

A tale of two African cities–Ivory trade comparisons in Khartoum/Omdurman and Addis Ababa

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Abstract

During a short visit to Sudan and Ethiopia in April 2017, the author learned that in Sudan the wholesale price of raw ivory was USD 279/kg for a 1-3 kg tusk. There were 56 souvenir shops seen in Khartoum/Omdurman displaying 7,073 ivory items for sale. Several shops were selling significant quantities of recently-carved ivory items. Prices for both wholesale tusks and retail ivory items had more than doubled since the last published survey undertaken by Martin in 2005. Chinese were still the main customers. Most items were pendants and bangles. Ethiopia, in contrast, has improved its law enforcement efforts and justice system considerably following the government's confiscation of ivory items from the shops in Addis Ababa in 2015, including extra vigilance at the airport and penalties implemented. Ivory items were no longer seen in the souvenir shops in 2017. Ethiopian officials, with support from the Chinese Embassy and other embassies and conservationists, must be commended for their ongoing law enforcement efforts and success. It is hoped the successful law enforcement strategies in Ethiopia can be emulated in Sudan.

Résumé

Lors d'une courte visite au Soudan et en Ethiopie en avril 2017, l'auteur a appris qu'au Soudan, le prix de gros de l'ivoire brut était de 279 Dollars US/kg pour une défense de 1-3kg. Il y avait 56 magasins de souvenirs à Khartoum/Omdurman affichant 7.073 articles en ivoire à vendre. Plusieurs magasins vendaient des quantités importantes d'objets en ivoire nouvellement sculptés. Les prix des défenses en gros et des articles en ivoire de détail ont plus que doublé depuis le dernier sondage publié par Martin en 2005. Les Chinois étaient toujours les principaux clients. La plupart des articles étaient des pendentifs et des bracelets. L'Ethiopie, en revanche, a amélioré ses efforts d'application de la loi et son système de justice, suite à la confiscation des objets en ivoire des magasins à Addis-Abeba par les autorités gouvernementales en 2015, et à une vigilance supplémentaire à l'aéroport et des pénalités mises en œuvre. Les articles en ivoire n'étaient plus visibles dans les magasins de souvenirs en 2017. On doit féliciter les responsables éthiopiens, qui, avec le soutien de l'ambassade de Chine, d'autres ambassades et des défenseurs de l'environnement, font des efforts pour appliquer la loi et réussissent. On espère que ces stratégies réussies en matière d'application de la loi en Ethiopie pourront être émulées au Soudan.

Introduction

Sudan's past ivory trade relied mainly on the vast elephant herds that existed in the south of the country. In 1976 there were an estimated 133,000 elephants, but ivory exports from Sudan led to heavy poaching, and by 1992 fewer than 40,000 elephants remained (Martin 1998). Today the figure is estimated at 7,103 (Thouless et al. 2016); the continuing civil war and now famine in South Sudan is adding to the demise of these last elephants.

Ethiopia's elephants were practically eliminated

in the north of the country in the 19th century with the introduction of firearms and to meet the demand for ivory in Asia and Europe (Pankhurst 1968). In 1987 there were an estimated 6,650 elephants (IUCN/AERSG 1991) and only an estimated 2,407 remained by 1995 (Said et al. 1995). Today's estimate is even lower–1,017 (Thouless et al. 2016).

Methodology

I visited Sudan from 7-17 April 2017 looking at the

souvenir shops in Omdurman and Khartoum (on the banks of the River Nile) over a five-day period. I collected information in Sudan on the sources of ivory and wholesale prices of tusks, from knowledgeable vendors. I visited Ethiopia from 17-21 April 2017 and surveyed the many souvenir shops over three days in Addis Ababa. In both Sudan and Ethiopia, I visited shops known for selling ivory in the past, and also new souvenir/curio shops, in markets, shopping malls, hotels, and in tourist/visitor souvenir shopping areas. In Sudan, I counted shops displaying ivory items, recording item types and prices, and if objects were old or recently carved. I learned directly from vendors and dealers (most speak varying amounts of English) about the ivory trade in the recent past and today, the buyers and what substitutes or alternatives to ivory were selling, keeping brief notes on my findings at the time, to type up later. I also learned from dealers and vendors about their views on the ivory trade, in both Sudan and Ethiopia.

