

Press release: UK fingerprinting kits to help in fight against illegal wildlife trade

Foreign Office Minister Mark Field visited the London office of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) today for the official handover of 100 forensic fingerprinting kits to fight the illegal wildlife trade.

The kits, specially designed to lift fingerprints from ivory, have been donated by IFAW and will be distributed to countries attending the upcoming London Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference in October.

The new fingerprinting technique, developed by the Metropolitan Police and King's College London, can reveal prints up to 28 days after poachers have touched the ivory, compared to the two or three days with current conventional powders. This will significantly increase the chances of identifying the criminals behind the illegal ivory trade.

The innovative technology will be used by law enforcement agencies around the world to test illegally traded wildlife products for fingerprints and bring criminals to justice. The Foreign Office has been working with IFAW to build links with priority countries and to share training and expertise with local law enforcement officers and rangers.

Foreign Office Minister Mark Field said:

These new fingerprinting kits are a fantastic example of British innovation and technology being used by law enforcement agencies around the world to put criminals involved in the illegal wildlife trade behind bars. The Foreign Office and IFAW have partnered up to distribute kits and boost training for rangers and police in countries in Africa and Asia already, and we hope these additional kits will be put to good use by those countries who will pledge to take action at our upcoming conference.

The illegal wildlife trade is devastating endangered species populations around the world, from the African elephant to the Asian pangolin. This is a serious organised crime, depriving local communities of sustainable livelihoods and lining the pockets of corrupt middlemen and criminal gangs. We must act now if we are to stop it in its tracks and save endangered species before it is too late.

These kits are already making a real difference in the fight against the illegal wildlife trade. When the original trial kit was put into use in

Kenya, it helped to secure evidence in four cases, which ultimately resulted in 15 arrests, including five police officers, and the seizure of 11 elephant tusks and 50 pieces of worked ivory.

Philip Mansbridge, UK Director at IFAW, said:

These pioneering ivory fingerprinting kits will aid wildlife crime investigators on the frontline in Africa and Asia, providing them with an additional tool in their vital work to catch elephant poachers, thus helping to safeguard elephants and other threatened wildlife from poaching for future generations.

This ground-breaking new method of fingerprinting ivory uses a small-scale magnetic powder, meaning it is now possible to detect fingerprints on an elephant's tusk for up to a month after it has been handled, as opposed to just 24-48 hours using traditional techniques.

Working with Kings College and the Metropolitan Police, IFAW has so far deployed around 100 ivory fingerprinting kits in 23 countries to help gather evidence to stop elephant poachers. This is just one part of IFAW's global efforts to protect elephants and the places they call home. We are grateful to the Rt. Hon Mark Field MP and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for helping us showcase and distribute these kits to attendees of the upcoming London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade in October.

Notes to editors

- The ivory fingerprinting kit was researched and developed by the Metropolitan Police Forensic Imaging Team and Fingerprinting Department and also with Dr Leon Barron from the Forensic Department at King's College London, so is a London based partnership between the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), the Metropolitan Police and King's College London.
- The success of the new kit relies on the reduction in size of the powder used, which requires less sweat residue for the powder to adhere to and enhances the marks, giving better definition. It is also inert and allows DNA samples to be taken from the fingerprints and could become a vital tool in stopping the illegal wildlife trade. Further tests have shown it also works on hippo ivory, polished rhino horn, lion and tiger teeth and claws and even pangolin scales.
- The illegal wildlife trade is a serious organised crime with revenues worth up to £17bn a year, more than the combined income of the Central African Republic, Liberia and Burundi.
- Around 20,000 African elephants are killed by poachers each year. Savanna elephant numbers have declined by a third from 2007 to 2014 and

over 1,000 rhinos were poached in South Africa last year alone. Wildlife in many parts of Africa is at crisis levels.

