in addressing evolving threats to wildlife conservation. In 2024, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES) continue to work on coordinating the

update of the national risk profile during the Coordination Meeting on the Implementation of Decisions and Recommendations on Rhinoceroses (*Rhinocerotidae spp.*) and Updating of National Risk Profile and Indicators with Royal Malaysian Customs Department (RMCD), Wildlife Crime Bureau, Royal Malaysian Police (WCB RMP) and Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia (DWNP) in 16 August 2024 (**Annex 1**).

## 2. Enforcement

### a) Intelligence and information sharing with implicated countries

Malaysia continues to strengthen our capacity and networking with other countries through coordinated intelligence and information sharing, enhancing efforts to combat wildlife including rhino horns trafficking by facilitating discussions and fostering cross-border collaboration through, among others:

- (i) RIACM on Ivory and Rhino Horn Trafficking and RIACM on Exotic Species Smuggling (25 - 26 January 2024);
- (ii) TRIPOD 2 – Roundtable Meeting Cross-border Wildlife Trafficking through Thailand - Malaysia Border: New Training and Networking Tools to Help Stop it held in Alor Setar, Malaysia, 12 – 14 May 2024;
- (iii) WCB RMP sent a delegation to Vietnam Environmental Police Department in Hanoi, Vietnam in 24 June 2024 and organized bilateral meeting and discussion to strengthen the cooperation in combatting wildlife crimes focusing on intelligence exchange and gathering (**Annex 2**); and
- (iv) Malaysia and Qatar as an implicated transit countries met virtually during the Strengthening Collaboration to Combat Illegal Trade in Rhinoceros Specimen between NRES, DWNP, RMCD and WCB RMP Malaysia and Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Qatar, 2 October 2024 to discuss enforcement efforts, best practices and challenges faced by transit countries (**Annex 3**).

### b) Prosecution of Rhino Horn Case

The last case recorded in Malaysia for rhino horn trafficking was in July 2022 where Royal Malaysian Customs Department foiled an attempt to smuggle wildlife parts, including elephant tusks, pangolin scales and tiger fangs worth MYR80 million. 16 units of white rhino horns were seized in the operation and the case has been concluded and marked for no further proceedings.

On the other hand, Malaysia has taken a serious action towards the perpetrators involved in 2021 case which were brought to court for trial September 2024. Two local men face two charges under the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010: one for possession of 49 White Rhino *Ceratotherium simum* horn pieces without a special permit, and a second charge for a single piece of horn from the Critically Endangered Black Rhino *Diceros bicornis*. They face a maximum fine of MYR100,000 (USD 20,930) and up to three years in jail for each of the charges, if found guilty. The upcoming trial will resume in December 2024 (**Annex 4**).

### c) Ops Bersepadu Khazanah

Operasi Bersepadu Khazanah (OBK) plays a critical role in deterring wildlife traffickers through multi agency collaboration which involve DWNP, RMP, RMCD, Forestry Departments, state governments and NGOs through strengthening border control and intelligence-driven operations (**Annex 5**).

### d) Sniffer dogs

Deployment of K9 Unit are carried out in the international airports, seaports and border gate to detect and prevent wildlife trafficking activities at the entry points including rhino horns. 54 operations have been carried out by K9 Unit, DWNP from year 2023 until September 2024 covering inspection at the airports, seaports and Malaysia-Thailand entry border (**Annex 6**). DWNP also received courtesy donation from Malaysia Airport Holdings Berhad (MAHB) for 2 Belgian Malinois breed from Netherlands in May 2024, making the total of 4 sniffer dogs.

### e) Forensic analysis

Samples from seized rhino horn are collected for forensic analysis by National Wildlife Forensic Laboratory (NWFL) DWNP, to link with crime scenes and implicated suspects and promoting successful prosecution under Wildlife Conservation Act 2010. The NWFL is recognized and listed in the Directory of Laboratories that Conduct Wildlife Forensic Testing. Malaysia continues to welcome parties to collaborate with NWFL DWNP in forensic analysis through platforms such as ASEAN Working Group on CITES and Wildlife Enforcement (AWG-CITES & WE) and ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crimes (SOMTC).

## 3. Other Collaboration and Operation

In 2023 and 2024, Malaysia demonstrated its commitment to combatting wildlife crime through active participation in several key international and national operations, meetings, and trainings, including:

- (i) Operation Mekong Dragon VI which was jointly organized by UNODC and the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office Asia Pacific (RILO AP) in 2024;
- (ii) 7<sup>th</sup> Wildlife Inter-Regional Enforcement (WIRE) Meeting on 7-10 November 2023 di Abu Dhabi, UAE led by UNODC;
- (iii) INTERPOL RIACM on Exotic Species Trafficking at New Delhi, India (22 – 23 February 2024);
- (iv) Border Control Training (Wildlife and Endangered Species), Royal Malaysian Customs Academy (AKMAL), Langkawi, 3-7 March 2024;
- (v) INTERPOL RIACM Webinar Exotic Species Trafficking (21 May 2024);
- (vi) Operation Presidio III organized by WCO - 19 August to 20 September 2024;

- (vii) Operation Thunder 2023 Post op Meeting led by INTERPOL, (2, 23, and 24 January 2024);
- (viii) National Workshop to Tackle Wildlife Trafficking in Malaysia involves sea, land and air mode organized by TRAFFIC on 28 August 2024 involving all the enforcement agencies and logistics sector. (**Annex 7**); and
- (ix) Strategic Dialogue and Collaboration on Wildlife Crime in Malaysia, 14-15 October 2024, Kuala Lumpur (**Annex 8**).

#### **4. Establishment of Malaysia Checkpoints and Border Agency (MCBA)**

The Malaysian government has established the Malaysia Checkpoints and Border Agency (MCBA) which has commenced operations since 1 May 2024 and will serve as a single agency to oversee the management and control of the country's borders (**Annex 9**). The establishment of MCBA is expected to strengthen the enforcement in Malaysian borders which also play its roles to control the movement of wildlife and wildlife products. Concurrently, the Malaysian government is crafting strategies to integrate technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI) into border control measures in order to fortify governance and optimize operational efficiency. MCBA will carry out enforcement, monitoring, detention, intelligence, investigation, patrolling and prosecution in addition to carrying out management and administration in the operational area.

With these efforts being undertaken, Malaysia has done significant works to ensure the illegal activities are being tackled and will continue to step up our effort in curbing the trafficking of rhino horns.

**Coordination Meeting the Implementation of Decisions and Recommendations on Rhinoceroses (*Rhinocerotidae spp.*) and Updating of National Risk Profile and Indicators with Royal Malaysian Customs Department, Wildlife Crime Bureau (Royal Malaysian Police) and Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia, 16 August 2024**



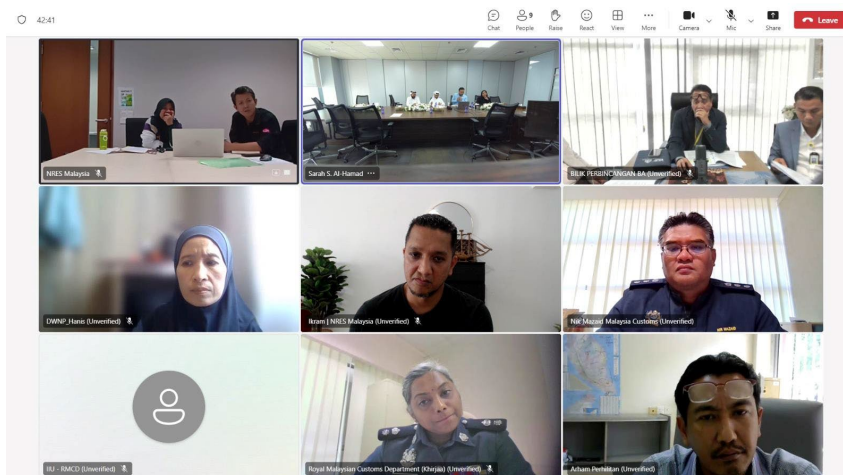
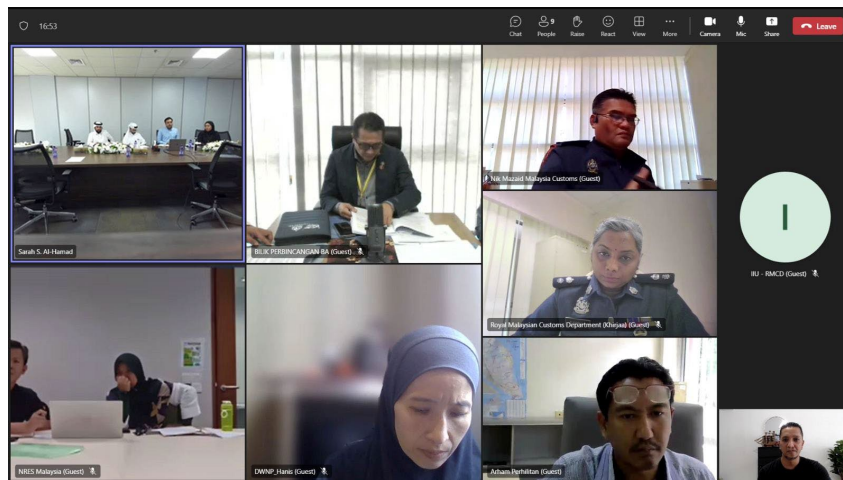
## Annex 2

### Bilateral Meeting between Wildlife Crime Bureau, Royal Malaysian Police with Vietnam Environmental Police Department (EPD), June 2024, Hanoi, Vietnam



## Annex 3

### Strengthening Collaboration to Combat Illegal Trade in Rhinoceros Specimen with Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Qatar, 2 October 2024 (online)





### TRIAL DATE SET FOR MALAYSIA'S FIRST COURT CASE ON TRAFFICKING OF AFRICAN RHINO HORNS

Two Malaysian men today claimed trial for illegal possession of African rhino horns in the country's first prosecution of such a crime, involving one of its biggest seizures of rhino horns to date.

