



Lusaka Agreement on Co-operative
Enforcement Operations

Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild
Fauna and Flora

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UNDERCOVER OPERATION FOILS IVORY TRAFFICKING ATTEMPT IN KENYA

– THREE SUSPECTS ARRESTED WITH REMAINS OF 3 DEAD ELEPHANTS

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(Embu County, Kenya) In a breakthrough against illegal wildlife trade, a swift undercover operation by Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) working in close collaboration with Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF), led to the arrest of three (3) suspects attempting to sell elephants

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tusks in Kiritiri town, Mbeere South Sub-County, on the evening of 28th May 2025. The arrests were made as part of a wider, ongoing search for criminal ivory traffickers in Kenya and beyond.

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Acting on actionable intelligence, the suspects were seeking buyers for six pieces of elephant tusks, which they were offering at USD 8500. A rapid-response team mounted a snap operation, successfully apprehending the suspects while in possession of the tusks, weighing a total of 48 kilograms.

The three suspects, two men aged 45 and a woman aged 47, were taken into custody and are currently being held at Kiritiri Police Station. Their identities are being withheld at this stage to avoid compromising ongoing investigations. They are facing charges related to illegal possession and trafficking of wildlife products.

LATF Director Edward Phiri commended the precision of the operation, stating:

“This arrest is a clear message that there is no longer a safe haven for ivory traffickers operating across borders in our region. Thanks to improved intelligence-sharing and cooperation, we are closing in on perpetrators at every level.”

“We commend the professional and immediate action taken by KWS, and we stand ready to support expanding probes by KWS and LATF into the ongoing illegal ivory trade that seriously threatens Africa’s elephants,” said Steve Galster, Founder of Freeland, which supported the operation.

While large-scale ivory trafficking has declined following the Chinese government’s ban on domestic ivory trade, smaller quantities continue to surface in the

hands of low-level traffickers seeking buyers in emerging markets. These incidents highlight a concerning trend of stockpiling and discreet trading by opportunistic individuals.

The trade in ivory from African elephants is strictly prohibited under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and all enforcement agencies remain committed to upholding this international mandate.

Lusaka Agreement Task Force, with its national and international partners, remains firmly committed to dismantling ivory trafficking networks and securing justice for Africa's elephants. LATF has uncovered regional links in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, highlighting the urgent need for coordinated action. This operation was supported by the counter-trafficking organization, Freeland and LATF.

About Lusaka Agreement Task Force: Lusaka Agreement Task Force is the Secretariat and Operational arm of an intergovernmental treaty known as Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa.

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