

Chris' Speech for Hong Kong Legislative Council, September 2017

My name is Chris Leadismo, the Head of Wildlife Security at Save the Elephants in Northern Kenya. I am from a people called the Samburu.

For generations the Samburu have loved and respected the elephants that we live among. This is why it is **natural** for me to give my life defending them.

I work in **tough conditions** as a wildlife ranger. The ivory trade has brought us more criminals than ever before, poachers who are waiting to **ambush** us at every turn.

Traders sometimes say that they fear their livelihoods will be affected by the closure of the ivory markets. But for us it is **our lives**, not our livelihoods, that are at risk from the criminals that kill to supply ivory for sale.



I am here to represent my fallen rangers, who were killed by poachers. I still recall the death of my very closest friend **Joseph** who was shot dead while on the line of duty in June this year, this is still pain in my heart.



I am here to represent the community that I come from, who suffer from the deaths of those who protect their heritage from poachers, and from the damage to their livelihoods.

I am here to represent my family. This is my wife..... I leave her and my three sons for long periods, not knowing when I will return, **or if I will return**. I know it

breaks her heart, but I still go because if no one keeps the peace in our landscape, eventually, we will all be victims of poachers, one way or another.



And I am here to represent elephants, who have no voice. This is Changila, whom I knew well. He was a young male with small tusks, but he was still killed for his ivory. The day he died, I was the one who uncovered him.

Like him, 100,000 were killed for their ivory between 2010 and 2012., and we are still in the battle.

Below are the pictures



Fig 1. This is Changila Alive



Fig 2. After poached.

I know many traders may say this killing is nothing to do with them, but as long as they are compensated, more elephants will die to fuel this trade, and I will lose more comrades, or even my life as a wildlife ranger.

I understand that people in Hong Kong are not the ones who are buying ivory. The buyers are from outside. Yet everyone else in the world thinks that it is you. I am here to show you that we in Kenya are doing all we can to stop the killing of elephants. You too can improve your reputation in the world by stepping away from the trade, once and for all.

Thank You