

to inspect it and he found it vacant. had made
Rugari said during the inspection. the process

Prince Jjunju is accused of defrauding Rugari in a land deal

sale price from sh2000

Why is Uganda keeping illicit ivory?

By Gerald Tenywa

Apart from the Uganda Police Force, stockpiles of ivory are being kept by Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) and Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA).

UWA is mandated by the Wildlife Act to keep ivory stockpiles.

Activists including Vincent Opyene, the executive director of Natural Resources Conservation Network, wonder why Uganda's agencies were spending money to keep ivory in the stores yet there is a shortage of manpower to protect elephants in protected areas.

Opyene said burning ivory would put an end to cases where the Police and wildlife officials keep stealing the ivory and feed it into the world of traffickers.

Opyene was speaking at a ceremony organised yesterday at Golf Course Hotel in Kampala to launch two tools that have

been developed to monitor wildlife and forest crime.

The meeting was organised by UWA and was presided over by Ephraim Kamuntu, the tourism minister.

Shortage of space

It was reported that the Police have run out of space for keeping the ivory confiscated from traffickers.

"Our stores are full of exhibits of concluded cases. I do not know how we can empty them," Tinka Zarugaba, a commissioner in charge of anti-narcotics, said.

Tinka added: "We also have to guard the stores during day and night. We need to discuss with UWA how to empty them."

Two years ago, Kenya in a campaign led by President Uhuru Kenyatta burnt over 100 tonnes of illegal ivory, a move that has improved Kenya's image in the world of conservation.

Kenyatta stressed that the

move was, "to destroy any possibility that poachers and their accomplices might benefit from the slaughter of Kenya's elephants".

Wildlife crime

Three years ago, 1.3 tonnes of ivory worth sh2b disappeared from the stores of UWA leading to two probes by the Inspector General of Government on orders of President Yoweri Museveni.

However, the Government has never explained how the ivory disappeared.

Sam Mwandha, the new executive director of UWA, said the Government has to take a decision on burning the ivory.

Mwandha said the current Wildlife Act is being revised and punitive measures were going to be harsher than the current law.

He said they were going to work in partnership with other law enforcement agencies to combat wildlife crime. He also

committed to use guidelines in the environmental motoring tools to combat wildlife crime.

In the past, countries where there are community programmes that sustain elephant populations have been allowed to trade in ivory.

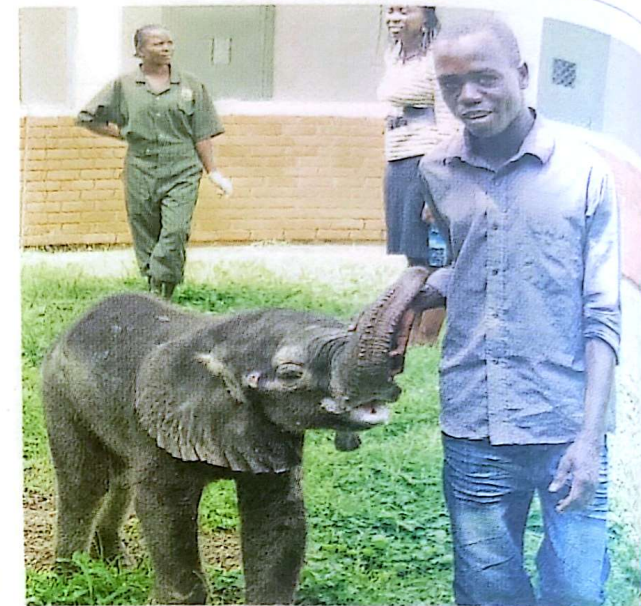
The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild flora and fauna imposed a ban on the trade in ivory.

Whereas there are no recent arrests of elephant poachers in Uganda, in 2013, it was reported that some of the ivory seized by Kampala authorities originated from neighbouring DR Congo or Central Africa.

The rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army led by Joseph Kony are among armed groups said to be killing elephants for ivory which they exchange for money and weapons.

Capacity of prosecutors

During the meeting at Golf Course Hotel, Justice Mike



Charles Hamukungu, a two-month-old baby African elephant, was rescued from Hamukungu Island in Kasese district on Lake George. File Photo

Chibita, the Director of Public Prosecutions said his office has delegated the prosecuting of wildlife crime to UWA and the Natural Resource Conservation Network (NRCN).

He also said they created a desk within his office to work with UWA and NRCN. Chibita also said the training will help build the capacity of the prosecutors.