

Press release: Government confirms UK ban on ivory sales

The UK will introduce a ban on ivory sales, Environment Secretary Michael Gove confirmed today as he set out our plans to help protect elephants for future generations.

The Government is publishing the [response to its consultation on a UK ivory sales ban](#), and confirming robust measures that will be brought into force through primary legislation.

The ban will cover ivory items of all ages – not only those produced after a certain date. The maximum available penalty for breaching the ban will be an unlimited fine or up to five years in jail.

There were more than 70,000 responses to the consultation, with over 88 percent of responses in favour of the ban.

The number of elephants has declined by almost a third in the last decade and around 20,000 a year are still being slaughtered due to the global demand for ivory.

Environment Secretary, Michael Gove said:

Ivory should never be seen as a commodity for financial gain or a status symbol, so we will introduce one of the world's toughest bans on ivory sales to protect elephants for future generations.

The ban on ivory sales we will bring into law will reaffirm the UK's global leadership on this critical issue, demonstrating our belief that the abhorrent ivory trade should become a thing of the past.

In line with the approach taken by other countries, including the United States and China, there will be certain narrowly-defined and carefully-targeted exemptions for items which do not contribute to the poaching of elephants.

The exemptions have been tightened since the Government published its proposals for consultation, but still provide balance to ensure people are not unfairly impacted:

- Items with only a small amount of ivory in them. Such items must be comprised of less than 10% ivory by volume and have been made prior to 1947.
- Musical instruments. These must have an ivory content of less than 20%

and have been made prior to 1975 (when Asian elephants were added to CITES).

- Rarest and most important items of their type. Such items must be at least 100 years old and their rarity and importance will be assessed by specialist institutions such as the UK's most prestigious museums before exemption permits are issued. In addition, there will be a specific exemption for portrait miniatures painted on thin slivers of ivory and which are at least 100 years old.
- Museums. Commercial activities to, and between, museums which are accredited by Arts Council England, the Welsh Government, Museums and Galleries Scotland or the Northern Ireland Museums Council in the UK, or the International Council of Museums for museums outside the UK.

By covering ivory items of all ages and adopting these narrow exemptions, the UK's ban will be one of the toughest in the world. The US federal ban exempts all items older than 100 years as well as items with up to 50% ivory content. The Chinese ban exempts ivory "relics", without setting a date before which these must have been produced.

The UK is already showing global leadership in the international fight against the illegal ivory trade, and at a recent European Environment Council called for EU member states to follow the Government's lead and ban commercial trade in raw ivory – which is already banned in the UK – within the EU as soon as possible.

In October, the UK will host the fourth international conference on the illegal wildlife trade, bringing global leaders to London to tackle the strategic challenges of the trade. This follows the ground breaking London 2014 conference on the illegal wildlife trade, and subsequent conferences in Botswana and Vietnam.

A ban on ivory sales in the UK would build on government work both at home and overseas to tackle poaching and the illegal ivory trade. The UK military is training African park rangers in proven poacher interception techniques in key African countries, and Border Force officers share their expertise in identifying smuggled ivory with counterparts worldwide to stop wildlife trafficking.

The CEO of Tusk Trust, Charlie Mayhew MBE said:

We are delighted that the Government has listened to our concerns and given the overwhelming public response to their consultation is now moving decisively to introduce tough legislation to ban the trade in ivory in the UK.

The narrowly defined exemptions are pragmatic. The ban will ensure there is no value for modern day ivory and the tusks of recently poached elephants cannot enter the UK market. We welcome the fact that Ministers are sending such a clear message to the world that the illegal wildlife trade will not be tolerated and every effort

will be made to halt the shocking decline in Africa's elephant population in recent years.

Tanya Steele chief executive at WWF said:

Around 55 African elephants are killed for their ivory a day, their tusks turned into carvings and trinkets. This ban makes the UK a global leader in tackling this bloody trade and it's something WWF has been fighting hard for.

But if we want to stop the poaching of this majestic animal, we need global action. We hope the UK will continue to press countries where the biggest ivory markets are, most of which are in Asia, to shut down their trade too.

