

Press release: Boris Johnson teams up with former England cricketer Kevin Pietersen to tackle illegal wildlife trade

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and former England cricketer and wildlife campaigner Kevin Pietersen have today (Friday 4 May) teamed up for a visit to see the important role Border Force plays in fighting the illegal wildlife trade at Heathrow Airport.

After receiving a briefing from illegal wildlife trade experts in the Border Force team, Mr Johnson and Mr Pietersen were shown confiscated items which people have tried to smuggle through customs and are now housed in Heathrow Airport's 'dead shed'.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

The illegal wildlife trade is a vile and loathsome crime with organised gangs and criminal scum at the very heart of it. Not only is it wiping out wildlife populations, it is also robbing communities of sustainable incomes and damaging economies across Africa and Asia, all for the senseless demand in live animals and wildlife products for trinkets and quack medicines.

Border Force is doing incredible work stopping these items from ending up on the black market here in the UK but more can and must be done on a global scale if we are going to stamp this crime out for good. That's why we are bringing world leaders together for an international conference this autumn, to find a way to save our charismatic megafauna and endangered species before it is too late.

I applaud the work that Kevin and other wildlife campaigners are doing to raise awareness of the plight of endangered rhinos across Africa and Asia.

Former England cricketer Kevin Pietersen said:

Stopping the illegal wildlife trade is the only way we will save those endangered species which are on the brink of extinction.

In South Africa close to three rhinos are illegally killed every single day. It's shameful that the world is just sitting back and watching as whole species are being wiped out.

I support the vital work going on by governments around the world

to tackle this issue head on but we need action now to halt the demand for the illegal wildlife trade before we see species wiped out for good.

October's conference will focus on tackling the illegal wildlife trade as a serious organised crime, building coalitions and closing illegal wildlife markets.

Further information

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