The trial is set to begin this September, close to three years after the 50 pieces of horns were seized not far from the Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

The men sprung a surprise in court today when they opted for a trial. It was a reversal of the guilty plea they had recorded at an earlier court appearance last month. Media and conservation groups gathered at court on Wednesday (24 April) had expected a penalty to be given to the two men.

The highly anticipated trial is now scheduled to take place on 11, 12 and 25 September 2024

Mohamad Sukry Wahab and Muhammad Hafszan Naser face two charges under the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010: one for possession of 49 White Rhino *Ceratotherium simum* horn pieces without a special permit, and a second charge for a single piece of horn from the Critically Endangered Black Rhino *Diceros bicornis*.

They face a maximum fine of MYR100,000 (USD 20,930) and up to three years in jail for each of the charges, if found guilty. The men were charged before the law was amended in 2022. The same offence now carries heavier fines.



The seizure that led to this court case took place on the night of 9 September 2021 when the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia stopped the vehicle driven by Sukry and Hafszan, at a roundabout near Malaysia's main international airport and discovered the rhino horn pieces.

This turned out to be one of the largest rhino horn seizures Malaysia has seen and the only one where a case has been brought before the courts.

<https://www.traffic.org/news/trial-date-set-for-malaysias-first-court-case-on-trafficking-of-african-rhino-horns/>

## Duo claiming trial for alleged possession of rhinoceros horns without permit



**NATION**

Wednesday, 24 Apr 2024  
5:58 PM MYT

### Related News



**INDONESIA** 29 Aug 2024  
Indonesia arrests man for selling rhino horn via social media

**FOOTBALL** 04 Apr 2024  
Pumped-up Machado can help Rhinos sharpen their horns

**ANIMALS** 09 Mar 2024  
Using tracker dogs to



Photo credit: S. Nishiki / TRAFFIC

PETALING JAYA: Two friends who initially pleaded guilty to two counts of possessing 50 units of rhinoceros horns without a permit three years ago are now claiming trial.

Mohamad Sukry Wahab and Muhammad Hafszan Naser, both 29, pleaded not guilty to the charges at the Sepang Sessions Court after the charge was read out to them before

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2024/04/24/duo-claiming-trial-for-alleged-possession-of-rhinoceros-horns-without-permit>

### Op Bersepadu Khazanah: 431 Malaysians, 91 foreign nationals arrested, seizures totalling RM150 million

By Niz Ain Mohamed Radhi, Qistina Sallehuddin - October 14, 2024 @ 12:29pm



Natural Resources and Environment Minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad said that 431 Malaysians and 91 foreign nationals have been arrested in Op Bersepadu Khazanah (OBK), resulting in seizures totalling RM150 million between 2021 and July this year. — NSTP/AIMAN HARIZ AZHAR

KUALA LUMPUR: A total of 431 Malaysians and 91 foreign nationals have been arrested in Op Bersepadu Khazanah (OBK), resulting in seizures totalling RM150 million between 2021 and July this year, the Dewan Rakyat heard today (Oct 14).

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad said the ministry and the Department of Wildlife Protection and National Parks have implemented various measures to combat illegal encroachment, which threatens forests and wildlife.

Among the measures is the deployment of community rangers, which started with 1,000 rangers, then increased to 1,500, and currently stands at 1,920, with 500 rangers located in Sabah and Sarawak.

These rangers comprised the Orang Asli people and veterans from the armed forces, police, and local communities.

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2024/10/119417/op-bersepadu-khazanah-431-malaysians-91-foreign-nationals-arrested>



## Annex 7

### National Workshop to Tackle Wildlife Trafficking in Malaysia, 28 August 2024, Kuala Lumpur



## Annex 8

### Strategic Dialogue and Collaboration on Wildlife Crime in Malaysia, 14-15 October 2024, Kuala Lumpur



## Annex 9

### Malaysian Checkpoints and Border Agency will have a total strength of 14,000 members

By Hafizul Himi Mohd Noor - May 24, 2024 @ 10:58pm



PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian Checkpoints and Border Agency (MBCA) director-general Datuk Seri Hazani Ghazali said the agency will take over 22 border entry points with a total strength of 14,000 members once the bill governing the agency is approved by Parliament this July.

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MBCA director-general Datuk Seri Hazani Ghazali said the agency is expected to take over ports, airports, and land, sea and air border entry points.

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2024/05/1054985/malaysian-checkpoints-and-border-agency-will-have-total-strength-14000>

## **Qatar**

Report on the implementation of resolution conf.9.14. (Rev.COP19), Relevant decisions on Rhinoceros (*Rhinocerotidae* spp), and SC77 recommendation August 2024

### **Submitted by:**

#### **State of Qatar**

**Ministry of Environment and Climate change**

**Wildlife development department**

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### **Summary**

This report outlines the measures taken by the state of Qatar in response to the recommendations issued by the CITES standing committee concerning illegal rhinoceros specimens transiting through our territory. The government of Qatar remains committed to fulfilling its obligations under the convention and has taken decisive steps to address this issue. In accordance with the CITES standing committee recommendations, Qatar has strengthened its collaboration with the parties known to be associated with illegal rhinoceros' specimens specifically we have established direct communication channels with law enforcement agencies and wildlife authorities in countries identified as sources, transit points, or destinations for illegal rhinoceros' specimens. Regular meetings and information-sharing sessions have been conducted to ensure timely and effective responses to potential threats. Qatar has participated in joint operations with these parties to intercept illegal rhinoceros' specimens. These operations have resulted in several successful seizures and prosecutions. Qatar has provided training and resources to its enforcement agencies, in

collaboration with international partners, to enhance their ability to detect and prevent illegal wildlife trafficking, with a particular focus on rhinoceros' specimens. As a result of these operations and the double inspection strategy Qatar has confiscated a substantial amount of illegal wildlife products specifically **769.984 kilograms of ivory and rhino horn** have been seized during inspections. Qatar has undertaken a comprehensive review of its risk management practices, focusing on cargo, luggage, and passengers associated with illegal rhinoceros' specimens. We have developed detailed risk profiles targeting high-risk shipments, luggage, and passengers. These profiles are based on intelligence gathered from national and international sources including CITES partners. Qatar has implemented advanced screening techniques at its ports of entry, including X- RAY screening, sniffer dogs and enhanced inspection protocols for high-risk cargo and passengers. Qatar customs and border protection have adopted a risk-based approach to targeting shipments and passengers, ensuring that resources are focused on the highest risk scenarios. This has resulted in more efficient and effective interdiction efforts. Qatar has established a monitoring and evaluation framework; this includes data collection and analysis. We are collecting and analyzing data on interceptions, seizures and prosecutions related to rhinoceros' specimens. This data will be shared with the CITES and other relevant stakeholders to inform future actions. Qatar conducts periodic reviews of its risk management practices identifying areas for improvement and to ensure alignment with international best practices. While significant progress has been made, Qatar acknowledges that challenges remain, we recognize the need for ongoing collaboration with international partners and further capacity building. To address these challenges Qatar is planning to expand our cooperation with CITES parties and other stakeholders involved in combating illegal wildlife trade. Qatar is investing in new technologies to improve detection and interdiction capabilities at its borders. We plan to launch public awareness campaigns to educate travelers and cargo operators about the risks and penalties associated with illegal wildlife trade. Qatar reaffirms its commitment to the conservation of rhinoceros' and to fulfilling its obligations under the CITES convention.

The measures outline in this report demonstrate Qatar's proactive approach to addressing the illegal trade in rhinoceroses' specimens, and we look forward to confirmed collaboration with the CITES secretariat and other parties in this important effort.

## 1. Introduction:

Qatar has implemented a comprehensive legal framework aimed at protecting wildlife and regulating wildlife trade, particularly in line with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The country has issued five key laws that address various aspects of wildlife conservation and the control of wildlife trade.

a. **CITES implementing Law (Law NO.5 of 2006):** This law governs the import, export, and permit system for legally trading species that are designated under CITES. It ensures that any trade in wildlife or wildlife products complies with international conservation standards.

b. **Dangerous animal Law (Law No.2 of 2020):** The primary law in this framework focuses on the regulation of dangerous animals, ensuring that such species are appropriately managed and handled to safeguard both the environment and human populations.

c. **Hunting Law (Law No.8 of 2004):** This law regulates the hunting of species within Qatar, detailing which species can be hunted, and during which seasons. It ensures that hunting practices do not threaten biodiversity by controlling hunting activities in line with sustainable conservation goals.

d. **Endangered species trade Law (Law No.5 of 2006):** This legislation specifically targets the trade of endangered species, prohibiting and regulating any actions that could contribute to the illegal wildlife trade, particularly of species threatened with extinction.

e. **Wildlife and Natural Habitats protection Law (Law. No 5 of 2006):** Often referred to as the wildlife protection Law, this law provides strong protections for endangered and threatened species by prohibiting activities that could harm them or their habitats. It plays a critical role in conserving biodiversity within Qatar's natural ecosystems.

f. **Environmental protection Law (Law No.30 of 2002):** This law supports the overall conservation efforts by prohibiting actions that degrade the environment, which indirectly contributes to the protection of wildlife and their habitats. It is a broad law that ensures environmental sustainability by addressing pollution and habitat destruction, which are key threats to wildlife.

Together, these laws provide Qatar with a rigorous legal foundation to protect wildlife, prevent smuggling, and regulate the legal trade in species. By adhering to these regulations, Qatar not only upholds its commitments under CITES but also enhances its national efforts to safeguard biodiversity.

Qatar has taken significant steps to combat the illegal trade of rhinoceros horn and rhinoceros' specimens, demonstrating a strong commitment to international conservation efforts. The country has enhanced its coordination among key authorities, including law enforcement, customs, and judicial bodies, to enforce laws more effectively and prevent wildlife smuggling.

