

Speech: Minister Mark Field's speech at the Wildlife Crime Reception, House of Commons

Introduction

Good afternoon and thank you to Zac Goldsmith for hosting us, and to International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) for giving me the opportunity to engage with you today.

As we all know, the spectre of wildlife poaching has been with us for decades – I remember hearing about the imminent danger to elephant and rhino populations almost 4 decades ago when I was still at school.

Effect of internet on IWT

What has really changed things and accelerated the urgency of the issue in recent years is the internet. Criminal networks caught on pretty quickly that they could harness the internet to create a marketplace that is not simply local or regional. It is global.

It means that the scale of the illegal trade in wildlife has really taken off. This criminality is now thought to be worth up to £17 billion a year. To give you an illustration of the scale of the slaughter – in just 7 years from 2007 to 2014, Savannah elephant populations are thought to have declined by almost a third.

That sad statistic alone equates to around 144,000 elephants – if they stood trunk to tail they would stretch from here to John O Groats! Or was it Land's End? Well, either way I think you get the point!. It is not just elephants – the illegal wildlife trade is decimating a huge range of species, from the pangolin, killed for medicine and food, to the gentle Sumatran orangutan, of which there are now fewer than 8,000 now left.

Baby orangutan are trapped to be kept as pets. Tragically, for each and every animal reaching market, as many as 5 other die in transit. These crimes not only threaten irreplaceable wildlife with extinction. They not only leave countries and communities bereft of the iconic animals that help define them, and that could sustain livelihoods long into the future.

This illegal trade also fuels, and is fuelled by, corruption. So these criminals are also undermining sustainable development, good governance and the rule of law. This is why it is so vital that we put a stop to the illegal wildlife trade, and close down the online marketplaces for illegal wildlife products.

UK action

This government is playing a leading role at home and on the international stage. Today, my colleague the Environment Secretary, Michael Gove, is introducing the [Ivory Bill in the House of Commons](#) – an important step in highlighting the UK's rejection of this horrible trade.

International action

We are also taking the fight to the poachers and traffickers. Over these past 4 years, the UK government has committed £26 million to tackle the illegal wildlife trade. The British military have provided tracker training for park rangers in key African states, and we have funded the expansion of INTERPOL's operations to track and intercept shipments of illegal wildlife products, including ivory and rhino horn.

The only way to really shut down illegal wildlife trade for good is for countries to work together, so we are also strengthening international partnerships.

IWT conference

In [2014 we hosted the ground-breaking London conference](#) that was praised as a turning point in global co-operation in this field. It secured ambitious agreements from more than 40 governments to take urgent, coordinated action.

To build on all this recent progress we are bringing the conference back to London this October. Please be assured we have even higher ambitions this time.

We will focus on 3 primary objectives:

- first – treating the illegal wildlife trade as a serious organised crime
- second – building coalitions of allies who share our aims
- finally – closing markets for illegal products

Closing online space

As the Adessium report makes clear: we urgently need to close down online marketplaces for illegal wildlife products. I commend IFAW, WWF and TRAFFIC for the progress they made bringing together an alliance of online companies in March to commit to an 80% reduction in the online sale of illegal wildlife products by 2020.

It is encouraging that over 20 companies, including big names like Ebay, Pinterest, Facebook and Microsoft have already signed up. I hope more will do so, and that this global initiative leads to the end of illegal wildlife sales online.

Innovations

I believe strongly that by working together, and by using the latest technology, we can – and we must – turn the tide on the illegal wildlife trade. Innovations like the ivory fingerprinting kit developed by Dr Leon Barron of King's College London, and Mark Moseley of the Metropolitan Police, will make a huge difference.

With this new technology, enforcement agencies will be able to capture better quality fingerprints from ivory and catch more of the culprits.

I congratulate Leon and Mark, both of whom are here today, on their innovation, and I am delighted to be able to announce that thanks to a generous donation from IFAW, we will be handing out kits to every country that attends the [illegal wildlife trade conference](#) in October.

Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen, imagination, collaboration and commitment like this will help us stop the traffickers. It will not be quick or easy, but we have a range of committed individuals, organisations and governments alongside us.

Our October conference is a great chance to bolster our forces. I look forward to working with you in the lead up to it and beyond. There is no time to lose. Let's work together to stamp out this miserable, criminal trade.

