



FACT SHEET

Abolish Ivory Sales To Save Our Elephants From Extinction **via Executive Authority**

National Security Brief & Source Index Selection

Executive Summary

The international illicit ivory trade represents a critical and immediate vulnerability to global stability and American national security. While traditional conservation efforts treat wildlife trafficking strictly as an environmental issue, this campaign establishes that the domestic "antique" and "mammoth" ivory trade is actively weaponized by Transnational Organized Crime (TCO) syndicates and global terrorist entities. Additional laundering guises include "de minimis," "mastodon," "heritage" craft pieces, and so-called fine "art" loopholes.

The general "antique" and "mammoth" market in the United States serves as the primary infrastructure to launder illicit blood ivory into the domestic economy. Trafficking networks utilize this unmonitored repository – estimated to hold a valuation range of \$10 Billion to \$30 Billion USD – as a mechanism for **High-Value Value Storage**. By converting poached ivory into unique, bespoke, or decorative artifacts, illicit networks create an elite, untraceable physical currency. This allows TCO and terrorist facilitators to move millions of dollars across international borders in a single container, completely bypassing the global banking system and all Anti-Money Laundering (AML) monitoring.

To dismantle this threat, the campaign urges the White House to issue a **National Security Directive via Executive Order** to close the "antique" and "mammoth" exemptions and loopholes once and for all. By treating this crisis as a direct national security imperative, the executive action overrides standard statutory limitations and institutes a zero-tolerance domestic market ban. This strategy

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builds directly upon the battle-tested "Gold Standard" precedent established by the State of New Jersey in 2014.

Key Notes of Core Crisis

1. The National Security Threat & Terror Finance

- **The Laundering Mechanism:** Terroristic syndicates rely entirely on the general decorative "antique" market to launder illicit ivory into the United States. Today they are also using "mammoth" ivory as another guise to smuggle new ivory into the U.S. marketplace.
- **Funding Global Terror:** The ivory-linked criminal economy enters the billions of dollars annually, serving as a primary high-value physical settlement currency for multi-commodity illicit trade, including narcotics, arms, and human trafficking.
- **Regional Destabilization:** This revenue directly funds notorious terrorist entities, including Al-Shabaab, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Janjaweed, and Boko Haram. The mass slaughter of elephants directly precedes the terrorization of adjacent local populations to secure illicit trafficking routes.

2. The Devastating Population Collapse

- **Historical Decline:** In the 1800s, an estimated 26 million elephants roamed the African continent. Driven by relentless commercial demand, an estimated 100,000 elephants were slaughtered per year during peak poaching crises.
- **The True Academic Baseline:** While federal agencies and compromised NGOs historically utilized inflated baseline data to mask the acceleration of the crisis, definitive 2014 research from Princeton University exposed the stark reality: less than an estimated 240,000 African elephants remained.
- **The Tipping Point:** According to the United Nations, elephants are currently being killed faster than they are giving birth. It is fundamentally the end of the ivory trade, or the end of the elephants.

3. The Human Cost on the Frontlines

- **The Casualties:** The illicit ivory market is directly responsible for the systematic killing of people on the ground – including heroic wildlife rangers, indigenous villagers, and civilian populations. Indigenous tribes in Serbia are also being murdered and terrorized today in the Arctic north by Mammoth Pirates.
- **Industrial-Scale Poaching:** Heavily armed syndicates now utilize advanced technological capabilities, including Agentic AI, to coordinate poaching operations and evade law enforcement, making the trade 4.5 times more profitable than traditional methods.