Sudan–Background

Sudan has a significant history in ivory trade. In the 1850s Sudan was exporting on average 130 tonnes of tusks a year, one of the largest exporting countries in the world (Parker 1979). In the late 19th century/early 20th century there were four main ivory carving families, all Copts from Asyut in Egypt who started carving ivory in Omdurman and Khartoum with a few Sudanese assistants (Martin 1998). They crafted ivory that suited British and European taste, especially for the expatriates living in Khartoum at the time. After World War II, foreign troops departed and the ivory business declined, recovering in the 1950s. Once the CITES international trade ban came into effect in 1990, the Americans and Europeans, the main buyers previously of worked ivory, no longer wanted ivory (Martin 1998). In the 1990s the ivory industry found a new market with over a 1,000 Chinese labourers and hundreds of South Koreans coming to Sudan; many risked smuggling ivory items back home (Martin 1998).

In 1998, tusks of 1-2 kg cost USD 15.50/kg wholesale and tusks of 5-10 kg were USD 43.60/kg wholesale (Martin 1998); at the time a US dollar was 1,750 Sudanese pounds (known as Junayh' in Arabic). There were 19 shops in

Khartoum and 15 in Omdurman visited at that time and collectively they had a few thousand ivory items for sale between them. (Martin 1998). The main items were animal figurines and jewellery, but also chopsticks and name seals were on display for the Chinese who were then already buying about half the ivory items in the shops (Martin 1998), hiking up demand.

In 2005 a follow-up survey (Martin 2005) found tusks came, as well as from southern Sudan, increasingly from the DRC. With so much civil unrest in the region and weapons widely available with the presence of the military (Somerville 2016) thus enabling poaching and ivory trade to continue unhindered. The ivory trade in Khartoum/Omdurman had grown to be one of the largest in Africa (Martin 2005). There were 50 retail outlets counted, half in Omdurman and half in Khartoum, with 11,329 ivory items on display for sale (Martin 2005). The wholesale price of raw ivory was up to USD 105/kg for tusks of 2-5 kg (when a US dollar was 2,530 Sudanese pounds). There were animal figurines (30%), pendants (19%), rings (15%) and bangles (8%). About 4,000 Chinese were now working in Sudan. Chinese made up about 75% of the buyers for worked ivory as prices were very low compared with China, for instance a pair of chopsticks sold for USD 13 compared with USD 90 in Beijing.

Results regarding ivory in Khartoum and Omdurman in May 2017

Most recent elephant poaching has been in central Africa (Thouless et al. 2016). Tusks have been smuggled into Sudan from the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and northern Gabon, with Sudanese horsemen (known also as the Janjaweed militia) involved; raw ivory is brought through Darfur into Omdurman on the west bank of the Nile. 'It is very difficult to bring tusks [into Sudan] in lorries nowadays because of the police check posts, especially after separation of the two countries [that occurred in July 2011] to obtain ivory', a vendor in Omdurman explained. On reaching Omdurman/Khartoum, raw ivory was selling wholesale in April 2017 for 4,000 to 6,000 Sudanese pounds or USD 223-335 per kg, (USD 279/kg on average) for a 1-3 kg tusk. This is an increase up from USD 105/kg for a 2-5 kg tusk in 2005 (Martin 2005). The price rise is understandable as tusks are more difficult to obtain and generally come from further away, with South Sudan's elephants now so few. Continued Chinese demand, along with a smaller supply of tusks reaching the capital, has pushed prices

up, vendors remarked.

There are very few traditional ivory carvers remaining in the Omdurman area who use hand tools. In the Omdurman souk, one elderly carver demonstrated to me with hand tools the making of bone and wood items, and another was repairing an old ivory bangle. Vendors said the young don't want to carve ivory as it is too time consuming; they would rather drive cars and work with computers.

