

# DAILY MAVERICK

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## IVORY POACHING

### Uganda court hands life sentence to man caught with elephant ivory



*An African Elephant pictured in the grassland in the Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda, 29 September 2012. EPA/GERNOT HENSEL*



By [Reuters](#)

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KAMPALA, Oct 21 (Reuters) - A Ugandan court has handed a life sentence to a man caught with nearly 10 kg of elephant ivory, the country's highest punishment ever for wildlife violations, authorities said on Friday.

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Pascal Achiba was sentenced by the country's Standards, Utilities and Wildlife Court on Thursday after being convicted for unlawful possession of protected species, the state-run Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) said in a statement.

Achiba was arrested in January in a suburb of the capital Kampala alongside two pieces of ivory weighing 9.55 kg.

UWA head Sam Mwandha called the sentence "a landmark achievement in the fight against illegal wildlife trade".

Poaching and illicit wildlife trade is rampant in Uganda where police frequently seize hauls of ivory, rhino horns, pangolin scales and other wildlife products.

Achiba had previously served 18 months in jail for possession of four pieces of ivory, so was given a life sentence because he was a "habitual offender," the statement quoted the court's chief magistrate as saying.

In July 2020, a man who pleaded guilty to [killing Rafiki](#), a beloved 25-year-old male gorilla in Uganda, was sentenced to 11 years in jail.

(Reporting by Elias Biryabarema; Editing by George Obulutsa and Andrew Cawthorne)