ZSL Director of Conservation, Matthew Hatchwell, said:

Legal domestic ivory markets are intrinsically linked to the illegal ivory trade that is driving the current poaching crisis. With almost 20,000 elephants poached in the last year, it is vital that countries take significant steps such as those outlined by the UK government today to close their markets and help make the trade in ivory a thing of the past. No one in the UK today would dream of wearing a tiger-skin coat. Thanks to this move, in a few years' time we believe the same will be true for the trade in ivory.

John Stephenson, CEO Stop Ivory said:

This is a significant day for the future of elephants. The UK government has taken a momentous step. The proposed ban, with its narrow and clear exemptions, places the UK at the forefront of the international determination to halt the extermination of elephant populations by banning trade in ivory. The Secretary of State for DEFRA has shown clear leadership in demanding legislation whilst there is still time to secure a future for elephants in the wild.

The end of the ivory trade in the UK removes any hiding place for the trade in illegal ivory, and sends a powerful message to the world that ivory will no longer be valued as a commodity. Ivory belongs on an elephant and when the buying stops the killing will stop.

As profits become ever greater, the illegal wildlife trade has become a

transnational organised enterprise, estimated to be worth up to £17 billion a year.

The further decline of elephants would also deprive some of the poorest countries in the world of their valuable natural capital, affecting economic growth and sustainable development.

News story: We must end the shameful ivory trade now

The African Elephant is a species apart – a beautiful animal that inspires awe in any who see it. Safeguarding the future of this amazing animal is a mission our species cannot shirk. And the need for action is urgent because numbers are declining dramatically, driven by human greed for ivory.

Long prized for ornaments and jewellery, ivory is increasingly seen as a symbol of wealth and social status, particularly in East Asia. And in recent decades, poaching has reached devastating levels.

The numbers are stark – about 20,000 elephants are killed every year, which equals about 55 every single day.

The unthinkable could happen – unless we take action to stop poaching today future generations will be deprived of one of the world's most majestic and inspirational creatures.

Africa leaders have called for an international response to this global problem. The Presidents of Botswana, Uganda, Gabon and Kenya have made a joint plea for the European Union to shut down ivory markets, arguing that if we want to tackle poaching we must remove the opportunity for criminals to profit from their sickening activities.

That is why we will ban the sale of ivory in the UK. The ban will cover ivory items of all ages and once it has been approved by Parliament, it will be the toughest ivory ban in Europe and one of the toughest in the world. A ban of this kind is the only way to demonstrate that ivory – and the elephant – is not a commodity for sale.

In line with the approach taken by other countries, there will be carefully-defined and narrowly-targeted exemptions for items that do not contribute directly or indirectly to the poaching of elephants. The exemptions have been narrowed since consulting conservation groups and the antiques trade. They are balanced and proportionate – and crucially they will not undermine the ban or provide loopholes that could continue to fuel elephant poaching.

All exempted items will have to be registered and the police and other

enforcement agencies will pursue illegal sales with new powers. Anyone found breaching the ban could face an unlimited fine or up to five years in jail.

When it is passed, this ban will confirm the UK's place at the forefront of global efforts to end the shameful trade in one of our most beautiful natural treasures. We will continue to work with international partners to tackle illegal wildlife trade – the world's fourth most profitable criminal enterprise, worth up to £17 billion annually. Our global leadership is essential to show the world that we cannot go on as we are – we must end this trade.

The fact that ivory is still bought and sold for financial gain and status shames our generation. We need decisive action to end this abhorrent trade and take on the smugglers and poachers who are depriving some of the poorest countries in the world of their valuable natural capital. Only then will we be able to claim we have protected this iconic species for future generations.

Supporting refugees in Greece: €180 million in emergency support

The European Commission has announced today new funding of €180 million for aid projects in Greece, including to scale up the flagship '[Emergency Support to Integration & Accommodation' \(ESTIA\)](#) programme which helps get refugees into urban accommodation and out of camps and provides them with regular cash assistance.

The funding comes as Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** met today with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras in Athens.

Launched in July 2017 with the UN Refugee Agency, ESTIA is the biggest EU aid operation in the country and works in line with the Greek government's 'out of camps' policy. So far it has created more than 23,000 urban accommodation places and set up a cash assistance scheme serving more than 41,000 refugees and asylum seekers.

