



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# An elephant is killed every 25 minutes – UNBELIEVABLE!

***Born Free launches Elephants in Crisis appeal on behalf of an iconic species that could disappear from much of Africa within our lifetime***

Elephants are in crisis. A century ago there were an estimated five million elephants in Africa. Today, there are less than half a million. On average, at least 55 elephants are killed by poachers every day for their tusks. That's one every 25 minutes.

Since 2012, it is estimated that 201,288 elephants have been poached. Now, experts have predicted that unless poaching can be effectively addressed, elephants could all but disappear from many of Africa's wild places in the coming decades.

Ahead of World Elephant Day (Sunday 12th August 2018), Will Travers OBE, President of The Born Free Foundation, said:

"A world without elephants is simply unimaginable. Born Free simply cannot, and will not, let that happen.

"Our extensive experience means we have witnessed first-hand the brutal aftermath of poaching and the pressure that the species is under because of the demand for ivory. That's why we have been campaigning for a global ban on the trade in ivory since 1989. Steps are finally being taken in the right direction - China officially closed its domestic ivory

market back in 2017, the USA has taken resolute action, the majority of Africa countries are calling for the trade to end - and the UK Government plans to end almost all domestic ivory trade by October 2018, However, there is still a great deal more to be done.

"Just two years ago I stood on the edge of Nairobi National Park, in Kenya, and watched 105 tonnes of ivory burn. Eleven towering pyres of tusks from an estimated 10,000 elephants were ceremoniously torched to send a defiant message to the world that, as far as Kenya was concerned, elephants are worth more alive.

“While there is still a demand, poachers, and the criminal networks that support them, will continue to destroy a symbol of all that is wild and free. There is much we still have to do to end the slaughter and secure a safe, long-term future for these iconic animals.”

### **So why does the world need elephants?**

African elephants are a keystone species with a valuable role to play culturally, aesthetically, and within their own diverse and varied ecosystems. Known as ‘gardeners of the forest’, elephants disperse plant species by depositing undigested seeds in their dung, and modify landscapes by uprooting trees and digging for water during the dry season. These natural foraging behaviours help other animals survive in harsh environmental conditions.

Elephants are also sentient creatures. They live in close-knit family groups of individuals who care for and protect their young. And, just like humans, they mourn the loss of family members. Callous poachers kill adult elephants for their tusks, often leaving distraught infants orphaned. The lucky ones are rescued – the majority almost certainly perish.

### **What can you do to help Born Free?**

- Sign Born Free’s ivory petition - <https://www.bornfree.org.uk/ivory-trade-petition>
- Adopt Born Free’s Elephant Family - a large, close-knit herd who live in Kenya’s Amboseli Park, at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro - <https://give.bornfree.org.uk/products/african-elephant-adoption-202>
- Support the Born Free ivory amnesty- <https://www.bornfree.org.uk/donate-your-unwanted-ivory-to-born-free>
- Donate - Born Free urgently need funds for their life-saving work in Cameroon, Ethiopia and Kenya - <https://give.bornfree.org.uk/products/elephants-in-crisis-1052>
- Spread the word - use Born Free’s social media links to spread the word about the ivory trade around the world to drive the rejection of ivory as a valuable material - <https://www.bornfree.org.uk/ivory-trade>

### **Virginia McKenna OBE, Founder of Born Free, concluded:**

“Elephants are living treasures. Nature’s gardeners. Nature’s great teachers. Tragically some people don’t give a damn. We must cherish life and not tolerate cruelty and death. We must challenge the bloody ivory trade with all our might. We must bring shame on those who would condone it. It’s time to be kind.”

**For more information, visit [www.bornfree.org.uk](http://www.bornfree.org.uk) or watch <https://vimeo.com/280547403>**

**-ENDS-**

### **Notes to Editors:**

Images: [www.georgelogn.co.uk](http://www.georgelogn.co.uk) - High res versions available from <https://spaces.hightail.com/space/1tAqlaINks>

Born Free’s elephant appeal video and message from Virginia McKenna: <https://vimeo.com/280547403>

Interviews: Interviews with representatives from Born Free are available. Please contact Gemma Hook at [gemma.hook@pmwcom.co.uk](mailto:gemma.hook@pmwcom.co.uk) / 01403 783 400 to organise.

### **About Born Free:**

Born Free’s mission is to ensure that all wild animals, whether living in captivity or in the wild, are treated with compassion and respect and are able to live their lives according to their needs. Born Free opposes the exploitation of wild animals in captivity and campaigns to keep wildlife in the wild.

Born Free promotes Compassionate Conservation to enhance the survival of threatened species in the wild and protect natural habitats while respecting the needs of and safeguarding the welfare of individual animals. Born Free seeks to have a positive impact on animals in the wild and protect their ecosystems in perpetuity, for their own intrinsic value and for the critical roles they play

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