



WESTERN POLITICIAN HOLDS AFRICAN WILDLIFE HOSTAGE – TOTAL DESTRUCTION

(Original Text)

By Emmanuel Koro

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If it was a movie, it would focus on a top British politician's 21st century moment of madness when he chose not to listen to wildlife management experts but to the clueless animal rights groups fundraising industry; whose figureheads ill-advised him to ban trophy hunting imports into his country and unwittingly destroyed African wildlife.

Movie-goers worldwide would want to watch that movie out of curiosity to find out exactly why a powerful politician from a rich and former colonial master now returns to Africa to haunt its wildlife and people instead of 'healing' the continent. This is not a movie but a sad reality.

The impact of the British Government's worldwide trophy hunting imports ban Bill, including trophies of Africa's big five (elephant, lion, rhino, buffalo and leopard) is not going to save but wipe out wildlife on the continent. The trophy hunting imports ban Bill will take away incentives to conserve wildlife and its habitat. It is public knowledge that African people don't conserve wildlife if it doesn't benefit them. They would rather poach it to extinction. Despite this sad reality, the British Government is going ahead with the trophy hunting imports ban Bill. Incredible and insane!

"The British Government's failure to consult African people before introducing the Bill shows that it still has racist and neo-colonial attitudes towards Africa," said Mr Ishmael Chaukura of Masoka hunting community of Zimbabwe. "The Bill will take away hunting benefits. When that happens, African hunting communities will see absolutely no value in wildlife. Therefore, we will convert national parks and wildernesses areas into agricultural land. This means we will have to kill all our wildlife and clear forests to make way for agricultural production. The British Government should take responsibility for this tragic destruction of African wildlife and its habitat."

Observers say “it is so sad that the wife of an important British Government leader and her husband are curiously holding hostage African wildlife. Totally compromising wildlife and habitat conservation. Also, compromising the sovereign and human rights of African people to benefit from the sustainable use of their wildlife through international hunting.”

Therefore, one wonders where the British values to uphold human and sovereign rights have suddenly disappeared in the 21st century. Sadly the country’s parliamentarians have also been fooled into believing the animal rights groups fundraising industry’s lies that international hunting harms wildlife. The British Government’s plan to introduce the harmful trophy hunting imports ban Bill has sadly crushed African people’s hopes to continue using international hunting income for wildlife and habitat conservation.

In what is increasingly viewed as Western wildlife management dictatorship in Africa, the British Government never bothered to consult African people or visit African hunting communities to find out how international hunting income is supporting the wildlife and habitat conservation. Hunting revenue is also bringing socio-economic development benefits to African hunting communities. A hunting revenue built school in Zimbabwe’s Masoka hunting community has already produced medical doctors, engineers, teachers, nurses, technicians and accountants.

[“The ban has been promised by the prime minister \[Boris Johnson\] himself at the despatch box,”](#) said Sir Roger Gale MP, chairman of the all-party parliamentary group on banning trophy hunting and patron of the Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation.

The trophy hunting imports ban Bill was first read in Parliament in January 2022 and will be read for the second time on Friday 18 March 2022.

“This ban is an ‘excellent’ idea if destroying our wildlife is what the UK Government has in mind”, said Mr Pabst a German who operates in Zimbabwe’s Sango Conservancy and who has made an immense contribution to wildlife conservation that includes the translocation of 100 elephants using his personal finances.

He has warned the British Government that “it is a form of neo-colonialism” if it proceeds with the Bill without conducting site visits to African hunting communities and also without consulting African politicians, chiefs, rural councils, and the local population.

“Sixty members of the British Parliament are needed to vote against the Bill in order to block it,” said chairman of Safari Club International, Switzerland Office, Mr Antoine Spillmann.

Meanwhile, over 100 leading wildlife scientists and conservationists worldwide, wrote an open letter to the British Government this year, warning it against introducing the trophy imports ban Bill because it takes away both the revenue and incentives to conserve African wildlife.

“Although supporters of trophy hunting import bans claim such legislation will save African animals, these bans will ultimately achieve the exact opposite, resulting in unprecedented rates of habitat loss, with consequent wildlife depletion,” said President of African Professional Hunters Association, Mr Mike Angelides.

[CITES allows the hunting of all wildlife, including endangered wildlife](#), as long as it's not harmful to the hunted population. IUCN, CITES and WWF acknowledge hunting as a necessary wildlife management tool. Hunting doesn't have a detrimental impact on wildlife, as only 0.5-3% of the population is hunted.

Restrictions on wild trade in general, including international hunting will make the UN fail to achieve *2030 Sustainable Goals* (SDGs) in Africa,” said Chieftainess Rebecca Banika, who represents the wildlife-rich Chobe District of Botswana at the House of Chiefs that advises Parliament.

The SDGs, also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

“African people will remain poor if they can’t fully benefit from their natural resources, including wildlife through hunting and they will have no incentive to conserve wildlife without benefits,” said Chieftainess Banika, protesting the British trophy hunting imports ban Bill. “Therefore, UN should totally stop dreaming about achieving SDGs in Africa by 2030.”

About the writer:

Emmanuel Koro is a Johannesburg-based international award-winning independent environmental journalist who writes extensively on environment and development issues in Africa.