➤ **intensified law enforcement and customs operations:** Relevant authorities in Qatar have strengthened their efforts to detect and prevent the smuggling of rhinoceros horn and ivory. Specialized security measures have been put in place, particularly at Hamad international Airport, which is a key transit hub. These efforts ensure that illegal wildlife products, like rhino horn, are intercepted before they can be trafficked internationally.

➤ **Judicial cooperation:** Qatar has also improved its cooperation with the judicial system to ensure that wildlife crimes are prosecuted effectively. This collaboration ensures that not only are smugglers apprehended, but they are also held accountable under the full weight of international conventions, like CITES, and national laws that govern wildlife protection.

➤ **Comprehensive Anti-ivory and Rhino-horn smuggling plan:** As part of a broader plan to combat the illegal ivory trade, Qatar has implemented strict measures that have significantly reduced the incidence of wildlife smuggling through its airports. This plan includes intensified security, surveillance, and enforcement protocols, particularly targeting rhinoceros horn and other wildlife contraband.

➤ **Positive impact at Hamad international Airport:** The plan has proven to be highly effective, as it has limited the illegal trade of rhinoceros horn and specimens to a large extent. Hamad international Airport, being a major international transit point, has seen a marked reduction in the smuggling of these illegal products due to Qatar's heightened security and enforcement efforts.

In summary, Qatar's multi-faceted approach—combining law enforcement, customs operations, judicial cooperation, and specific anti-smuggling strategies--has played a vital role in reducing the illegal trade of rhino horns and

rhinoceros' specimens. These efforts have bolstered the country's implementation of international conventions and laws aimed at wildlife conservation.

## **2. Status:**

### 2.1. Activities and outputs

The State of Qatar has actively worked to enhance the capabilities of its law enforcement personnel, particularly those stationed at Hamad international Airport and Hamad port, as part of its commitment to CITES. To ensure effective enforcement of CITES regulations, Qatar has implemented regular and comprehensive training programs for law enforcement officers. These training sessions are designed to equip officers with the necessary skills and knowledge to identify and prevent illegal wildlife trade, including the trafficking of endangered species such as ivory and rhinoceros' horn. By focusing on capacity building and continuous education, Qatar aims to strengthen its efforts in curbing illegal trade, aligning with international standards and demonstrating its dedication to the protection of endangered species.



Table 1: The measures and accomplishments that have been achieved since the year 2018-2023.

MEASURES	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<p><b>1) Qatar has implemented a significant measure to combat the illegal wildlife trade of rhinoceros specimens by establishing a formal collaboration mechanism and enhancing cooperation between various departments operating at Hamad international Airport and Hamad port. This initiative aims to strengthen the nation's efforts in curbing wildlife crime, particularly focusing on the illegal trade of rhinoceros specimens and ivory transiting through Qatar. The coordinated approach specifically targets cargo, luggage, and passengers with heightened attention on individuals and shipments identified as high-risk. This strategy ensures a more effective and streamlined response to wildlife trafficking at key entry and exit points.</b></p>	<p>In response to recommendations from CITES, Qatar's CITES Management Authority, in collaboration with stakeholders operating at Hamad international Airport (HIA) and Hamad port, has achieved a significant milestone by establishing a <b>permanent committee</b>. This committee serves as a central body tasked with coordinating efforts to combat wildlife crimes, including the trafficking of illegal elephant ivory and rhinoceros horns transiting through Qatar. To ensure efficient operations, the committee has designated focal points from each participating organization. These focal points are responsible for facilitating communication, enhancing coordination, and ensuring swift actions are taken to prevent and address wildlife crimes. This achievement highlights Qatar's commitment to strengthen its enforcement measures and addressing the illegal trade in endangered species in alignment with CITES requirements.</p>

<p><b>2) Qatar has taken a proactive approach to combat illegal wildlife trade by organizing regular training sessions and workshops aimed at enforcement authorities stationed at Hamad international Airport (HIA) and Hamad port, as well as the wildlife Development Authority. These training initiatives are designed to raise awareness about wildlife crimes and strengthen the capacity of officials to effectively combat them. The workshops cover critical topics such as international policies governing wildlife trade, techniques for detecting and identifying illegal wildlife consignments, and the recognition of items like ivory and rhinoceros' horns. In addition, participants are educated on the applicable legislation and protocols that need to be followed when encountering suspected wildlife trafficking. By equipping enforcement personnel with specialized knowledge and skills, Qatar ensures a more robust and informed response to wildlife crimes, aligning with global efforts to protect endangered species.</b></p>	<p>Between 2018 and 2024, the CITES Management Authority in Qatar organized a series of three workshops aimed at strengthening the capacity of various government departments to combat wildlife trafficking. These workshops were part of Qatar's broader commitment to combating wildlife crime, with strong support from the highest state authorities.</p> <p><b>First workshop (July 2018)</b></p> <p>The first workshop took place over three days in July 2018. It was attended by 30 employees from key departments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Customs General Authority</b></li> <li><b>Airport security department</b></li> <li><b>Animal resource department</b></li> <li><b>Wildlife development authority</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Newly recruited employees</b> for CITES enforcement.</p> <p>The focus of this initial workshop was to introduce the participants to the fundamentals of combating wildlife trafficking and CITES procedures. It helped raise awareness about the roles of various stakeholders in enforcing wildlife protection laws.</p> <p><b>Second workshop (March 2019)</b></p>
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The second workshop was held in March 2019 and saw participation from 26 employees from the same departments, alongside 11 additional employees from the **Qatar Museums Authority**. The workshop continued to build on the topics discussed in the first, focusing on the importance of inter-agency cooperation in combating illegal wildlife trade. The inclusion of Qatar Museum staff emphasized the role of museums in identifying and preventing the illicit trade of wildlife artifacts.

#### **Third workshop (March 2024)**

By March 2023. The third and largest workshop took place for four days involving more than 70 participants from the departments. This workshop was notable for its focus on **combating illegal wildlife trade** through the lens of CITES as a legal mechanism. sessions were designed to enhance understanding in several key areas:

**Introduction to CITES** and its role in wildlife protection.

**CITES appendices**, outlining different levels of protection for species.

**Identification of wildlife specimens** in international trade

**CITES permits and certificates** required for legal trade.

**Implementation of CITES procedures** in Qatar, with an emphasis on the **National ivory action plan (NIAP)** requirements.

**Legal procedures** in accordance with Qatar's national laws regulating trade in endangered species.

This workshop also involved a thorough review of how Qatar implements its national wildlife protection laws. It was particularly focused on enhancing the skills of employees at Hamad international airport, as the airport plays a critical role in intercepting illegal wildlife trade. The CITES management authority evaluated the effectiveness of these programs through monthly follow-ups on the performance of staff in their daily duties.

**2021 state program and judicial control**

Qatar's commitment to combating wildlife crime extended beyond these workshops. In 2021, the states' training program included a specialized component on the CITES convention and wildlife crime. This was part of a larger national effort that covered other critical areas such as.

**Judicial control**, empowering law enforcement to act against wildlife criminals.

**Unified electronic inspection systems**, which help streamline and standardize enforcement efforts.

The high level of interest from Qatar's leadership in combating wildlife crime highlights the country's proactive stance on environmental protection and compliance with international standards, reinforcing Qatar's role in the global fight against wildlife trafficking.

**3) As part of its efforts to combat illegal wildlife trade, particularly in rhinoceros horn and ivory, the Qatar CITES Management Authority has taken significant steps to strengthen the capacity of officers stationed at Hamad international Airport (HIA). One of the key measures implemented was the provision of operational handbooks and identification manuals. These resources are designed to enhance the ability of airport staff to accurately identify illegal wildlife products and specimens, particularly those that fall under CITES regulations, such as rhino horn and ivory. The operational handbooks provide practical guidelines on the enforcement of CITES protocols, while the identification manuals focus on helping officers distinguish between legal and illegal products. This measure aims to ensure that frontline staff at HIA are well-equipped to detect and intercept smuggled items, contributing to Qatar's overall efforts to curb the illegal wildlife trade.**

As part of its ongoing efforts to combat illegal wildlife trade, the Qatar CITES Management Authority has developed specialized resources to support the implementation of the **National ivory Action Plan (NIAP)** and combat the illegal trade in **rhino horn**.

#### **Identification Manual and operational Handbook**

A detailed **identification manual** and **operational handbook** have been prepared to guide officers in the implementation of NIAP and the specific process related to rhino horn trade. These materials provide comprehensive information on:

**The legal framework** for implementing NIAP in Qatar

**Best practices** for detecting and intercepting illegal trade in rhino horn.

**Step-by-step procedures** for handling cases involving rhino horn smuggling.

The handbook ensures that enforcement officers, particularly those at **Hamad international Airport** and other border control points, are well-prepared to address cases of illegal wildlife trade, focusing on high-risk items such as ivory and rhino horn.

**Handbook on commonly traded CITES species (Middle East and North Africa)**

In collaboration with the **international fund for Animal welfare (IFAW)**, a specific handbook was also developed, focusing on **commonly traded species listed under CITES in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region**. This handbook serves as an essential tool in identifying wildlife species frequently involved in the trade in this region. It covers species include in various **CITES Appendices**, providing officers with critical information on their status and the legal trade restrictions associated with them.

This handbook prepared by IFAW, was used extensively during **training sessions** for enforcement personnel. It helps officers differentiate between legal and illegal specimens, thereby improving the accuracy and efficiency of their inspections. The use of these materials in training programs has significantly contributed to enhancing the capacity of Qatar's enforcement officers in curbing illegal wildlife trade.

4) In response to recommendations from CITES, which identified Qatar's airports as potential transit points for the illegal trafficking of rhinoceros horn and ivory, the country has significantly ramped up its enforcement efforts. The Qatar CITES Management Authority, in collaboration with other national entities, has introduced a range of measures aimed at addressing the illegal wildlife trade, particularly targeting high-risk species such as rhinos and elephants.