- The UK will be hosting a conference on 11-12 October this year, bringing together leaders from both supply and demand countries so we can work together to stamp out the illegal wildlife trade for good. The conference will agree action to tackle IWT across three broad themes:
 - Tackling IWT as a serious organised crime, including increasing collaboration across continents to tackle IWT-associated illicit financial flows and corruption;
 - Building coalitions, particularly through increased engagement with the private sector, NGOs and academia, and;
 - Closing markets, by sharing successful approaches for reducing the demand for illegal wildlife products, including ivory.

Further information

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Mark Field [@MarkFieldUK](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
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[Press release: Unemployment down by over 1.1 million since 2010](#)

Britain's unemployment rate has not been lower since the mid-1970s, as [official figures released by the Office for National Statistics](#) show it's fallen to 4.0%, with 1.15 million fewer unemployed people since 2010.

The UK saw a sixth continuous month of real terms pay increases, with regular wages up by 2.9% in July, or 0.5% against CPIH inflation.

Meanwhile the employment rate remains high, at 75.5%, with over 3.3 million more people in work since 2010 and youth unemployment at a record low, falling by over 45% since 2010.

1.45 million more children are living in a home with all adults in work, and the proportion of children living in a household with no working adults has fallen by 33% in the UK since 2010, reaching a record low and taking tens of thousands of children out of poverty.

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Esther McVey, said:

Since 2010 we have delivered significant growth in jobs, and in the last 6 months we've seen real terms wage growth.

We haven't had a lower unemployment rate for over 40 years and I'm especially proud that youth unemployment is at a record low, falling by over 45% since 2010 – opening up career opportunities for our next generation.

In the EU we see unemployment rates over double those of the UK. This government is transforming this country into a great working nation. Ready and prepared for the future challenges after Brexit.

Minister of State for Employment Alok Sharma said:

With unemployment rate still at its lowest level in 43 years, it is good to see that for the sixth month in a row wages have grown faster than inflation helping to put more money in people's pockets. In the last quarter regular pay is up by 2.9%, 0.5% above inflation.

Households across the country are benefiting from the security of being in work, and with increasing wages and GDP growth of 0.6% last quarter we are delivering an economy that supports working people.

We've taken millions out of paying income tax altogether, and by raising the National Living Wage have helped deliver the fastest pay rise for the lowest earners in 20 years.

Today's (11 September 2018) figures also show:

- older workers also continue to find work as the number of workers aged 50 and over is at a record high of 10.25 million
- the female employment rate remains at a near record high at 71.0%
- since 2010, the vast majority of jobs have been in full-time, permanent roles
- since 2010, there has been an increase of 3.75 million in private sector jobs

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[News story: Human Rights Council 39: Sri Lanka Core Group Statement](#)

This statement is delivered on behalf of Germany, Macedonia, Montenegro and the UK as members of the Sri Lanka core group.

We welcome further recent steps Sri Lanka has taken to implement commitments made to the Council in 2015 and 2017. We welcome the Government's continued engagement with the UN system and actions to implement its National Reconciliation Action Plan and Peacebuilding Priority Plan. We applaud the Office on Missing Persons' commencement of work and encourage everyone able

to advance or contribute to its work to do so. We hope the Government will establish an Office for Reparations quickly. We also welcome the return of further private land in the north, and commitments to return more military-occupied land to civilian ownership.

Nonetheless, the pace of progress on important areas remains much slower than many hoped for. As time passes, lack of progress in delivering key steps risks undermining reconciliation efforts.

In co-sponsoring resolution 30/1, Sri Lanka recognised that national accountability mechanisms are essential to dealing with the past, and to restoring confidence among its communities. These have yet to be established. The Prevention of Terrorism Act has not been replaced with a law that accords with international standards. And, though processes to consider reform to important provisions of the Constitution, including devolution of political authority, has been ongoing since 2016, a way forward has not been found. We are concerned by recent reports of harassment of and attacks on human rights defenders.

Our view remains that, with determined leadership and a clear time-bound action plan, this Government can make more progress towards delivering its Council commitments, and that doing so will better position Sri Lanka and its people to enjoy a more enduring reconciliation and prosperity. We urge Sri Lanka to prioritise and drive forward implementation of resolutions 30/1 and 34/1, before the Council next considers Sri Lanka in March.