A Khartoum vendor in his 70s had seen the changes in the ivory industry. He remembered when tusks from the south were as tall as a person, when the traders were selective and would bring the best tusks to the carvers in Khartoum. An Egyptian vendor used to employ an Indian carver to produce good quality animal figures, but he sent him back to India as work ran out. The old vendors in Khartoum lamented that the Chinese demand for chopsticks had wiped out their elephants. Chopsticks are quickly processed from the best solid top third of a tusk. The hollow lower part is used to carve hair clips, thin figurines and other smaller items, such as pendants. This insatiable Chinese demand for tusks, one vendor explained, led to the killing of calves even that had just been weaned with tiny tusks; the killers and the Chinese buyers don't care; now ivory is running out; there are virtually no more elephants; the government authorities have become strict when it is too late, 'after the horse has bolted'.

There were a total of 56 retail outlets counted with 7,073 ivory items on display for sale (averaging at 126 ivory items per outlet). Of these in the Omdurman souk, there were 29 shops with 2,795 ivory items (96 items per outlet) and in Khartoum 27 outlets with 4,278 items (158 per outlet). Since 2005 there has been a 10% increase in shop numbers but 38% fewer ivory items on view (Martin 2005). These, however, are minimum figures as there were also sometimes spare items kept in drawers or in boxes on the side that were not on view, and thus not counted.

The Chinese prefer big beaded items, bangles, chopsticks, cigarette holders, large name seals and large disk pendants with a central hole, to locally carved items disliking the quality. The Gulf Arabs choose walking sticks, prayer beads (33 beads per strand), men's rings, animal figures and ivory jewellery, especially combined with silver.

Worked ivory prices had gone up overall since 2005 (Martin 2005) sometimes by 2.5 times. The cheapest items were still narrow ring bands and

earring studs, now for USD 3 each, while the most expensive was a pair of carved 60-cm tusks for USD 2,793 (Table 1). Some common objects, such as beaded items, are often sold retail by weight, generally from USD 25-30/g, using an electronic scale placed on the shop counter.

Only tribal Sudanese bangles were obviously old. These ivory bangles were given as a pair from a husband to his wife as a wedding present in the past; there were 75 on view for sale in Omdurman and 11 in Khartoum. No other antiques were seen for sale. The most numerous items for sale overall were pendants, bangles, figurines, beaded necklaces, rings and pen holders (Table 2).

Some old outlets had items that looked like they had been on the shelves for a while, but nearly all had been carved post-1990, thus illegal to sell (Martin 2005). A few owners said they were not replacing their ivory items with new ivory objects. For them, the heyday was over. Fewer Chinese men came to shop, and usually only one in ten buy, a vendor complained, and most come in groups, just for something to do. The economy was strong between 2000 and 2009, but Chinese visitor numbers fell in 2011 when Sudan and South Sudan became two countries. The lack of oil in Sudan and the completion of the Merowe dam also contributed to a slowing economy. The very few tourists who come to Sudan are mainly Europeans who essentially do not buy ivory. While business appeared to be slow in some of the older shops, there were others, those with the most ivory items, especially the smarter, recently established shops, that had a brisker trade and sold fresh, new ivory items, again predominantly to the Chinese. These included key rings of the new Sudan, produced after 2011.

In five outlets Chinese men were looking at ivory, sometimes haggling with the Sudanese vendors. One vendor said his boss had a machine at home for making the ivory items for sale in his shop and nearly all his customers were Chinese. Mass production has largely replaced carving. Now pendants followed by bangles are the main items seen (Table 2) as opposed to animal figurines followed by pendants in 2005 (Martin 2005). The number of bangles seen since 2005 had gone up 1.8 times as these are particularly popular with the Chinese.

Vendors in the newer outlets, especially, in contrast to some of the pessimistic old ivory dealers, were optimistic about the future ivory trade. They could obtain new raw ivory, unlike some of the vendors in the older shops. As well as big tusks made into large pen holders, there were very small tusks, very lightly carved or polished, demonstrating that whole families of elephants nowadays are killed for the illegal ivory trade.