#### Increased inspections

One of the primary steps taken was the increase in inspection at Hamad international Airport (HIA) and other key entry points. These inspections are designed to target high- risk flights -----those originating from or connecting to regions known for illegal wildlife trafficking activities. The heightened focus on high- risk flights allow authorities to Zero in on smuggling routes that are frequently used for the illegal transport of rhino horn and ivory.

#### Random inspections and Targeted operations

In addition to scheduled inspections of specific flights, Qatar has also implemented in

The Qatar CITES Management Authority has implemented a robust strategy in collaboration with the Aviation Department and the Airport security Department to intensify efforts in combating the illegal trade of rhinoceros horn and ivory. One of the key components of this strategy is the introduction of double inspections for luggage arriving from and destined to specific countries involved in the illicit wildlife trade.

#### Double luggage inspections

The double inspection process is focused on luggage originating from countries identified as source nations for rhino horn and ivory. These countries are known for being hotspots in the illegal poaching and trade of these wildlife products. Likewise, the process targets luggage bound for destination countries, which are often the final markets where rhino horn and ivory are sold or distributed. This targeted approach helps to tighten control over the most vulnerable points in the smuggling chain, ensuring that high-risk items are intercepted before they can enter illegal markets.

#### Cooperation with wildlife protection and development departments

In addition to these measures, there is close cooperation between the wildlife protection



random inspections. These random checks ensure that smugglers cannot predict which flights will be scrutinized, increasing the chances of intercepting illegal shipments. This unpredictability plays a key role in disrupting organized wildlife crime networks that may attempt to exploit Qatar's airport as transit hubs.

#### Special covert operations

Special covert operations also been introduced, where trained personnel from various departments, including customs, airport security and CITES enforcement officers, work together to carry out in depth investigations into suspected smuggling activities. These operations involved advanced screening methods, canine units, and intelligence sharing with international partners to track and monitor suspicious cargo or passengers.

#### Focus on CITES- listed species.

The inspections prioritize CITES-listed species, with a particular emphasis on rhinoceros and elephant specimens. This focus is vital, as both species are heavily targeted for their horns and tusks, respectively, which are

department and the wildlife development department. Staff from these departments conduct regular visits to the airport and engage in random inspections to further bolster enforcement efforts.

These unannounced visits are designed to assess the effectiveness of trained personnel at the airport and ensure that they are properly applying their training in the field. By conducting these random inspections, the management authority ensures that the trained airport crews remain vigilant and adhere to the procedures they have learned. This oversight helps maintain a high standard of enforcement at Hamad international Airport, particularly in identifying and seizing illegal wildlife products.

#### Positive outcome: confiscation success

The enhanced measures have had a significant positive impact. As a direct result of these inspections and the diligent efforts of the authorities, Qatar has confiscated a substantial amount of illegal wildlife products. Specifically, 796.984 kilograms of ivory and rhino horn have been seized during inspections. This is a clear indication that the double-inspection strategy, combined with random checks and the continuous evaluation of trained staff, is

<p>highly sought after in illegal markets, especially in Asia. Rhino horn is trafficked for use in traditional medicine and as a statue symbol, while ivory is used for decorative items and jewelry.</p> <p><b>Legal and procedural enhancements</b></p> <p>Qatar has also integrated enhanced legal and procedural frameworks into its inspection processes to ensure that CITES protocols are followed to the letter. The increased inspections are backed by,</p> <p><b>Rigorous Legal Mechanisms, ensuring that any confiscated items lead to swift legal action against traffickers, further discouraging the use of Qatar as a transit point. These measures demonstrate Qatar’s commitment to tackling wildlife trafficking, aligning the country with international efforts to combat the illegal trade in endangered species and protect global biodiversity.</b></p>	<p>effectively curbing the illegal wildlife trade through Qatar airport and ports.</p> <p>These accomplishments underline Qatar’s commitment to fighting wildlife crime and fulfilling its obligations under CITES. The country’s proactive approach, including cooperation between departments, targeted inspections, and ongoing staff evaluation, serves as a model for effective wildlife law enforcement at key transit hubs.</p>
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5) The CITES Management Authority in Qatar could collaborate with Qatar Airways to develop a targeted in-flight awareness campaign, aimed at discouraging wildlife crimes, particularly focusing on the illegal trade of rhino horn and ivory. This partnership would involve the production of educational videos to inform passengers about the negative environmental and legal consequences of such crimes, emphasizing Qatar's commitment to the conservation of endangered species under CITES. The videos could highlight key aspects of Qatar's role in combating wildlife trafficking, including its strategic position as a global hub for transit. The CITES Management Authority would provide expertise, ensuring that the messaging aligns with international standards and emphasizes Qatar's legal framework and ongoing efforts to enforce wildlife protection laws. This collaboration could further strengthen Qatar's leadership in regional and global conservation efforts, using Qatar Airways' vast passenger reach to raise awareness among travelers from diverse backgrounds. By integrating these videos into Qatar Airways' inflight entertainment system, the initiative would have the potential to reach millions of

Qatar Airways has successfully implemented a comprehensive awareness program and training for its staff, focusing on CITES requirements and the prevention of illegal wildlife trafficking. This initiative ensures that the airline's personnel are well-equipped to recognize and respond to potential instances of wildlife smuggling, thus reinforcing Qatar's commitment to global wildlife conservation and compliance with international regulations. In addition to staff training, Qatar Airways has developed a range of multimedia tools aimed at raising awareness among passengers about the illegal trade of wildlife, particularly rhino horn and ivory. These tools include:

**Educational videos:**

Integrated into the in-flight entertainment system, these videos inform passengers about the devastating impact of illegal wildlife trade, highlighting the penalties and consequences of participating in such activities. The videos are designed to engage passengers in supporting conservation efforts by discouraging involvement in wildlife trafficking.

**In-flight Magazine Features:**

Articles and features in Qatar Airways' in-flight magazine serve as another medium to educate

passengers annually, contributing significantly to global wildlife conservation efforts while promoting Qatar's proactive stance in addressing illegal wildlife trade.

passengers on the importance of wildlife protection and Qatar's role in combatting illegal trafficking. These publications also promote the global initiatives aligned with CITES regulations.

**Digital posters at Hamad international Airport (HIA).**

Screens across HIA display vivid and impactful messages, reinforcing the airline's stance on wildlife conservation. These posters highlight Qatar Zero tolerance policy on illegal wildlife trafficking, further reaching travelers who transit through or depart from Doha.

By implementing these diverse actions, Qatar Airways position itself as a proactive player in the fight against wildlife crime, raising awareness on a global scale and enhancing the effectiveness of Qatar's efforts under CITES regulations. This broad-reaching strategy ensures that both the staff and passengers are informed and actively engaged on protecting endangered species from exploitation.

<p>6) To enhance the visibility of efforts in combating illegal wildlife trafficking, Qatar's relevant authorities could publicize seizures of illegally trafficked wildlife products, such as rhino horn and ivory, as well as subsequent prosecutions, through mainstream media outlets and official governmental social media platforms. This strategy would serve multiple purposes:</p> <p><b>Deterrence:</b></p> <p>By showcasing the successful detection and interception of illegal wildlife products, along with the legal consequences faced by traffickers, such as arrests, prosecutions, and penalties, it sends a strong message that Qatar is committed to enforcing strict measures against wildlife crimes. This would act as a deterrent to potential smugglers who may view Qatar as a transit hub for illicit wildlife products.</p> <p><b>Transparency and Accountability:</b></p> <p>Regular publicizing these enforcement actions through media coverage ensures that the public is informed about the government's ongoing efforts to combat illegal wildlife trafficking. It demonstrates transparency in the government's approach and highlights Qatar's compliance with</p>	<p>As an accomplishment by CITES Qatar, the <b>Ministry of environment and climate change</b>, through its department of protection and wildlife, has taken significant steps to enhance transparency, awareness, and enforcement in combating illegal wildlife trade.</p> <p>One of the key achievements is the proactive <b>communication strategy</b> employed following all seizures related to illegal wildlife trafficking. In every case of confiscation, the ministry organizes press conference attended by representatives of local newspapers and media outlets, ensuring comprehensive media coverage.</p> <p>Additionally, National television channels host special interviews, providing in depth coverage and raising, public awareness about Qatar's efforts to uphold CITES regulations.</p> <p>Another notable accomplishment is the <b>2021 Training program</b> aimed at judicial control authorities. This program was designed to strengthen the capabilities of enforcement agencies, equipping them with the knowledge and skills required to effectively detect and wildlife crimes. The media actively participation in all training activities, particularly at Hamad international Airport (HIA), played a crucial role in amplifying these efforts. By broadcasting these</p>
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international conservation commitments under CITES.

**Awareness and education:**

Featuring these cases in mainstream media, including television, newspapers, and radio as well as government social media channels such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook can help raise broader awareness about the scale of the illegal wildlife trade and its impact on global biodiversity. It can also inform the public about Qatar's specific role in preventing the transit and trade of endangered species products.

**international collaboration and Reputation:**

Publicizing such actions helps to enhance Qatar's reputation on the global stage as a country actively participating in international wildlife protection efforts. By showcasing successful law enforcement actions, Qatar can demonstrate its commitment to collaboration with other countries and international organizations in stopping the illegal wildlife trade. This approach, using both traditional media and digital platforms, would allow for maximum outreach educating the public and travelers while reinforcing the legal and environmental significance of protecting endangered species.

initiatives, CITES Qatar was able to further educate the public on the importance of wildlife conservation and the nation's enforcement mechanism.

