

Write a letter to the editor30 September 2021 | [Nature & Environment](#)

Elephant poaching could increase again



According to researcher Daniel Stiles, elephant poaching could soar again after the virus. Photo: Claudia Reiter

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Windhoek (NMH / cr) - Namibia has seen a sharp decline in elephant poaching, particularly over the past eight years. According to the Ministry of the Environment, elephant poaching appears to be declining annually. In 2014 78 elephants were poached, in 2017 again 50. While up to 101 elephants were poached in 2016, in 2019 and 2020 there were only 13 and 12 elephants respectively. Ministry spokesman Romeo Muyunda said the decline is due to law enforcement agencies taking stricter measures against wildlife crime.

However, Daniel Stiles, a researcher who has specialized in illegal markets and the trade in game and game products for decades, warns that the recent spike in black market ivory prices in Vietnam and China is worrying.

"Once the world has the COVID-19 virus under control, poaching - especially elephant poaching - could soar again. It then has to catch up with the cumulative demand for ivory on the world's black markets," said Stiles. He made the remarks in a report that is part of a series by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC).

The sale of national ivory supplies has further lowered the black market price dramatically. At the same time, the breakup of transnational criminal networks in eastern and southern Africa has led to the relocation of ivory poaching and illegal trade activities to western and central Africa.