The Proposed Framework & Regional Stabilization Phases

The campaign calls for a decisive federal baseline that mirrors the successful,

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non-legislative model executed by the State of New Jersey (N.J. P.L. 2014, c. 22). The framework expands into a multi-tiered, cross-jurisdictional stabilization strategy:

- **The Complete Resale Ban:** Applies strictly to all non-functional ivory objects, raw tusks, mammoth ivory and decorative antiques that serve no active mechanical purpose. These purely aesthetic items will be eliminated from commercial resale, permanently crushing the infrastructure used for high-value asset laundering.
- **The Narrow Functional Exceptions:** To safeguard legitimate historic preservation without leaving room for illicit laundering, narrow, discretionary carve-outs are permitted strictly for active, functional mechanical items: historical firearms with ivory handles or inlays and musical instruments with ivory inlays. For musicians, this includes possessing a CITES Musical Instrument Certificate (MIC) for international travel, and an ESA Antique Certificate for interstate commercial sales, backed by a professional appraisal. We aim to make this professional appraisal piece far more rigorous by requiring the businesses that provide these appraisals to become licensed to do so by applying for a new state application, with a review process that will also require a federal board's final approval. For firearms, A Certificate of Authenticity, a dated bill of sale, or a qualified appraisal. Under the ESA, the item must be at least 100 years old. There must be documentation showing the ivory was not repaired or modified with any federally protected species after December 27, 1973, if the firearm has been modified. Import documentation is required if the antique was not manufactured in the U.S. For firearms with African elephant ivory inlays, the gun owner must show proof that the firearm was legally imported prior to January 18, 1990. Non-functional ivory objects, including "mammoth," "antique" and "art" items with ivory may also be passed down to family members via inheritance but these items cannot be sold on the open market.
- **Phase 1 (Tactical Training and Intelligence Integration):** Training African rangers in designated "down range zones" to secure ancient migratory routes and utilize the lethal precision of American security intelligence to eliminate active terrorist networks.
- **Phase 2 (Command Base and Strategic Headquarters):** Establishing a dedicated United States armed forces headquarters framework optimized for executing this security mission on the African continent, evaluating primary command centers such as Germany.
- **Phase 3 (Economic Substitution and Technological Optimization):** Launching high-end, low-impact ecotourism frameworks in Gabon and other critical range states to provide sustainable employment for local villages. This phase utilizes public-private infrastructure partnerships – including satellite telecommunications networks like Elon Musk's Starlink – to decrease financial and political pressure on regional leadership.
- **Academic and Niche Industrial Partnerships:** Establishing a dedicated academic partnership in cooperation with Princeton University and Professor Andy Dobson for scientific fieldwork. Concurrently, this program will foster non-extractive economies, including an organic, non-animal-based perfume industry inspired by luxury Parisian traditions of Capri methodology, alongside infrastructure for international film production locations.

Campaign Leadership

- **Raymond Lesniak (Campaign Champion):** Former Senator in New Jersey from 1983 to 2018. He introduced and successfully directed the historic 2014 New Jersey ivory ban through the state legislature, establishing the national "Gold Standard" for wildlife protection and anti-trafficking enforcement.
- **Jen Samuel (Campaign Advocate):** Founder of Elephants DC, investigative journalist, and endangered species advocate. She has delivered critical testimony before the U.S. Department of the Interior's Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking and coordinated multi-state legislative initiatives across the country.

Public Call-to-Action

The campaign is entirely nonpartisan, uniting national security metrics with a profound global moral imperative. Citizens are urged to take three direct steps:

1. **Call the White House Comment Line (202-456-1111):** Ask the President to use his executive authority to treat the antique ivory loophole and mammoth ivory exemption as a national security crisis and mandate a total commercial ban on decorative ivory.
2. **Write to First Lady Melania Trump:** Thank her for her historic 2018 visit to the orphaned elephants at the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust in Kenya and urge her to support this vital national security and conservation directive.
3. **Mobilize the Coalition:** Visit SaveOurElephants.org to sign up for deployment alerts, access verified research citations, register your organization to join the alliance, and send a digital note to the White House.

