



Background Paper

Committee: The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Topic: Illegal wildlife trade and its impact on health security

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Wildlife trade is defined as the action of buying and selling wild animals and plant resources; including importing, exporting, and the re-exportation of them (alive, raw, or finished products made out from them). It is considered the fourth largest global crime. Taking into consideration that several countries have legal ways for people to adopt certain animal species. The fact that people prefer to buy from criminals that dedicate themselves to illegal wildlife trading, means that animals will not live in the correct manners, creating a state of stress and anxiety to the animals.

National Geographic investigations have concluded that annually around the world, more than 160 billion dollars are involved in wildlife illegal trading. More than 100 million animals are captured and subsequently sold by armed gangs, poachers, illegal hunters, and enormous mafia networks each year. Unfortunately, 90% of all the animals do not make it to their destination, they often die on transportation or while being hunted. Nevertheless, plants are also part of the problem, around 440 tons of exotic plants are illegally sold around the world; Putting in danger the precious biodiversity and ecosystems around the world. In fact, studies have shown that between the years 1970- 2000, wildlife species have declined by 40%. Ivonne Higuero, secretary-general of The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) states, “Illegal wildlife trade has many negative consequences for

human wellbeing and conservation. When criminal actors trade endangered species, they weaken entire ecosystems and threaten essential links of the world's biological diversity. The world Economic Forum found that over half of the world's GDP is highly dependent on nature".

On the other hand, besides all the damage this problem does to the environment, there are several more effects that impact humanity. The economy is looking directly affected due to the large amount produced by this illicit activity. Considering previous statistics, around 8,000 to 20,000 million dollars are created by illicit wildlife trading. This is a serious problem for every economy around the world since it goes along with money laundering and other types of crime such as drugs and guns trafficking. Furthermore, it causes damage to the environment, and it can have a significant impact on global health through the spread of diseases.

In fact, wildlife illegal trading poses a high risk to humanity. It increases diseases transmitted between animals and humans by evading biosecurity and sanitary controls. Since wildlife trafficking tends to be international, it creates big transmissions risk to every country that passes through. In other words, these diseases and viruses are able to cross national borders at a very frightening speed, which can lead to global crises, affecting millions of people, just as Sars-Cov-2 did.

Wildlife trafficking is currently alarming nations around the world since the majority of the consumption of wild meat is being practiced by people with unstudied scientific beliefs. People around the world often think that wild meat is much healthier than farmed meat, directly impacting several nations' economies and health systems. Nowadays, there are illegal markets in which people sell wild animals, desiring the fact if they are alive or dead. Lamentably, in these places, people can easily get infected by unknown pathogens, in which some of them can start mutating, getting infectious, and start being contagious among human populations, causing millions of deaths. Indeed, many of the worst diseases in all human history have been transmitted from animals to humans. Some of these diseases include: Coronavirus, Nipah, H1N1, H5N1, HIV, and Ebola. The culture of hunting and consuming wild animals means a significant risk to humans.

As previously stated, every single nation around the world is being affected by wildlife trading on a bigger or smaller scale. Considering that China, Malaysia, Brazil, Panama, Cambodia are one of the most affected countries around the world, The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice urges all nations around the world to plan strategies to combat this relevant crime, such as the creation of programs and propaganda which encourages people to get informed about this global problem and to inform people about what they buy and sell. Impose a total and permanent closure of wildlife markets around the world, and improve educational programs to attack the problem by its roots. Creating a positive impact in order to eradicate wildlife extinctions; taking into account the 11,167 species that are in danger of extinction. and decreasing the risks of the transmission of animal infections to humans.

Illegal wildlife trading is a serious crime and should be targeted as so. Humans depend on every ecosystem, they provide us with clean air, water, medicine, climate regulation, and food. We need to start taking care of nature, so nature can take care of us. Is time to create limits and start protecting our home.

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