Table 1. Retail prices for recently made ivory items on view for sale in Omdurman and Khartoum in April 2017

| Item | Size (cm) | Price range (USD) | Average price (USD) |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------------|---------------------|
| JEWELLERY | | | |
| Bangle | 1-3 | 11-279 | 132 |
| Bracelet, bead | 1-2 | 101-168 | 134 |
| Earring, pair | 1-3 | 3-11 | 7 |
| Necklace, bead | 0.5 | 30-45 | 36 |
| Necklace, bead | 1-2 | 56-335 | 147 |
| Pendant, small | 2-3 | 4-10 | 5 |
| Pendant, medium | 3-4 | 8-30 | 12 |
| Pendant, large | 4-6 | 14-45 | 31 |
| Prayer beads (33) | 1 | 84-168 | 130 |
| Ring, thin | 0.25 | 3 | 3 |
| Ring, man | 0.5-1 | 6-7 | 6 |
| FIGURINE/FIGURE | | | |
| Animal, thin | 5-10 | 6-14 | 12 |
| Animal | 10-15 | 95-251 | 145 |
| Animal | 15-20 | 42-279 | 130 |
| Human | 15 | 280-419 | 349 |
| TUSK | | | |
| Tip | 10 | 56 | 56 |
| Bridge | 20 | 196 | 196 |
| Tusk pair, light carving | 20 | 67 | 67 |
| Carved or polished | 25-30 | 112-168 | 140 |
| Tusk pair, carved | 30 | 391 | 391 |
| Carved or polished | 40 | 279 | 279 |
| Tusk, carved | 60 | 1,396 | 1,396 |
| Tusk pair, carved | 60 | 2,793 | 2,793 |
| Bridge | 75 | 2,235 | 2,235 |
| MISC. | | | |
| Baton 'soldier stick' | 50 | 223 | 223 |
| Belt buckle | 5-6 | 30-34 | 31 |
| Chopsticks, pair | 20 | 17-56 | 36 |
| Cigarette holder | 10 | 6-17 | 13 |
| Coptic cross | 15-16 | 84 | 84 |
| Cup, Chinese | 6 | 8-11 | 10 |
| Hair clip | 7 | 8-11 | 10 |
| Name seal | 7-8 x 2-3 | 45-112 | 65 |
| Key ring | 3-4 | 3-17 | 10 |
| Paper knife | 15-25 | 6-42 | 27 |
| Pen holder | 15-30 | 56-838 | 226 |
| Walking stick, ivory handle | 300 | 84-140 | 112 |
| Walking stick, full ivory | 300 | 559-1,397 | 1,006 |

Exchange rate: USD 1=17.9 Sudanese pounds (SDP), commonly used black market rate (official rate USD 1=15.8 SDP)

Table 2. Ivory items seen for retail sale in Omdurman and Khartoum in April 2017

| Item | Percentage of total |
|--|---------------------|
| Pendant | 41 |
| Bangle | 23 |
| Figurine/figure | 8 |
| Necklace | 6 |
| Ring | 5 |
| Pen/paint brush holder | 3 |
| Cigarette holder | 3 |
| Earring, pair | 3 |
| Name seal | 2 |
| Bracelet, big bead | 1 |
| Tusk | 1 |
| Chopsticks, pair | 1 |
| Key ring | 1 |
| Hair clip | 1 |
| Misc. Paper knife, prayer beads, walking stick, Coptic cross, comb, baton, cup | 1 |
| TOTAL | 100 |

Substitutes and alternatives to ivory in Omdurman and Khartoum

Camel bone is the main ivory substitute seen commonly in most souvenir outlets. The camels come mostly from the grassy Darfur region and are sold 'on the hoof' to Egypt where camel meat is preferred. Artisans in Egypt carve camel bones into figures, walking sticks and other artifacts, and there are many seen for sale in Sudan (Table 3), similar in appearance to worked ivory, but without the tell-tale criss-cross patterns. Vendors said the more simple items could be made in Omdurman. Camel bone items are a poor man's substitute with most items a fraction of the price of ivory (Table 3). The Chinese do not want camel bone. They especially like bangles, chopsticks, name seals, and big-beaded bracelets and necklaces that cannot be confused with or made from the thinner camel bone.

Ebony animal carvings, chopsticks and walking sticks were also for sale. The vendors said that the wood was from Sudan, but many carvings had come from Kenya. Ebony items were less expensive than camel bone. A full ebony walking stick averaged at

USD 13 compared with USD 76 for a camel bone one, and USD 1,000 for a full ivory one. Rich Arabs from the Gulf States, who also come to shop for ivory in Khartoum and Omdurman prefer ivory to substitutes, ivory being more valuable.