Moreover, the ministry has ensured that all cases of wildlife confiscations are widely publicized on social media platforms. This not only keeps the public informed but also demonstrates the transparency and accountability of the legal processes that follow. The Department of protection and wildlife also follows up on cases referred to the legal authorities, providing updates as they proceed through the judicial system. This level of engagement highlights Qatar's robust commitment to wildlife conservation and strict enforcement of CITES provisions, reinforcing the country's leadership in the global fight against illegal wildlife trade.

2.2. Confiscations:

*Table 2: confiscations (2014-2018)*

period	Species	No. of pieces	Weight(kg)	source	Date
2014-2018	Rhino horns	80	166.340	unknown	2014-2018

*Table 3: Rhino horn confiscated (January 2020 – June 2023)*

No.	Species	No. of pieces	Weight (kg)	Source	Date
1-	Rhino horns	4 pieces	11 kg20g	South Africa	05/01/2020
2-	Rhino horns	12 pieces	22kg1g	South Africa	31/01/2022
3-	Rhino horns	25 pieces	46kg 12g	Zimbabwe	28/04/2022
4-	Rhino horns	-	44kg7g	South Africa	15/06/2022
5-	Ivory rings	-	9kg400g	Uganda	31/01/2023

Table 4:confiscation record from 2020-2023

Wildlife development department						
Inventory Number	Code Number	Set the abstract thing	Customization (presence)	Weight (g) Quantity	state	observations
66	R020-1	Rhinoceros	21	3.274	Good	
67	R020-2	Rhinoceros	21	3.858	Good	
68	R001	Rhinoceros	21	1.666	Good	
69	R002	Rhinoceros	21	2.428	Good	
70	R003	Rhinoceros	21	1.682	Good	
71	R004	Rhinoceros	21	2.044	Good	
72	R005	Rhinoceros	21	1.904	Good	
73	R006	Rhinoceros	21	2.516	Good	
74	R007	Rhinoceros	21	3.472	Good	
75	R008	Rhinoceros	21	5.734	Good	
76	R009	Rhinoceros	21	4.844	Good	
77	R010	Rhinoceros	21	1.44	Good	
78	R011	Rhinoceros	21	3.144	Good	
79	R012	Rhinoceros	21	0.902	Good	
80	R013	Rhinoceros	21	0.542	Good	
81	R014	Rhinoceros	21	1.138	Good	
82	R015	Rhinoceros	21	0.788	Good	
83	R016	Rhinoceros	21	7.012	Good	
84	R017	Rhinoceros	21	5.076	Good	
85	R018	Rhinoceros	21	3.274	Good	
86	R019	Rhinoceros	21	4.858	Good	
87	R021	Rhinoceros	21	1.728	Good	



88	R022	Rhinoceros	21	1.628	Good	
89	R023	Rhinoceros	21	0.692	Good	
90	R024	Rhinoceros	21	2.562	Good	
91	R025	Rhinoceros	21	3.754	Good	
92	R026	Rhinoceros	21	4.35	Good	
93	R027	Rhinoceros	21	4.63	Good	
94	R028	Rhinoceros	21	4.106	Good	
95	R029	Rhinoceros	21	1.74	Good	

## Attachments

### 1. Pictures of recent confiscations (January 2023)



### 2. Pictures of recent confiscations (June 2022)



3. Some pictures of the workshops and training that took place at Hamad International Airport 2021 and 2022



4. Awareness materials: a guide to measures to combat illegal trade in wildlife.



## Meetings

### Minutes of the Qatar- Hosted meeting on strengthening collaboration to combat the illegal trade of ivory and rhinoceros specimens: Fulfilling the Mandate of Decision 19.115

Date 2.10.2024.

Location **Qatar**

Participants

**Qatar**

**Malaysia United Arab Emirates Uganda**

### Agenda

1. opening remarks and introduction
2. Review of Decision 19.115 and its objectives
3. Discussion on collaboration between Qatar, UAE, and Malaysia
4. Risk management practices and development of rhinoceros-specific risk profiles.
5. Action points for strengthening efforts in addressing illegal trade.
6. conclusion and next steps.

#### **1. opening Remarks and introductions:**

Dr Dafi heedan (Head of Animal Wildlife Development Department) welcomed the participants from the UAE Malaysia and Uganda. He emphasized the importance of decision 19.115 and the need for scaling up cooperation to combat the illegal trade of rhinoceros specimens and ivory. The UAE, Malaysia and Uganda representatives echoed similar sentiments and highlighted the importance of the collaborated efforts initiated by Qatar.

#### **2. Review of Decision 19.115**

The group revisited the text of decision 19.115, which encourages Qatar, Malaysia, and UAE to collaborate with other parties associated with illegal rhinoceros' specimen and ivory trade (Uganda, South Africa, and Zimbabwe). The primary objective is to enhance risk management strategies and develop specific profiles to monitor cargo, luggage, and passengers.

#### **3. collaboration Discussions:**

The meeting discussed the current state of collaboration between the nations. Key points include:

Ongoing information sharing regarding suspected illegal shipments.

The need for dedicated points of contact for faster exchange of intelligence.

Enhanced capacity- building initiatives, including training and joint operations.

#### **4. Risk Management practices:**

The participants reviewed existing risk management practices and shared updates on their respective strategies.

##### **Points discussed:**

- **Qatar** has been developing ivory and rhinoceros- specific risk profiles focusing on high – risk routes and passengers.
- **Malaysia** has implemented heightened scrutiny of wildlife- related cargo passing through its airports and seaports.
- **UAE** discussed its recent advancements in screening technologies and the use of data analytics for early identification of illegal cargo.
- **Uganda** proposes better coordination between African countries and transit hubs like Qatar, UAE, and Malaysia to share intelligence, monitor suspect shipments and apprehend traffickers.

#### **5. Action points and Next steps:**

The following action points were agreed upon:

**Information sharing:** The parties will establish a secure and fast-track information-sharing platform with source countries to disseminate intelligence on suspected illegal shipments.

**Risk profile development:** Qatar will take the lead in developing ivory and rhinoceros- specific risk profiles, with inputs from UAE, Malaysia, and Uganda to be shared within six months.

**Capacity building:** joint training programs will be organized to ensure consistent implementation of enforcement measures across all the countries.

**Legislative Review:** All parties will review their respective legislation to ensure harmonization in addressing wildlife crime, especially relating to rhinoceros' specimens and ivory.

##### **Strengthening of customs and Border control:**

The countries acknowledged the need to reinforce customs and border control measures, ensuring better detection of illegal wildlife products. This includes utilizing advanced screening technologies, enhanced scrutiny, and more frequent inspections at ports of entry.

### Long term collaboration:

The participants concluded that continuous and sustained collaboration along with other international partners is essential to disrupt the smuggling routes that use their territories as **transit points**. Regular follow-up meetings were scheduled to ensure progress and adjustments to their strategies.

### 6. Conclusion and Next steps:

The meeting concluded with a commitment from all parties to continue their close cooperation. These conclusions aim to tackle the illegal trade of rhinoceros specimens and ivory by addressing **weakness in transit control** and ensuring that traffickers find it increasingly difficult to use these countries territories for their illegal activities. A follow up meeting was proposed to assess progress on the agreed-upon points.



*Figure: Uniting for wildlife protection: Qatar, UAE, Malaysia, and Uganda collaborate on Ivory and Rhinoceros conservation and Anti-trafficking efforts.”*

## **South Africa**

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON RHINOCEROSES (RHINOCEROTIDAE SPP.)**

#### **Decision 18.116**

South Africa is in the process of publishing a revised National Biodiversity Management Plan for Rhinoceros which includes several actions, amongst others, addressing demand management.

#### **Decision 19.115 :**

a) South Africa collects samples from all rhinoceros horn seized within the country for forensic analysis, as anticipated by paragraph 1 g) of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19) on *Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses*.

b) When importing DNA samples from countries where illegal consignments of rhino horns have been seized, South Africa uses the simplified procedures provided for under the *Regarding the use of simplified procedures to issue permits and certificates* in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Permits and certificates* for law enforcement purposes. This ensures the facilitation of the exchange of rhinoceros horn samples for DNA analyses.

#### **Decision 19.116**

a) South Africa often uses the *Directory of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn focal points* to facilitate contact with relevant agencies in different countries on matters related to rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros specimen.

b) Our details in the Directory of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn focal points are up to date.

#### **Decision 19.117**

South Africa is implementing the National Integrated Strategy to Combat Wildlife Trafficking (NISCWT), implementation of which is monitored through the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (NATJOINTS) Priority Committee on Wildlife Trafficking. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment's Environmental Enforcement Fusion Centre (EEFC) is coordinating and improving the reactive and proactive response to rhino poaching and other wildlife crimes by continuously reviewing trends associated with crimes involving rhinoceroses affecting South Africa and the NISCWT is implemented to respond to these crimes.

#### **Decision 19.118**

In December 2023 the Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, convened a bilateral meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam with the Deputy Minister of Public Security of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. During the meeting, the two Deputy Ministers acknowledged the positive relationship between their respective countries and engaged in discussions concerning biodiversity protection, combatting wildlife trafficking and wildlife crime, and enhancing cooperation in these areas. They also reviewed the status of various agreements aimed at addressing these issues. It was emphasized that wildlife crime, particularly the international trafficking of rhino horn, remains a significant concern for South Africa. Cooperation with Vietnamese authorities was underscored as crucial in addressing this issue effectively. Another engagement between the Deputy Minister of Public Security of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Deputy Minister of Police took place in South Africa in February 2024. The two countries agreed to strengthen cooperation in addressing the challenges posed by international wildlife trafficking and wildlife crime through enhanced collaboration between the various law enforcement agencies.

### **With regard to general implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 the following:**

DFFE in cooperation with the provincial conservation authorities, South African National Parks (SANParks), Provincial Conservation Agencies, private rhino owners and the South African Police Service (SAPS) are focusing on a proactive and integrated approach to wildlife crime. The seven Integrated Wildlife Zones (IWZ) across the country blur the distinction between national, provincial and private parks to prevent borders and boundaries from inhibiting planning and implementation and allow, among others, maximum integrated effort, so that each zone operates in a more cohesive manner,

ensuring effective communication, coordination of deployment of forces and collaborative response to threats. Within the Zones cooperation between all stakeholders has already resulted in the apprehension of various rhino poachers and syndicate members and successful convictions in court.

