



# Implementation of CITES provisions concerning ivory

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



## Contents

Introduction: .....	3
Legislation: .....	3
Access points control: .....	4
Online control: .....	5
Awareness: .....	6
Training courses: .....	6
Public awareness: .....	7
Ivory Destruction: .....	9
Annex 1: List of Media Coverage of Ivory Destruction Event .....	11



## Introduction:

In 1979, there were an estimated 1.3 million African elephants. By 1989, only 600,000 remained. The loss of more than half a million elephants in a decade was primarily due to poaching for ivory. Natural habitat loss was a second important factor, human population had doubled in elephant range states since 1970. Major public awareness campaigns were launched worldwide to save the elephant and stop the illegal trade in ivory. In October 1989, at the seventh meeting of the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) Convention of the Parties (CoP7), governments banned international trade in ivory, with effect from January 1990. (wildlifedirect.org)

The UAE recognized the importance of tackling illegal wildlife trade early on and in line with its keenness on conserving the environment, it became one of the first nations in the Middle East to ratify CITES in 1990. The UAE regularly assesses the effectiveness of its ability to implement the Convention successfully and has positioned itself as a leading nation within the region for these efforts. The nation's legislation on CITES were issued and came into force in 2002, entitled Federal Law 11, which later qualified the UAE for a category (A) status in the national legislation project. This meant that the UAE's legislation pertaining to illegal wildlife trade completely fulfilled all requirements to implement CITES.

## Legislation:

The geographical location of the UAE makes it a critical hub as many shipments pass through via air, sea and land ports, thus the UAE has recognized the issue and has enacted a number of legislations which include the Federal Law No. (11) for the year 2002 concerning the regulation and control of CITES. This law includes 40 articles governing the scope of implementation, the functions of the authorities, administrative and scientific authorities, international trade and documentation, exceptions, identifying the ports of entry, how to deal with non-member states, registration of establishments and companies, transit, cooperation with the concerned authorities, and sanctions. It also includes penal articles and sanctions for offenders which varies from fines up to 50 thousand dirhams and imprisonment up to six months. The penalties vary depending on the Appendixes to the Convention. Also, the Resolution of the Council of Ministries No. 22 of the year 2003 was announced to issue the executive By-law of the Federal Law No. 11 of the year 2002 on regulating and controlling the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna & Flora. Furthermore, in 1988 Dubai Government issued an order for the ban of ivory, preventing the business of buying and selling and manufacturing of ivory and rhino horns. As a result of the previous law, in 1992 Dubai burnt 12 tons of confiscated ivory to demonstrate its support for the United Nations ban on trading in elephant tusks. CITES authorities in the UAE in collaboration with security agencies and NGOs are



evaluating the effect of CITES enforcement in the UAE and improving the efforts of CITES implementation regularly.

### **Access points control:**

The Ministry of Environment and Water in collaboration and coordination with the competent authorities, monitor all main border crossing points with the latest technologies that would help to control illegal shipments. It also cooperates with international governmental and non-governmental organizations to take advantage of the expertise and develop them in line with the UAE strategy. In 2011, around 476 samples of live animals and plants, ivory and leather products were confiscated by main entry points being Dubai Airport, and Ghowafat and Abu Dhabi border points. In 2013, the number of confiscation increased to reach 463 samples where ivory consignments had the biggest share. In 2014, on the other hand, confiscations reached 1315 samples and varied between live animals and birds, mummified animals, leather goods and ivory products. These confiscations were conducted by cooperation and coordination between the Ministry and the competent authorities of law enforcement. Most of the confiscated ivory is either carried by a passenger or coming through transit without disclosure of the type of shipment. Ivory is smuggled through the UAE mostly in raw or carved trinkets form. In 2009, the amount of ivory stocked at the Dubai Municipality was six tons and varied between raw, polished, carved and powdered ivory.

In November 2012, Dubai Customs seized a haul worth USD 40 million that was being brought into the country at Jebel Ali Port. The 215 tusks came from 108 African elephants and were hidden in 40 boxes containing beans. In May 2013, Dubai Customs seized an ivory shipment being brought into the country at Jebel Ali Port. The 259 tusks came from 129 African elephants and were hidden in 212 boxes containing wooden furniture.