In one outlet there was a sack of big raw hippo teeth that had been recently bought wholesale for USD 59/kg for carving. In another shop, a polished small hippo tooth was USD 56 retail, but a similar unpolished one was USD 50. Other wildlife products seen were a pair of Ankole cow horns for USD 30, ostrich eggs (lightly carved) for around USD 16, stuffed young crocodiles for USD 42, young crocodile head ashtrays for an average of USD 10, a crocodile tooth for USD 3, a camel tooth in a silver clasp for USD 20, porcupine quills for USD 2, and a fox fur for USD 140. Rhino horn items were the most expensive alternative choice to ivory seen. On display in Khartoum there was a walking stick handle and a round amulet, both items sold by weight at USD 25/g. In Omdurman, a vendor said he had a full rhino horn, but then could not find it, saying his brother must have it. Rhino horn is thus still available, even if not usually seen.

Table 3. Ivory items seen for retail sale in Omdurman and Khartoum in April 2017

| Item | Size | Average price (USD) |
|--------------------------------|-------|---------------------|
| JEWELLERY | | |
| Bracelet | 0.5-1 | 11 |
| Earring, pair | 1-3 | 2 |
| Necklace | 0.5-1 | 14 |
| Pendant, small | 2-3 | 1 |
| Pendant, medium | 3-4 | 3 |
| Prayer beads (33) | 1 | 7 |
| Ring, thin | 0.25 | 2 |
| FIGURINE/FIGURE | | |
| Animal, thin | 10-15 | 12 |
| Animal | 30-40 | 40 |
| Human, thin | 10 | 4 |
| TUSK | | |
| Bridge | 15-20 | 8 |
| Bridge | 30 | 42 |
| MISC. | | |
| Cigarette holder | 10 | 2 |
| Key ring | 3-4 | 1 |
| Paper knife | 20 | 8 |
| Shoe horn | 10-15 | 8 |
| Walking stick with bone handle | 300 | 40 |
| Walking stick, full ivory | 300 | 76 |

Exchange rate: USD 1=17.9 Sudanese pounds (SDP), commonly used black market rate (official rate USD 1=15.8 SDP)

Ethiopia–Background

Historically, ivory carving was not common in Ethiopia, except for bangles worn by tribes in the southern region. In modern history, however, Ethiopians learned to carve ivory in Addis Ababa, making an array of items for the western market: large human figures and busts, animal figurines, chess sets, candlesticks, combs, paper knives, pipes and bangles. Since at least the 1940s, ivory items were seen for sale around Churchill Road in the city centre (Richard Pankhurst, historian, pers. comm. June 1999). The main buyers in the mid-1980s were the British and Americans. But after the 1990

CITES international ban came into effect, French, Italians, Chinese, Japanese and South Koreans bought most of the worked ivory, willing to risk smuggling it back to their home countries.

During an ivory study in 1993, raw ivory in the capital was available wholesale for USD 30-50/kg newly poached from elephants in southern Ethiopia. We visited one workshop in Addis Ababa where about 20 artisans were carving ivory (Vigne and Martin 1993, Martin and Vigne 1993) using electric drills, band saws and hand tools. New ivory items were for sale although Ethiopian legislation did not allow post-1990 ivory carvings to be sold (Vigne and Martin 1993).

In 1999, Esmond Martin and I counted 54 shops with 9,996 ivory items (on view) for sale in Addis Ababa (Martin and Stiles 2000). In 2004, a TRAFFIC survey counted 3,557 ivory items on display in the capital. TRAFFIC and WWF assisted the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) with an audit, market closure and follow up monitoring, and the CITES Enforcement Officer attended a workshop supported by WWF (Taye Teferi, TRAFFIC, pers. comm. June 2017). Consequently, in early 2005, 262 officials confiscated 500 kg of ivory and other wildlife products from 66 retail outlets with criminal charges made to the shop owners. A follow up survey shortly afterwards found only 78 ivory objects on display for sale (Milledge and Abdi 2005).