[News story: Scotland voted decisively in 2014 to remain part of the UK](#)

Mr Mundell said:

Scotland voted decisively in 2014 to remain part of the UK. That decision should be respected. The public do not want another divisive independence referendum.

We want to work with the Scottish Government to maximise the opportunities our exit from the European Union will bring. We should all put our energies into making sure we get the right deal for Scotland and the rest of the UK as we leave the EU.

[Press release: Don't use the hard shoulder as a naughty step!](#)

The shocking action on the side of the M4 near Bristol was revealed by Highways England today as the company released a list of excuses given to its traffic officers by drivers who had wrongly stopped on motorways.

Other excuses included a family cooking a meal and someone getting out of a taxi to spend a penny.

But CCTV footage reminds drivers why stopping on the hard shoulder also presents a risk. As many people set out on journeys this bank holiday and half term holidays the answer is to be prepared.

[A narrow escape when an out of control car skidded across the motorway.](#)

Simon Jones, Highways England, Regional Director South East said:

We want everyone to get to their destinations safely. But some people put themselves at risk. The advice is simple: Be prepared. Check your vehicle before you set out to avoid unnecessary breakdowns; don't stop except in an emergency; and if you have to stop, make sure you know what to do.

Drivers often think the hard shoulder is a safe place to stop but over 100 people are killed or injured on the hard shoulder every year. We don't want you to become one of those statistics; we want you to stay safe.

Drivers can get advice about [how to check their vehicles](#) before setting out:

If hot weather is forecast drivers are advised to carry plenty of water to drink.

What to do in an emergency

Always try to exit the motorway immediately if your vehicle is damaged or experiences difficulties. If that's not possible, move into the nearest place of relative safety.

On most motorways this will be the hard shoulder. But on a smart motorway there may not always be a hard shoulder, or the hard shoulder may be open to traffic. In these cases you'll see emergency areas spaced regularly along the motorway. Make your way to the nearest one.

You should follow these steps:

- Use an emergency area if you are able to reach one safely. These are

- marked with blue signs featuring an orange SOS telephone symbol on them.
- If you can leave your vehicle safely, contact Highways England via the roadside emergency telephone provided in all emergency areas. We will either send a traffic officer to help you, or set the motorway signs to temporarily clear lane 1 to assist you to rejoin the motorway.
 - If you cannot get to an emergency area but the vehicle can be driven, move it to the hard shoulder (where provided) or as close to the nearside verge or other nearside boundary as possible.
 - In all cases, switch on your hazard warning lights.

If you stop in the nearside lane next to a hard shoulder or verge and feel you are able to exit safely with any occupants, consider exiting your vehicle via the nearside (left hand) door, and wait behind the safety barrier, if there is one and safe to do so.

If it is not possible to get out of your vehicle safely, or there is no other place of relative safety to wait then you should stay in your vehicle with your seat belt on and dial '999' if you have access to a working mobile phone.

For advice on how to drive on motorways, including during an emergency, [visit our guidance page.](#)

Excuses given to Highways England traffic officers by drivers who have wrongly stopped include:

- naughty step – A traffic officer on routine patrol came across a child walking outside of a vehicle walking alongside the motorway on the M4 near Bristol. The car occupants had given the child 'time out' for playing up.
- nice day for a walk – Traffic officers came across an abandoned LGV in a live lane on the M1 near to Northampton Motorway Services. The driver returned 15 minutes later. Apparently he would rather walk into the services rather than use the lorry park.
- hungry – Traffic officers from Dartford found a family congregated on the hard shoulder, cooking a meal as they were hungry.
- festive feast – a crew who had stopped to investigate a car stopped on the hard shoulder of the M6 between with no hazard lights on came across a driver eating a mince pie. She had passed the Stafford South Motorway Services a couple of miles back.
- sleeping dangerously – Traffic officers found the driver of an LGV fast asleep on a verge of the M60. His vehicle was blocking an emergency access route near Cheadle.
- lost – Traffic officers stopped to assist a driver on the hard shoulder of the M1 near Mansfield. She had stopped to look for directions to the crematorium and was ringing her husband for assistance.
- sat nav sagas – A patrol came across a stationary vehicle with no hazard lights on in foggy conditions on the M1 between Chesterfield and Mansfield. The driver walked back up the embankment and got back into the car, which had three passengers, as the traffic officer approached. He had stopped in an emergency area after losing mobile signal for his sat nav.