The Ministry of Environment and Water, in 2014, did an inventory regarding ivory stockpiles in the country, the result of that inventory showed that there was 2380 specimens of ivory. The amount of such specimens was not weighed but the types of ivory was sorted in large, small, and medium sized ivory and carved, polished and raw ivory. The total number of ivory pieces seized in the country by 2014 is shown in Figure 1.

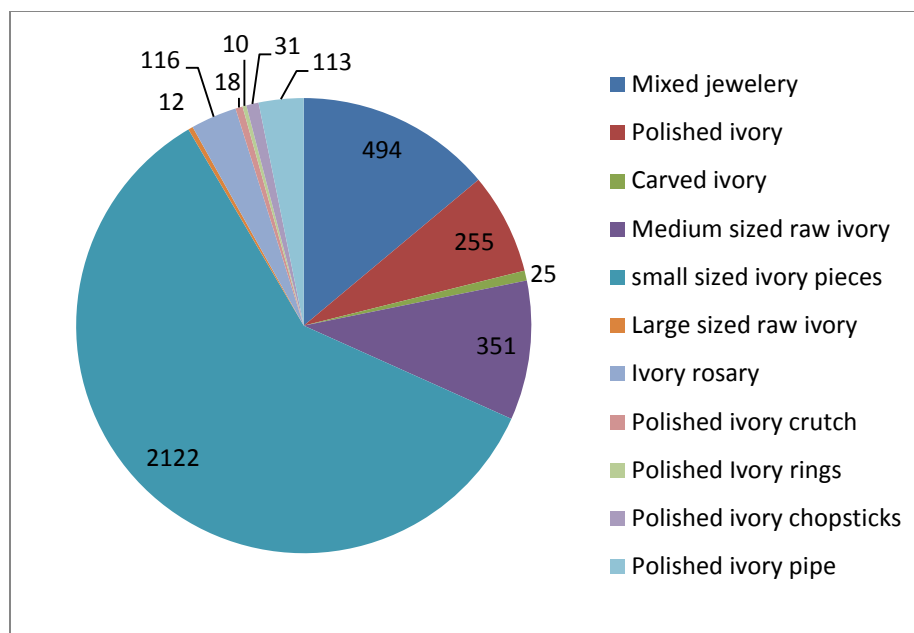


Figure (1): Type of confiscated ivory

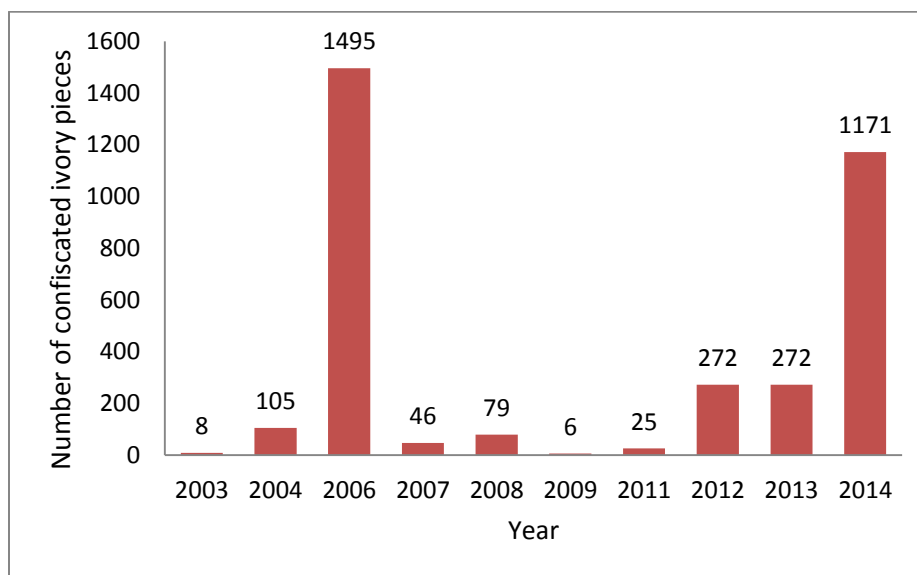


Figure (2): Number of confiscated ivory pieces

### Online control:

The Ministry of Environment and Water drastically reduced the electronic illegal trade of endangered animal and plant species listed in the Convention. This was done in coordination with the authorities responsible for electronic communication sites on the internet, through tracking advertisements for the sale of endangered animals online. Most of these ads were posted by fake communication channels outside the state, and as a result, 60% of such sites

were removed, i.e. 800 sites. The External Audit Department in the Ministry in coordination with the local environmental authorities conduct many inspection programs on pet shops and the related businesses, and take appropriate action against the violator of CITES legalization.