The EEFC is consolidating rhino protection efforts across the country, has standardised and is boosting tactical level anti-poaching and introduced integrated information-led enforcement and investigations. This work further strengthens the essential collaboration with the SAPS, the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation, the Department of Justice, and other sectors of the security forces to gather, analyse and share information on wildlife trafficking so that the international syndicate-related crimes can be effectively dealt with. The combined experience of the analysts in the EEFC ensures that the DFFE can support relevant investigating officers with profiling, association, cell phone, social media, crime scene and financial analysis. A Digital Forensic Laboratory which forms part of the EEFC has also been established to assist in extraction of digital devices to assist in criminal prosecutions of environmental crimes.

It is also worth mentioning that in the first 6 months of 2024, 229 rhino were poached in South Africa (mostly from Kwazulu-Natal Province). We have however seen quite a large drop in poaching numbers from May to end September. This reduced loss is thought to be attributable to the dehorning of rhino populations in KwaZulu-Natal and specifically in Hluhluwe iMfolozi Park, where over 1,000 rhinos were dehorned since April 2024.

## **United Arab Emirates**

### **UAE Report on Implementation of Rhinoceros Recommendations**

**2024**

#### **Introduction**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is committed to combatting illegal wildlife trade through stringent laws, international collaboration, and enforcement measures that support the conservation of rhinoceroses. With a zero-tolerance policy towards wildlife crime, the UAE has strengthened its national and international efforts to uphold the principles of CITES and protect biodiversity. This report provides an update on the UAE's recent actions taken in response to the recommendations of document SC77 Doc. 45.

#### **Collaboration with Key Countries**

In line with the recommendation to expand partnerships with key countries involved in the rhinoceros horn trade, the UAE's CITES Management Authority has engaged with the UAE's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to coordinate strategic meetings with official missions within the UAE. These meetings involve source countries (South Africa, Mozambique, and Angola), destination countries (Vietnam and China), and transit countries (Malaysia and Qatar) and aim to strengthen collaborative efforts against illegal wildlife trade. Specifically, discussions focus on:

- Enhancing mutual efforts to combat the illegal trade of rhinoceros horn;
- Establishing mechanisms for information and data exchange; and

- Facilitating knowledge-sharing and capacity-building in wildlife enforcement.

Furthermore, the UAE's CITES Management Authority recently conducted a coordination meeting with the CITES Management Authority of Qatar. This meeting included discussions on various aspects of combatting rhinoceros horn trafficking, with Qatar welcoming the UAE's proposals, and steps are in progress to implement collaborative measures.

### **Support for Decision 19.115**

The UAE is actively exploring opportunities to support Decision 19.115 by facilitating the sharing of rhinoceros horn samples that contribute to rhinoceros protection and sustainable management. These efforts aim to improve enforcement practices and aid conservation efforts through strengthened international cooperation.

### **Legislative Updates for Effective Enforcement**

The UAE's CITES Management Authority is in the process of updating national legislation to reflect the recent amendments under the convention. This legislative revision includes enhanced penalties, such as increased prison terms, higher financial fines, and other deterrent sanctions. This effort is essential to the UAE's commitment to international compliance and effective enforcement in the fight against wildlife crime.

### **Other Activities**

The UAE continues to demonstrate its leadership in addressing wildlife and environmental crimes through strategic, well-coordinated actions:

#### **Green Justice Operation**

Coordinated under the International Initiative for Law Enforcement for Climate (I2LEC), a program led by the UAE Ministry of Interior, the Green Justice operation took place from June 24–30, 2024, targeting cross-border environmental crimes in the Amazon Basin. The operation resulted in the confiscation of over 2.4 tons of illegally obtained terrestrial and marine wildlife products, as well as equipment used for unlawful activities.

This operation exposed significant wildlife trafficking networks, with key participation from law enforcement agencies in Brazil, Peru, and Colombia, alongside the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The UAE played a pivotal role in supporting coordinated enforcement actions to dismantle organized criminal groups involved in illegal wildlife hunting, poaching, and habitat destruction.



Advanced technologies such as AI-powered analytics were used to map wildlife crimes, providing critical insights into trafficking patterns and enhancing global enforcement capabilities.

### **Forest Shield Operation**

The Forest Shield operation, led by the UAE in collaboration with seven African countries, targeted illicit activities in the Congo Basin—a region crucial for global biodiversity. Conducted over 14 days, the operation resulted in numerous arrests and the seizure of illegal wildlife products derived from poaching and habitat destruction.

This initiative emphasized the importance of international cooperation in protection ecosystems. Utilizing AI-driven crime mapping and predictive analytics, the operation identified wildlife trafficking networks, enabling enforcement agencies to take effective countermeasures. These efforts reflect the UAE's unwavering commitment to combating environmental crimes that threaten endangered species and their habitats.

### **Training and Capacity-Building**

As part of its commitment to strengthening enforcement capabilities, the UAE's IZLEC organized a virtual training program in September 2024. The event, held in collaboration with the Spanish Civil Guard, EnviCrime Academy, and other international organizations, brought together over 500 participants, including law enforcement officials from Africa, Latin America, and Asia, as well as experts from Europol and the UN.

The training comprised two phases:

1. **Basic Training (9–12 September):** Focused on fundamental knowledge, covering principles of environmental protection, characteristics of wildlife and environmental crimes, and investigative tools for enforcement agencies.
2. **Advanced Training (23–26 September):** Targeted experienced officers, with sessions on legal frameworks, environmental forensic techniques, advanced investigation methodologies, ethical practices, and global collaboration.

In addition, the UAE's CITES Management Authority will organize specialized training sessions in the fourth quarter of 2024. These programs will enhance the skills of border checkpoint staff and other stakeholders responsible for enforcing CITES regulations and national wildlife protection laws. Conducted in partnership with the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and UNODC, the training will focus on capacity building, practical enforcement strategies, and protecting endangered species from illegal trade.

## Conclusion

The UAE is dedicated to upholding its international commitments to CITES and advancing global wildlife conservation through reinforced legislation, international partnerships, and enhanced enforcement strategies. These actions underscore the UAE's role in combatting illegal wildlife trade and its commitment to sustainable management and biodiversity protection.

## ***Viet Nam***

### **REPORT**

#### **Conservation of and trade in rhinoceroses in Viet Nam during 2023 – 2024**

#### **I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

At the CoP19 of CITES, the Conference of Parties retained Decision 18.116 and adopted Decisions 19.115, 19.116, 19.118 on Rhinoceroses. These decisions request parties in general, and Viet Nam in particular, to implement activities regarding to rhinoceros sample collection, exchange and forensic analysis; furthermore, request Viet Nam to strengthen joint operation and information exchange with other parties. At the request of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19), the Conference of Parties urges parties to implement a wide range of activities in relation to the trade in rhinoceros parts and derivatives. Viet Nam was identified as one of the Parties most affected by illegal trade in rhinoceros horn by document CoP19 Doc. 75 (rev. 1) on Rhinoceroses, thereof was working to compile and submit the Report on Rhinoceroses year 2022 – 2023 to the SC77 for review. The report was made available as information document SC77 Inf 29.

To facilitate the reporting at the SC78, Viet Nam has taken the comments and observations the Secretariat per Letter EA/02/07/2024/BvR dated 10/7/2024 into consideration, to provide an updated report Viet Nam CITES Management Authority year 2022 – 2024. The Viet Nam MA has consulted relevant government agencies and stakeholders to collect data and information to develop the report. Viet Nam CITES MA, based on collected data, formed a collective analysis and report which comprise information from interministerial state authorities and enforcement agencies.

The report is constituted by five sections in response to Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19) and related decisions, including: (1) Legislation, (2) Legal Enforcement, (3) Stockpiles and Disposal of specimens, (4) Samples collection and forensic tests, (5) Demand reduction and community awareness.

#### **1. Legislation**

- In 2019, the government Decree No. 06/2019/ND-CP on the Management of Endangered, precious, rare wild fauna and flora, and the implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of wild fauna and flora, was

enacted with details in management scheme, harvest, breeding and artificial propagation, marking, permit and certificates, and CITES implementation in general.

- In 2020, the Investment Law was issued, strictly prohibiting the trading of specimens of animals listed in CITES Appendix I and Group I according to Vietnamese law from the wild, including rhinos, elephants, tigers.

- Decision No. 11/2013/QĐ-TTg dated 24/01/2013 of the Prime Minister remains in effect until present, strictly prohibits the export, import, purchase and sale of white rhino specimens (*Ceratotherium simum*) and products made from white rhinos, black rhino specimens (*Diceros bicornis*) and products made from black rhinos.

- In 2020, Directive No. 29/CT-Tatg dated 23/7/2020 of the Prime Minister on a number of urgent solutions to manage wildlife, the Prime Minister directed ministries and committees to "strictly control and strictly handle acts of hunting, capturing, buying, selling, transporting, slaughtering, consuming, storing, advertising, and harming wildlife illegally, especially wild animals of the mammal, bird and reptile classes in the natural environment". The Directive remains in effect until present.

- In 2021, the Decree 84/2021/ND-CP dated 22/9/2021 by the Government on amendments of Decree 06/2019/ND-CP was enacted to address relevant needs for update of domestic regulations related to CITES.

- In 2023 and 2024, the Viet Nam MA, under Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, has submitted the Government the revised draft of a new government Decree to replace the enacted Decree on the implementation of CITES. This draft provides additional regulations and amendments on terminology, management of wild fauna and flora, implementation of CITES, permits and certificates to be adaptive to changes and current practices. It also states the responsibility of relevant Ministry to provide and report annual information on national CITES species storage, to facilitate the reporting to CITES under its provision.

