

Ivory seized in Kenya

NAIROBI, KENYA: Officials in the Kenyan port city of Mombasa seized almost one and a half tons of ivory hacked out of poached elephants, a report revealed on Wednesday (3 July). This is the latest in a series of seizures by Kenyan authorities.



"The ivory was stashed in 69 bundles of several pieces and had been disguised as sun-dried fish," said Kenya Wildlife Service spokesman Paul Udoto.

The smugglers tried to use smelly dried fish to hide the ivory, from sniffer dogs of the customs officers. Altogether 770 pieces weighing 1,478kg were seized.

"Some bags had polished pieces of ivory, while others were in a raw condition," Udoto added.

The seizure comes just days after US President Barack Obama signed an executive order launching a US\$10m bid to cut wildlife trafficking in Africa, with US\$3m in assistance earmarked for Kenya.

Export documents from the seizure show that the consignment had entered Kenya from Uganda on in June and was destined for Malaysia.

In January, two tons of ivory worth US\$1m was seized at Mombasa on its way from Tanzania to Indonesia.

Ivory trade is banned under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Poaching has risen sharply in Africa. Besides targeting rhinos, whole herds of elephants have been slaughtered for their ivory.

The illegal ivory trade, estimated to be worth between US\$7bn and US\$10bn a year, is mostly fuelled by demand in Asia and the Middle East, where elephant tusks and rhinoceros horns are used in traditional medicines and to make ornaments.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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