Picture (1): Showing part of the ivory stock at the Ministry's warehouse in 2014

#### **Awareness:**

##### **Training courses:**

The Ministry of Environment and Water provides special training courses on a regular basis for veterinarians, agricultural engineers who are working in Enforcement Authorities such as: Ministry of Environment and Water, Ministry of Interior, Airports Security and Customs, and those who are assigned to implement Federal Law no. (11) for the year 2002 on the organization and control of international trade on endangered fauna and flora . More than 32 training courses were conducted for the different concerned authorities from the year 2007 to 2015. Moreover, the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) office in Dubai is playing an important role in cooperating with the CITES Management Authority in increasing the capacity building and awareness for the inspection officers and the community in general. These training sessions keep such individuals up to date with the latest updates and ensuring alignment with the best practices worldwide.



Picture (2): Showing two different sessions of different training workshop conducted in 2015

### **Public awareness:**

The UAE has also put great efforts in increasing public awareness through the distribution of leaflets, posters and guiding brochures regarding CITES and the species listed in the appendixes of the Convention. This has been done in different places in the UAE such as shopping malls, local markets, airports, schools and universities, to demonstrate the risks and dangers of illegal trafficking of rare and endangered species. Awareness campaigns were carried out in 2009 until now, titled “What You carry May Harm You”, which aims to spread awareness to travelers through border crossing points. In 2003, The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) – MENA office launched a campaign to battle the illegal trade in ivory at Dubai International Airport jointly by the Airport Security department of Dubai Police. Advertisements warning passengers that ivory smuggling leads to prosecution were shown on video screens in the busy terminals. These advertisements reached all transit and arrival passengers. The number of passengers who saw the message is approximately 728,000.

In 2014, the IFAW in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Water in the UAE, Dubai Police, and Dubai International Airport conducted the “Ivory smuggling leads to prosecution” campaign – for the second year in a row- aiming to reduce the demand on ivory worldwide. A stand was set up to display samples of confiscated ivory to educate passengers about the importance of the wildlife and the threats facing elephants. A survey was done on passengers to measure the impact of the Dubai Airport ivory campaign. The number of passengers who did the survey was 942 passengers with 93.62% of them agreeing that trade in all elephant ivory should be banned, and 91.08% of them agreed that ivory smugglers should be punished. The campaign message was delivered to over 744000 passengers. The significance of such campaigns comes from the fact that it reached an international audience which gives an impression of the international status of ivory trade awareness. Furthermore, many electronic awareness campaigns were carried out through social networking channels such as Twitter,



Instagram and Facebook. In 2015, a similar campaign was conducted in Abu Dhabi Airport in cooperation with IFAW, Abu Dhabi Police, Abu Dhabi Customs and Abu Dhabi Airport.



Picture (2): Part of the “Ivory smuggling leads to prosecution” campaign held in Dubai Airport in 2014 in association with IFAW, Dubai Police, and Dubai International Airport.

The Ministry in corporation with the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) produced a number of leaflets, posters and printed mugs to increase the public awareness toward elephant's and their ivory's status. They also, issued “Elephant Never Forget” a scientific booklet with activities for schools, especially grade 4 and 5. The booklet's main message was how to care and conserve elephants. Furthermore, The CITES scientific Authority in the UAE the Environmental Agency Abu Dhabi, published a handbook titled “UAE CITES Handbook” which include common CITES & Non-CITES species involved in UAE trade.



Picture (3): Educational leaflets prepared by MoEW and IFAW





### **Ivory Destruction:**

In April 2015, approximately 10 tons of elephant ivory worth US\$20 million was destroyed to demonstrate the UAE's commitment to fighting the illegal trade. The stockpile of raw and crafted ivory seized from smugglers at the UAE's airports, borders and sea ports, was crushed by staff from the Ministry of Environment and Water, in collaboration with Environment Agency- Abu Dhabi (Scientific Authority of CITES), Dubai Municipality, Dubai Customs, Dubai Police and IFAW. The destruction of the ivory stocks was carried out in an environmentally friendly process, according to the best industry practices. A machine was used to crush the ivory into very small pieces. The pieces were subsequently mixed with treated waste then buried and disposed of in designated areas to prevent its reuse. Moreover, the Ministry in cooperation with Dubai Customs and the International Police Organization (Interpol) sent a sample of the confiscated Ivory to specialized international laboratories to analyze and identify the populations from which the samples come from and inform the appropriate international bodies.