[News story: Dounreay site demonstration exercise 12 September 2018](#)

The Dounreay site alert will be sounded during the course of the exercise.

This notice is to inform the public not to take any action when the alarm sounds.

Any queries in relation to this notice should be made to Leslie Mackay 01847 802535.

Press release: Military charity successfully reconstructed as a result of charity regulator's inquiry

A charity originally set up to establish memorials to D-Day veterans, and which now supports former members of the armed forces, has been successfully reconstructed as a result of a Charity Commission inquiry that facilitated the appointment of new trustees.

The Commission's existing engagement with [The Veterans Charity](#) escalated to a formal inquiry in April 2015, after three individuals connected to the charity, including the chief executive, were arrested by British Transport Police over concerns about the charity's fundraising practices. The publication of the report was delayed as the Commission awaited the outcome of the trial of the charity's chief executive for charges of theft and fraud by abuse of position; that trial ended when the judge ordered the jury to find him not guilty due to a lack of evidence.

The Commission used its powers on opening the inquiry to safeguard the charity's assets by freezing the bank accounts; while that freezing order was in place, the regulator monitored and authorised all of the charity's expenditure, ensuring that each transaction was necessary and a proper application of the charity's funds. It also exercised other statutory powers to ensure that funds collected from the public in particular through an annual event known as The Forces March were adequately protected while reconstruction took place.

During the early stages of the inquiry, the Commission identified a number of shortcomings in the charity's administration, including that the charity's finances were under the sole control of the chief executive, with limited oversight by the trustees. For a significant period of time the chief executive had sole control of the charity's bank accounts, including its cheque book, debit card and online banking facility.

The inquiry found that nearly £38,000 of the charity's expenditure had been withdrawn as cash during the period between January 2010 and May 2015, equating to over £500 each month. The inquiry was informed by the charity that the invoices for expenditure before 2013 were lost as a result of an office move. The inquiry was advised that cash withdrawals were used to repay subsistence claims for expenditure on charity business including accommodation, fuel, event costs such as the purchase of stocks, and support for beneficiaries. However there was very little supporting documentary evidence to confirm how these charitable funds had been applied.

In a report published today, the regulator concludes that the trustees of the charity at the time the inquiry opened were responsible for mismanagement in the administration of the charity, after failing to properly oversee the charity's chief executive or implement effective financial controls or

maintain adequate financial records.

Notwithstanding these concerns, the inquiry was satisfied as a result of its investigative work that the charity was undertaking work to provide urgent short term support for veterans in need. It therefore sought volunteers from the charity sector to assist in the charity's reconstruction. Three people stepped forward to help – two of whom remain as trustees today.

The Commission revoked its protective measures in early 2016 following the strengthening of the charity's governance and financial controls. The Commission is satisfied that its original regulatory concerns have been addressed following a further inspection of records and meeting with the trustees.

Harvey Grenville, Head of Investigations and Enforcement at the Charity Commission, says:

This charity has undertaken valuable work to support veterans in urgent short term need, and our report acknowledges the new trustees' contribution to the reconstruction of this charity. This is a collaborative model with sector professionals which we would like to see further developed to assist the reconstruction of certain charities which are in difficulty.

The charity's work prior to this reconstruction was undermined by poor management on the part of the charity's trustees at the time. This was a charity without adequate systems and controls in place, and limited oversight of the chief executive by the trustees. This is unacceptable, and we are critical of the trustees at that time for their failings.

When the public give to charity, they have a right to expect that their donations will be carefully managed, and be applied solely in furtherance of the charity's aims. Trustees may hand day-to-day operations to staff – but they must retain oversight, and ultimately, they are always responsible for everything that happens in their charity.

I am grateful, especially to the new trustees, for their hard work in turning the charity around, and ensuring its processes and systems are strengthened so that the charity's work can continue.

The investigation concludes with the publication of this report. The [full report](#) is available on gov.uk.

Ends

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