Master Sources & Citations Index

The campaign's legislative, economic, and national security framework is grounded in the following verified legal, academic, and intelligence sources:

I. Statutory Laws & Executive Directives

- **The New Jersey Gold Standard Law:** New Jersey Public Laws of 2014, Chapter 22 (codified at N.J.S.A. 23:2A-13.1 et seq.). This landmark statute established the first-in-the-nation complete domestic ivory and rhinoceros horn sales ban with effectively zero loopholes.
- **Federal Foundations:** Executive Order 13648 (2013), establishing foundational federal findings regarding wildlife trafficking and its intersection with transnational organized crime.
- **The Regulatory Gap:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Final Rule, 81 Fed. Reg. 43067 (June 6, 2016), which revised Endangered Species Act (ESA) section 4(d) regulations for African elephants but left the domestic "antique" and "de minimis" commercial loopholes exposed compounded by "mammoth" exemption.

II. Global Security, Intelligence & Macroeconomic Data

- **Economic Quantification of Illicit Markets:** United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *World Wildlife Crime Report* (2023).
- **Terror Finance & Polycriminality Intersection:** INTERPOL-UN Environment Programme (UNEP), *Environmental Crime and its Links to Transnational Organized Crime* (2016).
- **Financing Flows:** Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC), *Gangs, Ivory, and Terror: Behind the Lines of Illicit Trade* (2022).
- **The Digital Black Market:** Alliance to Counter Crime Online (ACCO), *Wildlife Sales on Facebook* (2020), and Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GITOC), *Wildlife Has a Facebook Problem* (2026), documenting the unchecked role of social media and e-commerce platforms in hosting illegal wildlife trafficking and transnational crime networks.
- **Global Enforcement Operations:** INTERPOL and World Customs Organization (WCO) coordinated operations across 134 countries, documenting over 4,600 seizures and identifying more than 1,100 suspects globally.

III. Biological Metrics & Academic Fieldwork

- **Population Decline Baseline:** Testimony of Professor Andy Dobson, Princeton University Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, before the New Jersey State Legislature (2014), exposing the true baseline metrics of the African elephant population collapse.
- **Species Status:** International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), *The Elephant Status Report* (2021).

IV. Congressional Record & Investigative Foundations

- **The Investigative Catalyst:** Bryan Christy, “*Blood Ivory*” cover report, National Geographic Magazine, establishing the foundational link between ivory smuggling routes and regional insurgent financial networks.
- **U.S. House Online Trafficking Testimony:** Testimony of Gretchen Peters, executive director of the Alliance to Counter Crime Online, before Congress on wildlife trafficking, transnational crime, and the growing online marketplace (April 2021).
- **The Mammoth Ivory Laundering Guise:** Natural History Museum (NHM) analysis, “*Why Woolly Mammoth Ivory Could Spell Trouble for Elephants*,” establishing the scientific and forensic reality that legal mammoth and mastodon ivory sales provide direct cover for the illicit elephant ivory trade. Note: Unfortunately, toward the end of this article, NHM cites data on the decline of elephant populations with information from a NGO that lists population figures. We strongly counter as grossly inaccurate and dangerously exaggerated. Top professors and field experts argue the true population is half of what the biggest NGOs proclaim as they secretly lobby to keep African elephants from full Appendix I level protection at CITES.
- **The Mammoth Pirates Phenomenon:** Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) investigative reporting (2016), “*The Mammoth Pirates*,” detailing the

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destructive permafrost mining of mammoth tusks utilized by cartels as a laundering guise for elephant ivory.

- **U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Testimony:** Full Committee Hearing, *"Ivory and Insecurity: The Global Implications of Poaching in Africa"* (May 24, 2012).
- **U.S. House Natural Resources Oversight Testimony:** Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs Hearing, *"Investigating the Ivory Trade Ban"* (June 24, 2014).
- **U.S. House Terrorism Testimony:** House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade Hearing, *"Poaching and Terrorism: A National Security Challenge"* (April 22, 2015).
- **U.S. House Foreign Affairs Full Committee Testimony:** Full Committee Hearing, *"Disrupting Transnational Criminal Networks: Loud and Clear"* featuring testimony on the convergence of wildlife poaching and terrorism (May 18, 2017).

