

**Submission from Dr ZEMAN Allan**

Around 33,000 African elephants, which is 1 every 15 minutes, are being slaughtered for their ivory tusks each year, in large part to supply demand in this part of the world.

Since the international ivory trade ban in 1989, domestic markets like Hong Kong have provided laundering mechanisms for poached ivory and perpetuated the demand. Study found that most of the ivory sold here was being smuggled illegally to the mainland China. Much of the ivory “legally” acquired in the 1970s and 1980s was obtained from poached elephants originally too with Africa losing more than 600,000 elephants over that period.

Elephants are an iconic species that are just like us in many ways, emotionally they are very human with the same sense of family and death. To kill such an animal for just a tooth from which to fashion a trinket or to show wealthy is morally unacceptable and totally incomprehensible. Anyone who buys or owns ivory today has blood on their hands. They have killed not only the elephant for their tusks, but all its dependent young as well.

I appreciate the Hong Kong government very much for taking concrete action to ban the local ivory trade and hopes this can be done as soon as possible, and I am here today to urging all Hong Kong lawmakers to support this government's proposal. The United States has already closed its market and China will also do so by the end of the year. So there is no way that Hong Kong do not follow this international trend.

The African elephant is doomed to extinction in 15-20 years, unless we can put a stop to it. There is only one way to save them that is the banning of the ivory trade.