- nature calls – A minicab which appeared to be a broken down in a live lane on the M25 had in fact stopped for a passenger to relieve their bladder on the exit slip road going towards Staines-upon-Thames.
- potty break – Traffic officers came across a family who had stopped their vehicle on the hard shoulder of the M6 between Oddendale and Penrith so that a child could use a potty.
- text that can't wait – A patrol stopped with a vehicle on the hard shoulder of the M56 near to Chester Motorway Services. The driver was waiting to receive a text and then going to respond.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[News story: Business-academic partnerships: apply now](#)

Up to £40 million of funding is available for businesses to work with an academic or research organisation and graduate on a [Knowledge Transfer Partnership](#).

Businesses can apply for funding to bring in a graduate to collaborate on an innovation project. They will support you to translate academic thinking into business change, growth and development.

The project can focus on any technology or industry area. It can last between 12 and 36 months, depending on what it is and the needs of your business.

Before applying, you should have a specific project in mind. You can work with a university, college or research and technology organisation you already have a relationship with, or start a new partnership. Additional project support is provided through the network of [Knowledge Transfer Advisers](#).

Applications should:

- include information about the participants
- set out the objectives of the project
- explain what the project is proposing to do
- outline the deliverables for the graduate

Programme information

- applications for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships are open throughout the year
- the deadline for applications for this round is 4 July 2018. If you miss the deadline for one round you will automatically be entered into the next
- any size business or not-for-profit organisation may apply
- projects can last between 12 and 36 months
- the amount of grant you can get for your project will depend on the size of your business, typically:
 - small and medium-sized enterprises contribute around £35,000 per year, about one-third of the project costs
 - large businesses contribute about £55,000 per year, or half of the project costs

[Find out more about Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and how to apply.](#)

Speech: Preventing conflict in Burundi

Thank you Madam President.

And first, let me thank Special Envoy Kafando for his very clear and frank briefing which has come at an important time for Burundi following the Referendum. I'd also like to thank Ambassador Lauber for your thoughtful briefing and in particular for the six recommendations you made for international community engagement, and I am happy to say that we support each of those six very clear and useful recommendations, so thank you.

Madam President, the United Kingdom would like to join the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the United States and France and other speakers today in expressing our concern at the violence seen in the run up to the Referendum. Human Rights Watch have reported that at least 15 people opposing the Referendum have been killed, six raped and eight abducted. We remain very concerned by the restrictions on political space and the media in the period leading up to the referendum. Preparations for the Referendum, and the vote itself, were regrettably held in a climate of intimidation and repression, with a lack of public information on the proposed reforms. And we heard today from Special Envoy Kafando about reports of many irregularities by the opposition and from civil society. These actions only reduce the confidence that the results of the Referendum represent the will of the electorate.

We are clear, and we strongly agree with Special Envoy Kafando, that the government of Burundi must ensure that the spirit of the Arusha Accords is respected when any constitutional reform is implemented. The current crisis in Burundi can only be resolved by continuing an inclusive dialogue that

preserves the Accords. We hope that the implementation of the constitutional amendments will not impact previous agreements, particularly with regard to ethnic quotas and the representation of women in the Government.

The United Kingdom calls on the AU and the other guarantors of the Arusha Accords to pay careful attention to the preservation of these agreements during any implementation of constitutional changes in Burundi. And we encourage and support the African Union in their efforts to ensure that the spirit of the Accords is adhered to.

Madam President, as others have already said today, we remain extremely concerned by the human rights situation in Burundi. We note with concern the points made by the Special Envoy about how human rights experts have been expelled and we join his call for the Burundian authorities to facilitate their return and to cooperate with OHCHR. We continue to call on the government to implement the two resolutions adopted at the 36th session of the Human Rights Council. And we also urge the government to make progress against the criteria set by the European Union that would pave the way for resumption of EU financial assistance to Burundi.

Madam President, what we have heard today indicates that there is little prospect of an early end to the political crisis or improvement in the humanitarian situation in Burundi. The current situation is unsustainable.

Madam President, we often talk in this chamber about the importance of conflict prevention. The risks in Burundi are huge and the case for preventative diplomacy is overwhelming. We therefore join the PBC's call for the international community to pay close attention to the situation in Burundi and we strongly encourage the Burundian government, the EAC and the African Union to vigorously pursue inclusive dialogue and to preserve the gains of the Arusha Accords which is the only way to generate peace and security in Burundi.

Thank you.