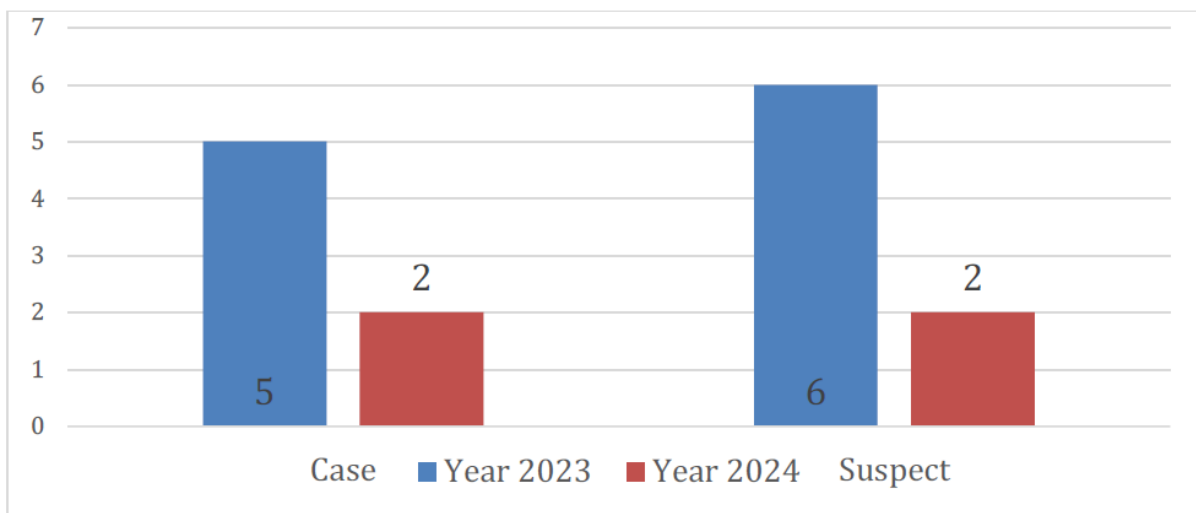
- Circular No. 26/2022/TT-BNNPTNT on management, traceability of forest products was enacted to replace the previous Circular. This circular reinforces strengthen the requirements in legal origin for forest wildlife species, inclusive of wild, bred, propagated species, purported for both import and export activities. The circular also strengthens concrete provision on species marking.

- On 27 December 2022, Decision No. 1623/QĐ-TTg on Plan on “Strengthening the prevention and combat biodiversity crimes to 2030, with a vision toward 2050”.

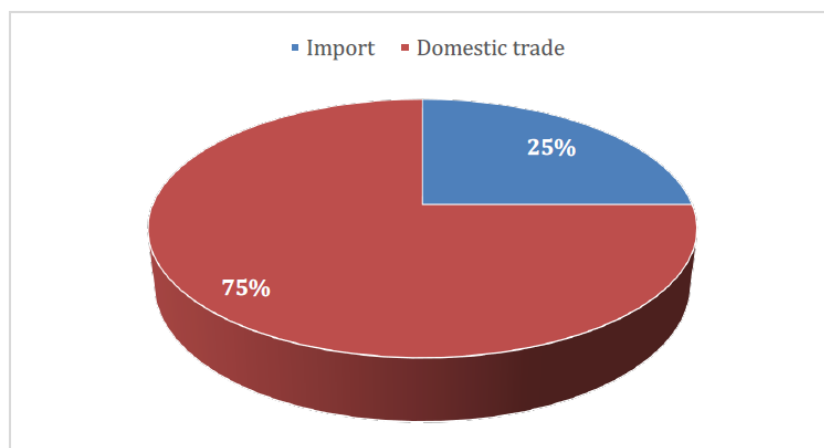
## 2. Legal Enforcement

### 2.1. Seizures

During the period 2023 – 09/2024, the authorities made 08 arrests (Annex) with 08 suspects were prosecuted. Among these, 02 cases were illegal imports, accounting for 28.57%. Consequently, it witnesses that domestic trading and transportation account for the majority. In particular, there was 01 case of online sales which was promptly detected and arrested by the enforcement agency while the suspect was transporting and delivering the specimens in Hanoi in January 2024.



*Chart 1. Rhino horn seizures in 2023-2024*



*Chart 2. Route of illegal trade in rhino horn (2023-2024)*

Overall, the enforcement efforts by Viet Nam should be recognized and applauded, although challenges remain given the lack of resources, information exchange from foreign countries, international support and facilitation.

### 2.2. Prosecution data (2023 – 2024)

Pursuant to domestic provisions, particularly Article 244 of the Penal Code, the People's Courts at all levels sentenced 10 suspects with specific sentences as follows:

- On March 21, 2023, the People's Court of Da Nang City sentenced Nguyen Duc Tai to 13 years in prison for illegally importing 138 kg of rhino horn and 456.9 kg of ivory at Tien Sa port on July 17, 2021.

- On May 12, 2023, the Hanoi People's Court sentenced Nguyen Van Tuyen, Nguyen Van Ngoc and Nguyen Van Chinh to three years in prison for illegally transporting 2kg of rhino horn in September 2022.

- On November 19, 2023, the Hanoi People's Court sentenced Ninh Ba Dien to 12 years in prison for illegally importing 4.71 kg of ivory and 11.82 kg of rhino horn at Noi Bai airport on April 29, 2023.

- On August 13, 2024, the Hanoi People's Court sentenced Ngo Duong Thu and Nguyen Dinh Tu to 9 years in prison, Pham Huy Hung and Ngo Doan Giap to 8 years in prison, and Le Thi Hang to 6 years in prison for concealing and transporting 22.63 kg of rhino horn and 54.26 kg of ivory at Noi Bai airport on June 27, 2023.

### **2.3. Joint- operations and international operations**

During recent years, the international community witnessed the success in the continuous series of enforcement Operations initiated by the Customs, facilitated by UNODC, WCO and INTERPOL. Hundreds of smuggling cases and suspects are seized within the scope of the operations.

#### ***2.3.1. Operation Mekong Dragon***

##### ***Previous phases***

Operation Mekong Dragon is an international operation that focuses on strengthening enforcement, seizures of transnational criminals and confiscation in smuggling and transporting of wild animals and plants, narcotics, and other transboundary crimes. Initiated by Vietnam Customs and China Customs, Operation Mekong Dragon was launched in September 2018 and received great technical support from the UNODC, RILO AP and six customs administrations in the Mekong sub-region. Through the last 4 phases from 2018 – 2022, the operation has achieved great success in terms of the number of participants and the number of seizures; and created a certain buzz about coordination activities in the control of wildlife and drug trafficking, and transnational crime in the region. The campaign has experienced the participation of 24 customs administrations and five agencies, including the Australian Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Singapore Drug Center, Singapore National Parks Board and RILO AP and UNODC. Viet Nam has been an active and key player in the operation. Vietnam Customs, within the framework of participating in the campaign from 2018 to 2022, had chaired and coordinated with other customs administrations to

handle 874 cases of drug smuggling and trafficking, arresting 843 suspects; and handle 113 cases of smuggling and trafficking of endangered species of wild fauna and flora on the CITES.

During the official visit to China by General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam in 2022, the Operation Mekong Dragon campaign was included in Vietnam-China Joint Statement on further promoting and deepening cooperation between the two sides. This shows the importance of the campaign in both bilateral and multilateral cooperation in controlling the trafficking of wildlife specimens.

### ***Current phase***

From 15/8/2024 – 16/9/2024, the Operation Mekong Dragon phase VI, coordinated by the General Department of Customs, Department of Counter-Narcotics Police and the Department of Prevention and Control of Environmental Crimes Police, had taken place in the country, focusing on preventing and combating illegal trafficking of drugs, wild animals, plants and wildlife products listed in the CITES Appendix. As a co-initiator, the Viet Nam Customs actively participated in the Mekong Dragon Operation coordination group with China Customs, RILO A/P-WCO Office and UNODC.

In order to demonstrate the proactive role of the co-initiator, co-coordinator and member in successfully implementing the Mekong Dragon VI Campaign, the General Department of Customs requests relevant affiliated and subordinate units to focus on implementing activities under the campaign, specifically: (i) Raise awareness and assign tasks to subordinate units to effectively implement the Campaign; (ii) Strengthen the collection of information on the situation, methods, and tricks of smuggling and illegal transportation of drugs and wild animals and plants to analyze risks, identify key points, and warn of risks to effectively serve the work of inspection, supervision, and customs control. Strengthen control and strict examination of goods, records, and documents for suspicious shipments. If signs of violations are detected, apply necessary measures to detect, arrest, and handle according to regulations; (iii) Actively coordinate with enforcement agencies, especially the Police, Border Army to organize and effectively combat cases of illegal trading and transportation of drugs and wild animals and plants and (iv) Participate in capacity building programs, coordinate and exchange information.



*Photo: Launching meeting of Mekong Dragon VI*

*Note:* The results of the Mekong Dragon VI campaign will soon be reported to the World Customs Organization by the Viet Nam General Department of Customs.

### ***2.3.2. Operation Thunder***

Operation Thunder is a campaign initiated by the Customs to fight against criminals in illegal trade of wild fauna and flora. Year 2023 marks the seventh campaigns in the series of the operation as a result of cooperation between WCO and INTERPOL. The operation's objectives are to strengthen the cooperation, information exchange among member states; at the same time, to facilitate coordination between Customs and Police in conducting seizures, handling of violation cases, dismantle international criminal syndicates in illegal trade and transport of wildlife species. To implement the operation comprehensively, the General Department of Customs of Viet Nam has requested their directly under authorities to the following mandates: enhancing collecting, information exchange, monitor and control of import and export towards conducting seizure activities in relation to illegal trade of wildlife specimens; and to coordinate with other enforcement authorities as police, border force control, forest ranger in relevant work aspects.