V. Interstate Legislative Momentum & Global Coalitions

- **Federal Advisory Council Records:** Testimony of Jen Samuel before the U.S. Department of the Interior's Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking in Washington, D.C. (2013, 2014, 2015), and joint testimonies of New Jersey Senator Raymond Lesniak and then New Jersey Assemblyman Raj Mukherji, now a state senator, before the same federal committee (2015).
- **Multi-State Advocacy Testimonies:** Joint legislative testimonies by Raymond Lesniak, Raj Mukherji, and Jen Samuel in Delaware (2015); Raymond Lesniak in Massachusetts (October 2015) and Delaware with remarks delivered on the chamber floor prior to a full Senate vote in favor of the proposed ivory and rhino horn sales ban; and Jen Samuel in New Jersey (2015), New York (January 2014), Connecticut (2015), Maryland (2015), and California (2015), and Massachusetts (2015); Jen Samuel was invited to speak before a joint House and Senate committee in Pennsylvania however that invitation was rescinded at the 11th hour, noteworthy the day prior to the hearing, due to political pressure from an unknown power player, invitations to testify were concurrently rescinded to Pennsylvania children, Philadelphia regional musicians and conservation stakeholders who had all be lined up to testify in favor of a complete ivory sales ban; their voices were silenced.
- **Sovereign African Range State Alliance:** Formal proposals and diplomatic appeals by the African Elephant Coalition (an alliance of 29 African range states, championed by nations including Gabon and Kenya, and historically supported by European allies including Germany) demanding the total international trade ban at the 2016 CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP17) in Johannesburg.
- **Regulatory Conflict Documentation:** Carl Safina, The Safina Center (Oct. 11, 2016), *"To save African elephants, scientists say ivory sales must stop,"* validating the USFWS active subversion of the New Jersey anti-poaching summit and subsequent industry conflicts of interest.

VI. Domestic 'Antique' Loopholes & State-Level Investigations

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- **Massachusetts Ivory Pipeline:** African Elephant Journal (2019), "Undocumented Elephant Ivory Trade Thriving in Massachusetts," documenting the massive exploitation of state and federal loopholes by antiquities dealers and localized historical markets.
- **Undercover Interstate Traffic Rates:** Humane World undercover investigations in Connecticut (2024) and Pennsylvania (2025), exposing the massive scale of undocumented ivory sold openly through brick-and-mortar antique shops and domestic online marketplaces.

VI. Domestic 'Antique' Loopholes & State-Level Investigations

- **Mammoth Laundering Guise 'Mammoth Pirates' & Laundering Guise:** The domestic "mammoth" ivory exemption serves as one of the most deceptive and dangerous vulnerabilities in American trade policy. Syndicates heavily exploit the harvest of extinct mammoth tusks-driven by "Mammoth Pirates" destroying permafrost regions to extract them-as the ultimate laundering mechanism. Because extinct mammoth ivory is visually indistinguishable from freshly poached elephant ivory without highly expensive and destructive laboratory carbon testing, the legal mammoth market provides perfect cover for illicit blood ivory to hide in plain sight. Closing the elephant ivory market is impossible without simultaneously banning mammoth ivory.
- **Digital Infrastructure of Illicit Commerce:** The illicit ivory trade no longer relies solely on shadowed back-alleys; it thrives openly online. Transnational organized crime cartels actively exploit the unmonitored infrastructure of social media platforms and e-commerce sites to move raw and carved ivory across borders. These digital platforms provide immunity and reach for wildlife traffickers, allowing them to operate highly lucrative, illicit currency networks to high-vault clients, all directly under the purvey of global law enforcement. Recent domestic undercover investigations reveal that states lacking New Jersey-style restrictions, such as Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Maryland, serve as thriving hubs for undocumented ivory sales in brick-and-mortar antique shops, at dark boutiques, and on digital devices.