



March 12, 2024

The British High Commission  
Plot 1079-1084 Main Mall,  
Off Queens Road,  
Gaborone, Botswana

Contact: 686 2851/ 2  
director@ncongo.org  
www.ncongo.org

**ATT: THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION**

**RE: PETITION AGAINST THE PROPOSAL MADE BY THE FORMER PRESIDENT OF BOTSWANA TO LOBBY FOR THE RETURN OF THE HUNTING TROPHIES (IMPORT PROHIBITION) BILL**

Dear Sir/Madam,

We the Communities living alongside wildlife represented by 22 Community Trusts across Botswana, write to you today with deep concern regarding the proposed bill to be presented to the UK parliament on prohibition of importation of trophies from CITES listed species for importation to the United Kingdom.

**Our petition addresses critical issues that we believe merit careful consideration and evaluation:**

**1. Botswana's incredible conservation success story:** Botswana has a long history of unparalleled conservation success. Almost 40% of the area of Botswana has been set aside for biodiversity conservation. Botswana has the largest population of elephants in the wild in the whole world. The recent (2022) elephant wide survey estimated the population of elephants in the KAZA area to be 277 900 of 131,909 or 47% of the KAZA elephant population resides in Botswana. This due to our good conservation policies and programs

**2. Trophy Hunting Benefits to Communities:** Trophy hunting plays a pivotal role in benefiting communities residing in wildlife areas. It serves as a vital source of revenue generation, providing employment opportunities, social services such as funeral insurance and scholarships, and income for housing for the needy and elderly. In 2023, trophy hunting contributed significantly to communities involved in the practice, generating a substantial amount financial resource, directly contributing to community development. The ban on trophy hunting between 2014- 2019 resulted in complete loss of financial benefits for some local communities. We urge against reverting to such detrimental outcomes if the ban on trophy hunting is reinstated.

**3. Elephant Expansion and Human-Wildlife Conflict:** The ban on hunting in 2014 led to a noticeable expansion of the elephant population in Botswana, causing elephants to venture into previously non elephant range areas. This expansion has resulted in increased instances of crop damage, posing risks to human lives and livelihoods. The current elephant population estimates in Botswana raise concerns about the environmental sustainability of maintaining such large herds in the country's rangelands.

**4. Crop Damage and Human Losses:** Wildlife, including elephants, have been responsible for damaging crops, leading to reduced yields and food scarcity for communities. Furthermore, the escalation of human-wildlife conflicts has tragically resulted in human casualties, with reports of fatalities linked to

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encounters with elephants. These conflicts underscore the urgent need for sustainable wildlife management practices.

**5. Conservation and Human Well-being:** Trophy hunting can serve as a conservation tool when implemented responsibly and with consideration for wildlife populations. It aids in managing wildlife distribution, particularly the elephant population, to mitigate negative impacts on vegetation, agriculture, and livestock farming. Integrating human well-being into conservation policies is essential for achieving sustainable outcomes, as conservation efforts must prioritize both ecological preservation and community welfare.

**6. Controlled Trophy Hunting Practices:** Contrary to misconceptions, trophy hunting in Botswana is a regulated practice guided by annual wildlife quotas set by the government, selective targeting of specific animals, and adherence to ethical hunting standards. By focusing on old males and avoiding the hunting of breeding females and young animals, hunting practices aim to maintain sustainable wildlife populations.

**7. Mitigating Wildlife Poaching:** Ceasing trophy hunting in the past has led to adverse consequences, including increased wildlife poaching driven by factors such as crop damage, reduced community benefits, and wildlife-human conflicts. The rise in poaching incidents poses a threat to the conservation of wildlife resources and undermines tourism development in regions like Ngamiland, Chobe, and Boteti. Addressing these challenges through sustainable conservation practices that consider human well-being alongside wildlife preservation is imperative.

**8. Economic Impact on Local Communities:** The livelihoods of many local communities in Botswana are intricately linked to wildlife-based tourism, including trophy hunting. Reinstating the ban on hunting trophies importation could have significant economic repercussions for these communities, potentially leading to reduced income, employment opportunities, and social services that they depend on.

**9. International Relations and Conservation Efforts:** Botswana's stance on wildlife conservation, including the management of trophy hunting, can have implications for its international relations and conservation efforts. Collaborative efforts with other countries and organizations in the conservation sphere may be impacted by decisions related to wildlife management practices and policies.

In conclusion, we implore your government to carefully consider the implications of enacting THE HUNTING TROPHIES (IMPORT PROHIBITION) BILL. Such a decision could have far-reaching negative consequences on wildlife populations, exacerbate human-wildlife conflicts, undermine conservation efforts, and impact the livelihoods and well-being of communities residing in wildlife areas.

We trust that your esteemed office will give due consideration to our petition and advocate for sustainable wildlife management practices that balance conservation efforts with community needs and welfare.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Signed By,

1. Ngamiland Council of NGOs
2. Qangwa Community Trust
3. Lake Ngami Community Trust
4. Xhauxhwatubi Community Development Trust
5. Sankoyo Tshwaragano Management Trust
6. Okavango Community Trust
7. Mababe Zokotsama Community Development Trust
8. Cgae Cgae Community Trust
9. Okavango Jakotsha Community trust
10. Tcheku Community Trust
11. Okavango Kopano Mokoro Community trust
12. Tsodilo Community Development Trust
13. Habu Community Trust
14. Okavango Human Wildlife Foundation
15. Masego Community Conservation Trust
16. Nata Conservation trust
17. Pandamatenga Lesoma Kazungula Community trust (PALEKA)
18. Chobe Enclave Conservation Trust
19. Tsau Semboyo Makakung Management Trust
20. KD1
21. Nokaneng Community Trust
22. Shorobe Community Development Trust
23. Trust for Okavango Cultural and Development Initiatives (TOCaDI)

