



### ***Singapore crushed 7.9 tonnes of seized elephant ivory***

13 June 2016 – The Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) crushed 7.9 tonnes of seized elephant ivory, estimated to be worth about S\$13 million, today. This sends a strong signal of Singapore’s zero tolerance on the use of Singapore as a conduit to smuggle endangered species and their parts. This is the first time AVA is crushing seized ivory (see Annex A for details on the seizures). The seized ivory was pulverised by an industrial rock crusher and incinerated at an eco-waste incineration plant. The ashes would subsequently be used as landfill at Pulau Semakau (see Annex B for infographic on the process).

2 Mr Desmond Lee, Senior Minister of State for National Development and Home Affairs, who witnessed the crushing, said, “The public destruction of ivory sends a strong message that Singapore condemns illegal wildlife trade. By crushing the ivory, we ensure that it does not re-enter the ivory market. Tackling this illicit trade requires close international cooperation, and also the assistance of the public and NGOs. We will continue our enforcement efforts, to prevent Singapore from being used as a transit point.”

3 The crushing event was also witnessed by foreign diplomats from the British High Commission and the US Embassy to Singapore, and representatives from enforcement partner agencies (Singapore Customs and Immigration & Checkpoints Authority), Lee Kong Chian National History Museum, Wildlife Reserves Singapore and wildlife conservation groups.

### **The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora**

4 Singapore is a party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which is an international

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agreement to ensure that trade does not threaten wildlife species with extinction. As the CITES authority in Singapore, AVA has been working to ensure that the Convention is upheld and enforced (see Annex C for details on AVA's role).

5 Mr John E. Scanlon, CITES Secretary-General said, "Today's important event serves to raise local, national and global awareness about the devastating impacts of illegal trade in elephant ivory and of the unwavering determination of Singapore and the global community to put an end to it. Destruction of confiscated elephant ivory will not in itself put an end to the illegal trade in elephant ivory. However, when coupled with enhanced enforcement and demand reduction efforts, it sends a very powerful message that Singapore does not and will not tolerate this illegal trade, and illegal traders now face significant risks along the entire illegal supply chain – in source, transit and destination States."

**Advisory: The public can play a part**

6 Tackling the illegal wildlife trade requires concerted efforts of all stakeholders, including the public. Ms Tan Poh Hong, AVA's CEO, urged the public to play their part. "Demand is the impetus for poachers of endangered animals. The public can help reduce demand by not buying such products. When demand falls, poaching will naturally fall too. AVA will continue to ensure that regulatory measures against illegal wildlife trade are enforced," she said.

7 Anyone with information on illegal wildlife trade can contact AVA at 68052992 or provide information through the feedback form on AVA's website ([www.ava.gov.sg](http://www.ava.gov.sg)). All information provided will be kept in strict confidence.

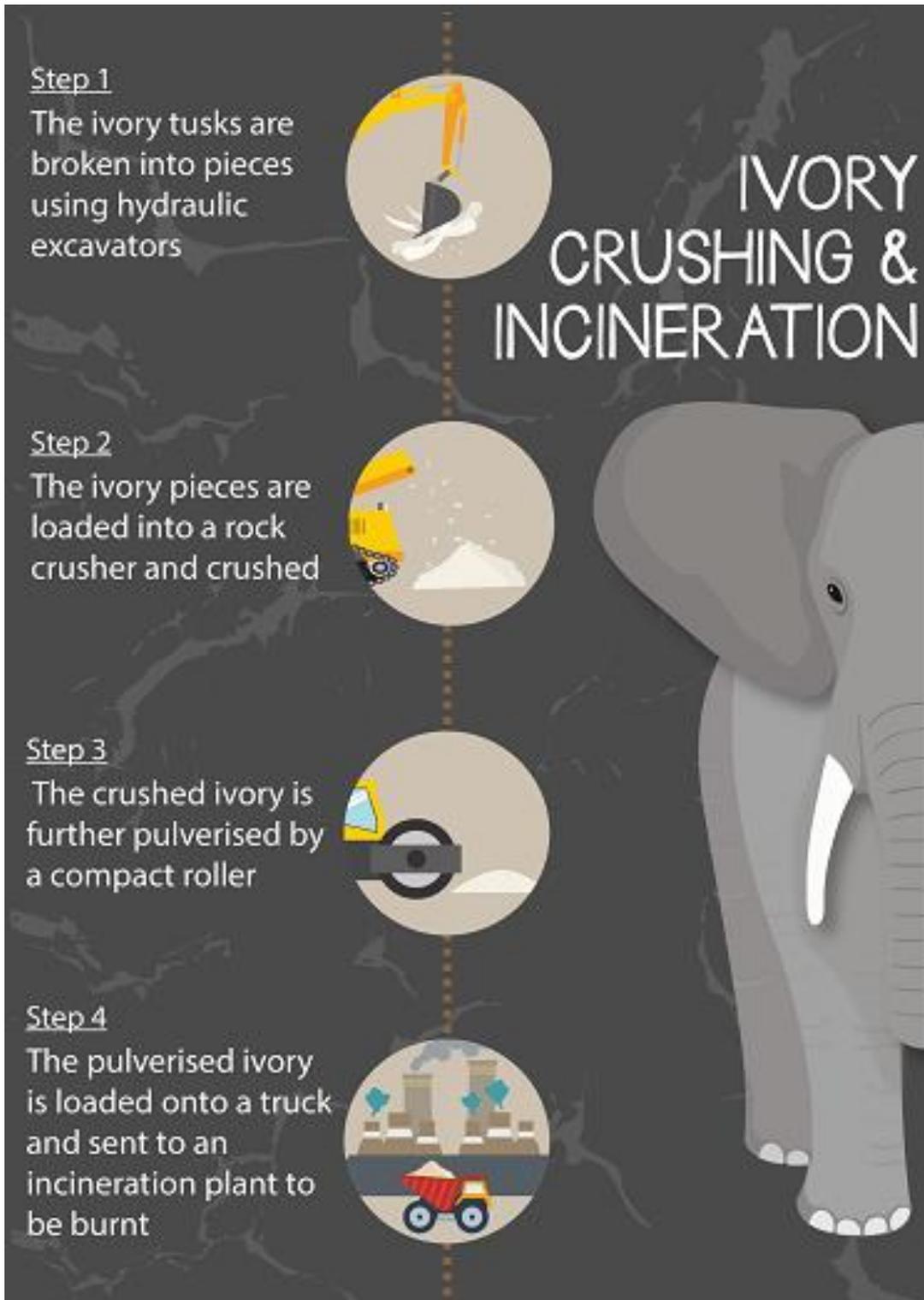
*Issued by the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority*