In 2008 we monitored the retail ivory market in Addis Ababa once again. The wholesale price of raw ivory had been stable in the 1990s, but from 1999 to 2008 it had tripled. Growing demand from Chinese workers in Ethiopia re-fuelled the ivory trade, as in neighbouring Sudan. For 2-5 kg tusks the wholesale price on average was up to about USD 120/kg (Vigne and Martin 2008a, Vigne and Martin 2008b, Vigne and Martin 2008c). We counted 44 retail outlets with 1,433 ivory items on view, mostly still around Churchill Road and the Mercato (a famous large market area). We saw 149 pairs of chopsticks for around USD 16 (compared with USD 139 in China in 2004). Chinese workers were buying ivory items to sell back home. We saw brown paper bags stuffed with brand new name seals, cigarette holders, chopsticks and jewellery, along with more new ivory items in drawers amounting to 706 more items (Vigne and Martin 2006c). Most of these items appeared processed and mass produced. There were also the thick old bangles, often joined in sets of up to four, from southern Ethiopia. Vendors said it was easy just to wear ivory jewellery out of the country or to put them in one's suitcase (not hand luggage due to the x-rays). We met the Chinese Defence Attache who said that the Chinese Ambassador in Ethiopia informed Chinese company managers to warn their workers not to buy ivory items as they were illegal and they would be caught at the airport and prosecuted. But with the growing numbers of Chinese, demand nevertheless was high for ivory items.

In mid-2009 we returned to Addis Ababa and counted 37 retail outlets with ivory items on display for sale (Martin and Vigne 2010). Only four out of 34

curio shops inspected in the Mercato had a few small ivory items for sale. Overall in the city, we counted 1,068 ivory items on display with a further 272 hidden from public view in bags (Vigne and Martin 2010). New luxury hotels were mushrooming near the Bole International Airport, a new African hub for transit passengers from across Africa, returning to China. Vendors here, mostly young and inexperienced shop girls, were helpful and seemed oblivious to the illegalities of ivory they were offering for sale, saying they were for Chinese guests in transit.

However, once again, a concerted effort was made by officials. On 25 November 2009 authorities raided 81 outlets seizing 191 kg of ivory items and other wildlife products with shop owners fined, starting from 5,000-9,000 birr (USD 393-708) (Vigne and Martin 2010). Six years later more ivory items were confiscated from the shops in Addis Ababa. Then, on 20 March 2015, at a ceremony in the capital, several diplomats were invited to attend an ivory burning (as well as other wildlife products), when 6.1 tonnes of ivory were burned in the Gulele Botanical Garden. This had followed the arrest of 106 people with ivory in their possession at Bole International Airport, and nearly all were Chinese, who had been staying in the many hotels where transit passengers await their connections back to China (Neme 2015).

Results regarding ivory in Addis Ababa in May 2017

On my return to Addis Ababa two years after the confiscations, had any vendors started once again to sell ivory, was my research enquiry? The May 2017 survey found no ivory on display at all. The Mercato vendors displayed ebony carvings and ebony bead bracelets. One vendor said his father was a carver and employed nine ebony carvers in his workshop and they now use mostly machines to make items quickly for the Chinese. They no longer make or sell any ivory items due to the strict rules against it, the vendors adamantly stated. Vendors around Churchill Road explained that the punishment was now too high and nobody dared sell ivory anymore. The Chinese fear being caught at the airport so instead buy ebony bracelets and animal figures. A hotel vendor remarked ivory items could only be found on the black market, but that was also too risky. Buying any ivory item was not advisable for foreigners. An antique dealer, whom I had visited on four earlier ivory studies, said he no longer sells ivory, this is because if a customer is caught at the airport even with one antique ivory bangle, the officials would trace the purchase back to the vendor

and take him to court. He added that the fines are at least USD 500.

Meanwhile, the country's economy has strengthened, development like many countries in the East African community is booming, with Chinese investors modernizing roads, railways and power plants. Although a land-locked country, as Sudan now is, industrialization is adding to its economic growth. Tourism has grown substantially, following Kenya's tourist decline in 2013 (due to the al-Shabab shopping mall attack). The souvenir outlets in April 2017 were busy with Western customers, and the lack of ivory sales had not impaired business.