*"Our humanitarian programmes for refugees in Greece are a clear and loud signal of European solidarity. We continue to deliver on our strong commitment to help refugees in Greece live more secure, normal and dignified lives, and facilitate their integration into the local economy and society. Our ESTIA programme is achieving real results to change people's lives for the better. I pay special tribute to the Greek citizens and mayors who have welcomed refugees in their municipalities with great empathy and care," said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**.*

Six other contracts have been signed with the Danish Refugee Council, Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund, Médecins du Monde, the Spanish Red Cross, as well as Greek NGOs METAdrasi and Smile of the Child to address pressing humanitarian needs in Greece, including shelter, primary health care, psycho-social support, improved hygiene conditions, non-formal education, the provision of interpretation for health and protection.

Overall, the European Commission has made available over €1.5 billion of support for Greece to help manage the humanitarian situation, migration and the external borders, through various kinds of funding.

Background

EU emergency support in Greece

In urgent and exceptional circumstances such as the increased influx of refugees in Europe, the European Commission can fund humanitarian aid for people in need within the EU territory through the Emergency Support Instrument, activated for the first time in March 2016. Overall EU humanitarian assistance disbursed so far to Greece through this instrument amounts to €605.3 million.

ESTIA programme with the UNHCR

Today's new funding for ESTIA will allow the programme to set up 27, 000 places in urban settings by the end of 2018. The bulk of the rented apartments will be in cities and towns on the Greek mainland while up to 2,000 places will be located on the Greek islands. Several municipalities in Greece are also part of this scheme.

The ESTIA cash assistance scheme aims to reach 45,000 people by mid-2018. Refugees and asylum seekers receive pre-defined monthly cash allocations through a dedicated card. This provides choice and enables them to meet their basic needs with dignity, while supporting the local economy. Making cash assistance more efficient remains a priority for the EU.

The Commission's humanitarian support complements other EU funding instruments which have already been providing significant financial resources for assistance in Greece such as the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund, the European Fund for the Most Deprived, and the EU Health Programme. It is also complementary to the voluntary offers for material assistance initially provided by states participating in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

For More Information

[Factsheet 'Greece: Response to the Refugee Crisis'](#)

News story: MOD confirms death of Lance Corporal George Partridge

Lance Corporal George Partridge joined the Army on 13th June 2010 at the age of 19.

After completing his basic training at Bassingbourn in Cambridgeshire, where he was awarded the prize for Fittest Recruit, he moved to 3 Royal School of Military Engineering Regiment at Minley in Surrey for combat engineer training, and from there to Leaconsfield for vocational driver training, qualifying as a Military Engineer (Driver) in April 2011.

His first years in the Army were spent at 21 Engineer Regiment in Ripon, North Yorkshire, where he qualified as a Class 1 Royal Engineer Driver and deployed to Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK 17 in 2012-13. Successfully selected for promotion he moved to 26 Engineer Regiment in Perham Down, Wiltshire where he served as a motor transport Lance Corporal within 38 Headquarters and Support Squadron. He was responsible for allocating drivers to tasks on daily driving details as well as scheduling maintenance and repairs for the Regiment's large fleet of wheeled vehicles.

Popular and hard-working, Lance Corporal Partridge was at the hub of the Regiment and was always to be seen out in the vehicle park ensuring that his vehicles were in good condition and ready for the next task. A genuine expert in the complex area of motor transport management, he was well known across the Regiment for his frank advice and his ability to find a vehicle for every last-minute important job.

Whilst at 26 Engineer Regiment he deployed to Canada, supporting armoured engineer training and construction exercises as well as deploying in support of UK operations. He recently achieved a long-held ambition to commence training as an Army diver, successfully completed his Junior Commanders Course, and had just been selected for promotion to Corporal.

Lance Corporal Partridge loved sport and fitness. A regular in the Regiment's Gym every evening, he was also a talented sportsman who had represented the Regimental Rugby Team and the Army as part of the Under 23 Army Football squad. He also tried his hand at luge ice sports where he represented the Corps.

The loss of such a popular and capable soldier is hard felt by his Squadron, the Regiment and the Corps, as well as everyone in the wider Army who had the privilege of working with him. He will be remembered fondly by his many friends and colleagues throughout the Corps. He leaves behind his wife Zoe, who is expecting their first child, parents Alyson and Stephen and siblings Lucy and Ben.

Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster said:

It is with great sadness we must confirm the death of Lance Corporal George Partridge. It's clear from the testaments of his colleagues that he had a bright future in the Army and was held in the highest regard. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this extremely difficult time.