*13 June 2016*

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#	Case details
1	<p>In January 2014, two Vietnamese travellers were arrested at Changi Airport for smuggling elephant ivory (13 ivory tusks, 16 ivory bangles and 109 ivory cubes), estimated to be worth about S\$65,000, from Africa en route to Laos.</p> <p>The ivory was detained and the travellers were sentenced to 16 months imprisonment. Upon conclusion of our investigation, 10 bangles and 109 ivory cubes were donated to the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum for educational purposes. The remaining ivory was crushed on 13 June 2016.</p>
2	<p>In March 2014, a shipment declared as 'coffee berries' from Uganda en route to Vietnam, was intercepted and detained by Singapore authorities. The shipment was found to contain elephant ivory (106 ivory tusks, approximately 1 tonne), estimated to be worth about S\$2 million.</p> <p>The freight forwarder was issued a warning for facilitating the transportation of the shipment. Upon conclusion of our investigation, 2 tusks were donated to the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum for educational purposes. The remaining ivory was crushed on 13 June 2016.</p>
3	<p>In May 2015, a shipment declared as 'tea leaves' from Kenya en route to Vietnam, was intercepted and detained by Singapore authorities. The shipment was found to contain illegal wildlife parts, including elephant ivory (1,783 ivory tusks, about 4.6 tonnes), estimated to be worth about S\$8 million.</p> <p>The freight forwarder was compounded \$5,000 for failure to exercise due diligence to ensure shipment does not contain contraband. The whole consignment was crushed on 13 June 2016.</p>
4	<p>In December 2015, six shipments declared as 'hair wigs' and 'personal effects' from Nigeria and Democratic of Congo, en route to Laos, were intercepted and detained by Singapore authorities. The shipments were found to contain illegal wildlife parts, including elephant ivory (851 ivory tusks, about 2.25 tonnes), estimated to be worth about S\$3 million.</p> <p>The two freight forwarding companies were compounded \$5,000 each for failure to exercise due diligence to ensure shipment does not contain contraband. The whole consignment was crushed on 13 June 2016.</p>

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AVA adopts a multi-pronged approach to weed out illegal wildlife trade in Singapore, including:

- Upstream measures:
  - Regulation of trade
  - Public education on CITES and endangered species, including working closely with website administrators of online classifieds forums to post warning messages on possession and sales of illegal wildlife on their platform, and engaging stakeholders and industry players to educate and update about CITES regulations and listing of new species on CITES
  - Conducting regular in-house sharing sessions with partner enforcement agencies to enhance their knowledge on CITES.
  
- Downstream measures:
  - Routine monitoring of retail outlets (e.g. aquarium shops and Traditional Chinese Medicine stores) and online sources for sale of illegal wildlife and wildlife parts/products
  - Conducting regular, unannounced checks on retail outlets
  - Conducting 100% inspections on CITES shipments including those from high risk countries at ports of entry/exit
  - Collaborating with international, regional and national enforcement agencies on border inspections and investigations
  - Taking enforcement action and imposing penalties including jail sentences and fines to deter would-be offenders.

Any illegally acquired or imported products that contain or purport to contain endangered species detected will be seized. Under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, it is an offence to import, export and re-export CITES-listed specimens, including its parts and products without a permit from AVA. Penalties for infringing the Act include fines of up to \$50,000 per specimen (not exceeding an aggregate of \$500,000) and/or up to 2 years' imprisonment. The same penalties apply to species in transit.

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Mr Desmond Lee, Senior Minister of State for National Development and Home Affairs, placing a piece of ivory into the excavator bucket to start the ivory crushing event.

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In Singapore's first ever ivory crushing event, the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore crushed a total of 7.9 tonnes of seized elephant ivory, estimated to be valued at \$13 million.

From Left: Mr. Scott Wightman, British High Commissioner to Singapore, Ms. Tan Poh Hong, CEO, Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore, Mr. Desmond Lee, Senior Minister of State for National Development and Home Affairs

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The ivory is loaded onto a rock crusher, where it will be crushed into small pieces before it is incinerated.

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