

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-3804

June 9, 2025

KONDO Shoichi  
Chairman, Committee on Environment  
The House of Representatives  
1-7-1 Nagatacho  
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0014  
Japan

AOYAMA Shigeharu  
Chairman, Committee on Environment  
The House of Councillors  
1-7-1 Nagatacho  
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0014  
Japan

**Re: Appeal to Close Japan's Market for Elephant Ivory**

Dear Chairmen KONDO and AOYAMA:

With a shared dedication to peace and stability,<sup>1</sup> the United States and Japan have been close allies for decades, aligning on a myriad of global priorities to make the world a better place for future generations.

**It is with this legacy in mind that we respectfully urge Japan to join the United States in protecting elephants from the international ivory trade.** Japan remains the most significant legal ivory market in the world today. Many ivory consuming countries closed their markets to bolster the 1989 international ban on commercial ivory trade, including the United States in 2016 under the Obama Administration. Taking steps to close Japan's domestic ivory market would be a significant global step in addressing elephant poaching and extinction, as well as addressing transnational organized crime.

African elephant populations have declined dramatically over the past 50 years. Despite elephant poaching and ivory trafficking decreasing in recent years, African elephants continue to face the threat of being poached for their ivory tusks. This risk is only exacerbated in smaller populations in certain regions of Africa. Tackling ivory poaching by reducing demand and increasing law enforcement is essential to reducing the elephants' population decline.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, the ivory trade fuels criminal syndicates – wildlife trafficking is the fourth-largest funding source for transnational criminal organizations, generating an estimated US\$23 billion annually,<sup>3</sup> driving poaching and financing criminal syndicates. In 2017, President Trump signed an Executive Order which both strengthened efforts to address transnational crime and reaffirmed the connection between

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-japan/#:~:text=For%20over%2060%20years%20the,Treaty%20of%201960%20is%20unwavering>

<sup>2</sup> Wittemyer, George. March 2, 2025. The Conversation. Africa's elephants have been in dramatic decline for 50 years. What can be done to save them – new study. <https://theconversation.com/africas-elephants-have-been-in-dramatic-decline-for-50-years-what-can-be-done-to-save-them-new-study-250293>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ice.gov/about-ice/hsi/investigate/wildlife-trafficking>

wildlife trafficking and transnational organized criminal networks<sup>4</sup>. According to a study from the Japan Tiger and Elephant Fund, many of the seizures of ivory from Japan meet the definition of a “serious crime” as per the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). The closure of domestic ivory markets plays a critical role in addressing transnational organized crime by reducing the demand for ivory, disrupting cross border trafficking networks, simplifying enforcement efforts, and strengthening international cooperation to solve a global problem.

Japan has the opportunity to take legislative measures to close its legal domestic market for commercial ivory during its review of the Act on Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Doing so will reduce the potential for ivory purchased legally in Japan to be exported to other countries.

According to the recent United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime’s (UNODC) World Wildlife Crime report, closing key domestic ivory markets has contributed to the ivory market shrinking.<sup>5</sup> When countries work together to solve global issues, we can facilitate transformative change to increase global security, combat transnational crime, and safeguard the global elephant population for future generations.

Sincerely,



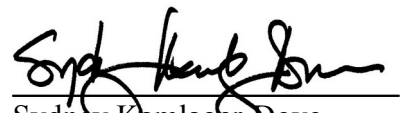
Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress



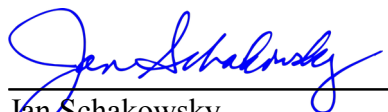
Nicole Malliotakis  
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove  
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

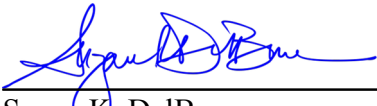


Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/DCPD-201700106/pdf/DCPD-201700106.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/wildlife/2024/Wildlife2024\\_Final.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/wildlife/2024/Wildlife2024_Final.pdf)



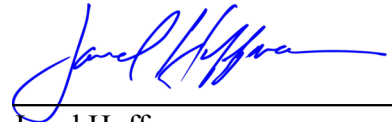
Suzan K. DelBene  
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Steve Cohen  
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Brian K. Fitzpatrick  
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Dina Titus  
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Troy A. Carter, Sr.  
Member of Congress



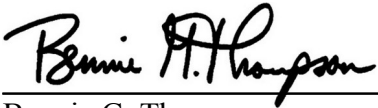
Julia Brownley  
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Sean Casten  
Member of Congress



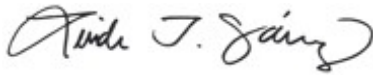
George Latimer  
Member of Congress



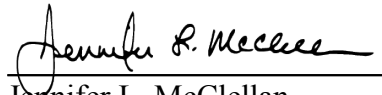
Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar  
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress

Cc:

George Glass, U.S. Ambassador to Japan, U.S. Embassy, Tokyo  
ISHIHARA Hirotaka, Director, Committee on Environment, House of Representatives  
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