CITES Secretary General acknowledged the event, he addressed the occasion by releasing a statement on the CITES website. He said: "When coupled with the seizure of ivory and prosecution of offenders, it sends a powerful message that the United Arab Emirates, does not accept and will not tolerate this illegal trade or the devastating impact it is having on the African elephant, on the livelihoods of rural communities, and sometimes on national and regional security. It also provides a very public opportunity to send a message to those who trade illegally in elephant ivory that the age and origin of their contraband can today be readily identified through the use of modern forensics. Therefore, whatever may happen in the future, illegally traded elephant ivory will never have any commercial value and the return on the 'investment' will most likely be imprisonment, heavy fines, and seized assets."

The event was attended by more than 15 national and international bodies, governmental and non-governmental organizations. The event was covered by different media forms, locally and internationally. Annex 1 contains a list of media coverage by English speaking media.



Picture (4): Ivory destruction event held in Dubai, April 2015, in cooperation with Dubai Municipality, Dubai Customs, Dubai Police and IFAW



## Annex 1: List of Media Coverage of Ivory Destruction Event

Form	Media	Link
Newspaper	The National	<a href="http://www.thenational.ae/uae/200kg-of-ivory-seized-at-dubai-airport">http://www.thenational.ae/uae/200kg-of-ivory-seized-at-dubai-airport</a>
	Gulf News	<a href="http://gulfnews.com/news/uae/environment/dubai-municipality-six-tonnes-of-smuggled-ivory-to-be-destroyed-1.1486298">http://gulfnews.com/news/uae/environment/dubai-municipality-six-tonnes-of-smuggled-ivory-to-be-destroyed-1.1486298</a>
	Khaleej Times	<a href="http://www.khaleejtimes.com/nation/inside.asp?xfile=/data/nationgeneral/2015/April/nationgeneral_April344.xml&amp;section=nationgeneral">http://www.khaleejtimes.com/nation/inside.asp?xfile=/data/nationgeneral/2015/April/nationgeneral_April344.xml&amp;section=nationgeneral</a>
	7 Days	<a href="http://7daysindubai.com/more-than-10-tonnes-of-illegal-ivory-destroyed-in-uae/61485">http://7daysindubai.com/more-than-10-tonnes-of-illegal-ivory-destroyed-in-uae/61485</a>
	Suadi Gazette	<a href="http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&amp;contentid=20150430242167">http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&amp;contentid=20150430242167</a>
	Gulf Today	<a href="http://gulftoday.ae/portal/bfe79c57-7399-4acc-979f-fbb4815444a0.aspx">http://gulftoday.ae/portal/bfe79c57-7399-4acc-979f-fbb4815444a0.aspx</a>
	Gulf Time	<a href="http://gulftimes.ae/caring-for-pachyderms-10-tonnes-of-seized-ivory-destroyed-in-uae/">http://gulftimes.ae/caring-for-pachyderms-10-tonnes-of-seized-ivory-destroyed-in-uae/</a>
TV	AFP news agency	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wox8pvlHh-0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wox8pvlHh-0</a>
	Alaan TV	<a href="http://www.alaan.tv/news/world-news/129431/uae-ministry-environment-damaged-13-tonnes-ivory-confirmation-commitment-combat-illicit-trafficking">http://www.alaan.tv/news/world-news/129431/uae-ministry-environment-damaged-13-tonnes-ivory-confirmation-commitment-combat-illicit-trafficking</a>
	Sky news Arabia	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-93FPgiVCM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-93FPgiVCM</a>
	CCTV+	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpGUSCmpRJE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpGUSCmpRJE</a>
	Emirates TV	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QJrHFiyq_g">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QJrHFiyq_g</a>
	Ruptly TV	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDeWq6pTpro">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDeWq6pTpro</a>