The Viet Nam MA will report the Standing Committee when information of outcomes of the operation is available and accessible.

### **2.4. Capacity development for law enforcement agencies**

- During the period year 2019 – 2024, the Viet Nam CITES Management Authority has been coordinating with scientific and enforcement agencies to organize training and capacity building for 1,500 provincial forest protection, customs and environment police, border guards, market management officer for CITES implementation and identification of wildlife species frequently traded, including rhino horns... Based on these activities, CITES enforcement agencies have made great efforts in inspecting, controlling, detecting and preventing the illegal trade, transportation and storage of tiger specimens. In particular, the dissemination of the provisions of Article 244, the Criminal Code 2015 (amended in 2017), Decree No. 06/2019/ND-CP, Decree No. 64/2019/ND-CP and other provisions of the law on wildlife protection encourage

the people to raise awareness on the protection and conservation of rhino and endangered, precious and rare wild animals.



*Photo: Trainings on specimen identification for the customs and forest rangers organized by the Viet Nam CITES MA in 2024*

- The Viet Nam CITES MA, under the support of the CITES Secretariat, has started the implementing of the project “*Strengthening CITES compliance and law enforcement capacity*” in 2024 – 2025. The project plan includes a series of training courses for enforcement officers including forest rangers, customs, environment police, and management officers in capacity building in species identification, laws promulgation, CITES implementation; and control, prevention, management and investigation of activities in violation of forest wildlife species provision. The Viet Nam MA will report to the Standing Committee the outcomes of the trainings in due course.

### **3. Stockpile and Disposal of specimens**

#### ***3.1. Stockpile***

Most of the rhino horn evidence is being kept at enforcement agencies for further investigation and will be disposed after court decision.

Presently, the National Stockpile is managing 315,125 kg (162 pcs) of rhino horn, unchanged compared to 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020 and 2019. All of these rhino horns are stored in a warehouse with 02-layer iron doors, equipped with a 24/24h camera surveillance system, a fire alarm system, maintaining a temperature of no more than 30 degrees, humidity from 55-60%. According to the report of the Department of Public Asset Management, Ministry of Finance, from 2019 until current state, the National Stockpile has not been transferred and received any other ivory and rhino horn specimens.

#### ***3.2. Destruction of illegal seized specimens***

According to statistics, from 2019 to present, rhino horns from seizures have been kept by authorities in temporary storage facilities of the arresting agencies to serve the



purposes of investigation. After the investigation, a number of destruction events was reported, in details:

- 24/6/2021, Civil Judgment Enforcement Department of Can Tho City organized the destruction of 28kg of rhino horn.

- 12/2023, Civil Judgment Enforcement Department of Da Nang city organized the destruction of 138 kg of rhino horn (plus 456.9kg of ivory, 3.1 tons of lion bone).



*Photos: Destruction of rhino horn and ivory in Da Nang city on 28 December 2023*

#### **4. Samples collection and forensic analysis**

Viet Nam was in a MoU with South Africa, with a joint action to exchange rhinoceros samples where it is relevant. During the period 2022 – July 2024, there is no record of seizures in rhinoceros specimen originated from South Africa, therefore, no exchange of samples had happened. Although there is no evidence or indication that rhino horn samples from the cases originated from South Africa, Viet Nam is willing to exchange rhino horn DNA samples with South Africa upon request from South Africa.

For rhino horns seized from the cases, the CITES Scientific Authority regularly collects DNA samples and stores them in the labs to serve the investigation, prosecution and trial of the cases in the following quantities: 10 cases (year 2021), 12 cases (year 2022) and 5 cases (year 2023).



*Photo: Samples collection by Viet Nam CITES Scientific Authority*

## **5. Demand reduction and community awareness**

### ***5.1 Workshop for management authorities and business owner***

The Da Nang and Khanh Hoa Department of Agriculture and Rural Development have chaired conferences to disseminate information on CITES and legal regulations of in Da Nang and Khanh Hoa with the participation of the People's Committees of the districts, business owners of jewelry and handicraft shops, focusing on: (i) regulations of CITES and Vietnamese law on controlling the trade of ivory, rhino horn and other wildlife specimens, (ii) survey results on the trade and business of wildlife products in Da Nang and Nha Trang, (iii) discussions and proposals for wildlife management solutions and (iv) commitments to the responsibilities of jewelry and handicraft shop owners. The workshop have attracted and created consensus, raising awareness of management officials and business owners at famous tourist destinations in Viet Nam, contributing to reducing demand for buying, selling and using wildlife and wildlife products, including rhino horn.

**5.2.** Under the support of USAID, the Viet Nam MA has led the compilation and publish of the *“Wildlife Conservation Communication Education Handbook – Practical Guide for Protected Areas”* to nature reserves and national parks.



Photo: Wildlife Conservation Communication Education Handbook - Practical Guide for Protected Areas

### 5.3. Awareness raising for traditional medicine officials and people

The Viet Nam MA has cooperated with the National Institute of Medicinal Materials, under the support of USAID, to conduct research, survey the reality and books on medicinal herbs that have been used for a long time. On that basis, the books “*Medicinal plants and herbs to replace rhino horn*” and “*Medicinal plants and herbs to replace pangolin scales*” were developed and published. According to the above books, 46 medicinal plants and some potential alternative remedies have been synthesized. This is considered a future direction to practically contribute to finding medicinal plants with potential to replace rhino horn, in order to reduce the demand for hino horn.



Photos: Book “*Medicinal plants and herbs to replace rhino horn*” and “*Medicinal plants and herbs to replace pangolin scales*”

### 5.4. Project “Saving Threatened Wildlife” (2022 – July 2024)

Project STW is the second phase of “Saving Species”, funded by USAID, implemented by Management Board for Forestry Projects in partnering with TRAFFIC, WWF. The project is working closely with stakeholders to execute a comprehensive activity plan focusing on behavior change for traditional medicine practitioners, domestic and

international tourists, users of illegal traded wild product in general. Partners of the program includes the Central Propaganda Department, Central Oriental Traditional Medicine Association, National Institute of Medicinal Materials, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Delivery services, E-commerce Association, Automobile Transportation Association, tourism related agencies, state agencies, international organizations and press agencies.

A series of awareness raising and demand reduction in illegal traded wild products have taken place across the country, in details:

- The cycle event on 11/3/2023 in Ban Me Thuot city, co-hosted by the Dak Lak Province Committee of the Fatherland Front, Regional IV Forest Protection Department, Yokdon National Park with more than 100 people participated.

- The cycle race on 12/8/2023 at Yokdon National Park, in response to the World Elephant Day, with the participation of more than 160 bicycle racer.

- Exhibition booth at Ha Long Food Festival 2023 – one of the international tourist hubs.

### ***5.5. Project “Rhino horn Demand Reduction campaign” by Humane Society International***

Within the scope of the campaign, Humane Society International ran our 15- second commercial video “[When I Grow Up](#)” on all Vietnam Airlines (VNA) flights from January to August 2022. During this period, the commercial video aired on 71,584 flights and reached more than 5 million passengers. In addition, the 60-second commercial video was also posted on our HSI/Vietnam Facebook page from April 2022 to June 2023. In 2022, the commercial video reached almost 4 million Facebook users in our target demographic, and in 2023, it reached more than 10 million. HSI continues to join hands with other organizations to urge the Vietnamese public to stop consuming rhino horn. The campaign with extended duration, is presently continuing broadcasting its communication videos on flights operated by Vietnam Airlines.

### ***5.6. Awareness raising among tourism authorities, travel agencies and tour guides***

The Viet Nam CITES Management Authority has coordinated with the Administration of Tourism, Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism, and the Provincial Departments of Tourism to organize:

- 02 seminars promoting responsible tourism associated with nature and wildlife conservation with the participation of travel agencies and tourism associations in Hanoi, Da Nang, Khanh Hoa and Ho Chi Minh City. Through these seminars, tourism management agencies and travel agencies have a better understanding of the role of wildlife, especially endangered species such as elephants, tigers and rhinos in

sustainable nature tourism development, thereby forming and enhancing the responsibility of those working in tourism development for wildlife and nature protection.



*Photos: Seminars on responsible tourism associated with nature and wildlife conservation in Da Nang, Khanh Hoa and Ho Chi Minh city*

- 06 training courses for nearly 300 tour guides who have direct contact and impact in changing the awareness and behavioral habits of tourists coming to Vietnam towards the awareness: Only look at nature, do not buy, sell or consume wildlife products.

### **5.7. Awareness raising in E-commerce**

On 25/09/2024, the Department of E-commerce and Digital Economy, Ministry of Industry and Trade has issued document 1341/TMDT-QL to official requested Ecommerce trade platforms, social networking platforms, website and others sales platforms to review and remove advertisements of selling of wild animals and wildlife hunting equipments. The Department also requested business owners to implement technical and control measures in manage the trade of wild animal products and hunting equipments, aiming to prevent, eliminate and effectively handled the violation of related laws as reported through digital platforms.

## **6. Plans for 2025**

- Proposing the Government to approve and enact the new Decree in implementation of CITES, with stricter management measures in CITES implementation, yet simplified CITES permitting administrative formalities.

- Proposing the Prime Minister to dispose (destroy) of rhino horn, ivory, pangolin scales which are currently kept in the national stockpile.

- Strengthening interdisciplinary coordination among law enforcement authorities on trade control on rhino horn, ivory and wildlife in key areas and provinces sharing the border with China and Cambodia and Laos, ASEAN member states.

- Viet Nam is willing to exchange rhino horns DNA samples with South Africa upon request from South Africa.

- Continue to work closely with the CITES Secretariat and related stakeholders in effective implementation of the project “*Strengthening CITES compliance and law enforcement capacity*” in demand reduction, awareness raising, capacity building for enforcement officers activities in 2024 – 2025.