Substitutes and alternatives to ivory for sale in Addis Ababa

There were virtually no items made of bone seen for sale, unlike before, when bone figurines, salad spoons and jewellery were common in the shops. Vendors said these too had been confiscated and destroyed in 2015, along with the ivory. Vendors now feared to sell any such ivory look-alike products. Synthetic fake ivory jewellery was hardly seen either. Some Chinese shoppers in the Mercato were buying tiger eye bead bracelets, but ebony was the most popular. A vendor scraped an ebony bead with a knife to prove to a Chinese customer it was not stained wood but pure ebony. More valuable items for sale are now opal and other stones liked by the Chinese as souvenirs.

Discussion

Some of the old souvenir shop vendors in Omdurman/Khartoum are selling less ivory than in the past, with government pressure to stop them. Elephants in South Sudan have mostly been wiped out, previously the Sudanese traders' main source for tusks. The number of Chinese working in Sudan has much reduced following the separation of Sudan and South Sudan into two countries. But new tusks are still being smuggled into Sudan, originating mostly from central Africa. In Khartoum, several recently established souvenir shops were selling ivory items mainly to Chinese and a few Arabs from Gulf States, saying that their ivory trade was profitable. They stated that demand (by the Chinese) for worked ivory over the past ten years

had continued to grow and sales were up for ivory. There was an alarming number of newly processed ivory items seen on display for sale. Unlike in Ethiopia, inspections and confiscations are not occurring, and even souvenir shop signboards often promoted ivory for sale. There were several jewellery items for sale in the international airport, that vendors freely admitted were ivory, and which had the distinctive criss-cross pattern.

Ethiopia's success story, in contrast, sets an excellent example for Sudan to emulate. Effective law enforcement is possible with enough collaboration and cooperation amongst the major players, including NGOs, and with CITES support. In 2014 Ethiopia issued a National Ivory Action Plan outlining a review of laws and ways to improve law enforcement in compliance with CITES requirements and recommendations, to combat illegal wildlife trade. By increasing the penalties and reinforcing the judiciary to take a stronger stance, with magistrate training, along with vital consular support at the airport, people are scared to travel out of the country with illegal ivory any more. There is now accountability as opposed to easily bribable corrupt officials being witnessed in many countries. This success gives kudos to Ethiopia, and the China Embassy efforts in Ethiopia must also be acknowledged. The China Embassy, according to the First Secretary, Xiao Wenrong (pers. comm. April 2017), has become increasingly active in efforts to curtail Chinese demand for ivory in Ethiopia, warning their citizens more strongly that ivory trade is forbidden and punishments serious.

While improvements have been massive, there are still ways that illegal ivory is being smuggled out of Africa. Ethiopian vendors commented, that Chinese flying on Ethiopian Airlines from, for example, Kenya and Tanzania, could still easily carry ivory items in luggage, which is kept in transit. Officials examine luggage entering the airport as opposed to transit luggage where an effective presence of detection dogs is still needed.

Another area of concern in Ethiopia is elephant poaching, and the Elephant Crisis Fund has stepped in with invaluable help. Regional wildlife trafficking between Sudan and Ethiopia and other borders also requires much collaborative support and funding.

Conclusion

Ethiopia's recent success in closing down the illegal retail ivory trade in Addis Ababa is inspirational. It is due to the combined efforts of Ethiopian officials, conservationists and embassy support, and the Chinese Embassy in particular, and all must be commended. Law enforcement

is working against the retail ivory trade in the country. In Addis Ababa, vendors and customers no longer risk selling or buying ivory to take out of the country as before.

Ethiopia's economic progress is strongly supported by the industrial world and the country is moving forward. This is in contrast to Sudan that remains largely excluded from the general world economic system. Many traders in Sudan are thus left to make their own ways to make money, including illicit activities.

The successful law enforcement measures undertaken in Ethiopia can be emulated in Sudan to end the illegal ivory industry in Khartoum/Omdurman where it continues unabated. With similar legislative improvements and training on inspections and confiscations of ivory in all shops, and with greater efforts to stop and punish those with ivory leaving Khartoum International Airport, the Sudan ivory industry can and should be stopped.

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