Lance Corporal Ash Skerten said:

If I could be half the man he was I would be proud, he was the best soldier.

Corporal Anthony Matthews said:

George was a motivated and determined individual, who was a role model to all those around him. His peers also looked up to him and would come to him for advice. He was a family-orientated man who was looking forward to starting his family with wife Zoe. He was both a physically and mentally fit person who relished any challenge thrown in his direction.

Sergeant Chris Brignull said:

I have had the honour and pleasure of knowing LCpl George Partridge for well over 2 years now, from the start he was an outstanding character and a great role model for younger Sappers within the troop.

George had a very calm and collected approach to everything he did, robust and professional during all tasks put his way, which he always tackled head on. He was a true leader and had the potential to progress through all ranks. Well liked throughout the whole Regiment and Corps, he will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him. Royal Engineers like George are a special type of person who are hard to find.

His Troop Commander, Lt David Thorne said:

Lance Corporal George Partridge was a gift to me as a Troop Commander. He had everything that I could have expected of a Junior Non Commissioned Officer. He could always be relied upon to carry out a task to the best of his ability and to get the best out the individuals who were working for him. Having already been selected to promote to Corporal, I have no doubt he would have climbed through the ranks with ease and had a very successful Army career. On top of this he was genuinely a good bloke who knew how to make people laugh, he will be sorely missed.

His Squadron Commander, Major Matt Walker said:

Every member of the Squadron, regardless of rank, looked up to and respected Lance Corporal George Partridge – we all aspire to be as fit, humble and capable as he was. The loss of this epic Junior Non Commissioned Officer leaves a void in the Squadron that can't be filled.

His Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Simon Doyle said:

Quietly determined, hard-working and immensely popular, Lance Corporal George Partridge was an exemplary soldier. Humble but hugely capable, he was always ready to lend a helping hand where it was needed the most and at some point everyone in the Regiment has had cause to be grateful for his ability to find you a car when the vehicle park seemed empty. Our clearest memories of him will always be on the rugby pitch and in the gymnasium, where he was the epitome of a Royal Engineer Junior Non-Commissioned Officer, always pushing himself and his soldiers to the next level, and always with a smile on his face. He will be sorely missed, and our thoughts are with his wife and family at this sad time.

News story: MOD confirms death of Lance Corporal George Partridge

Lance Corporal George Partridge joined the Army on 13th June 2010 at the age of 19.

After completing his basic training at Bassingbourn in Cambridgeshire, where he was awarded the prize for Fittest Recruit, he moved to 3 Royal School of Military Engineering Regiment at Minley in Surrey for combat engineer training, and from there to Leaconsfield for vocational driver training, qualifying as a Military Engineer (Driver) in April 2011.

His first years in the Army were spent at 21 Engineer Regiment in Ripon, North Yorkshire, where he qualified as a Class 1 Royal Engineer Driver and deployed to Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK 17 in 2012-13. Successfully selected for promotion he moved to 26 Engineer Regiment in Perham Down, Wiltshire where he served as a motor transport Lance Corporal within 38 Headquarters and Support Squadron. He was responsible for allocating drivers to tasks on daily driving details as well as scheduling maintenance and repairs for the Regiment's large fleet of wheeled vehicles.

Popular and hard-working, Lance Corporal Partridge was at the hub of the Regiment and was always to be seen out in the vehicle park ensuring that his vehicles were in good condition and ready for the next task. A genuine expert in the complex area of motor transport management, he was well known across the Regiment for his frank advice and his ability to find a vehicle for every last-minute important job.

Whilst at 26 Engineer Regiment he deployed to Canada, supporting armoured engineer training and construction exercises as well as deploying in support of UK operations. He recently achieved a long-held ambition to commence training as an Army diver, successfully completed his Junior Commanders Course, and had just been selected for promotion to Corporal.

Lance Corporal Partridge loved sport and fitness. A regular in the Regiment's Gym every evening, he was also a talented sportsman who had represented the Regimental Rugby Team and the Army as part of the Under 23 Army Football squad. He also tried his hand at luge ice sports where he represented the Corps.

The loss of such a popular and capable soldier is hard felt by his Squadron, the Regiment and the Corps, as well as everyone in the wider Army who had the privilege of working with him. He will be remembered fondly by his many friends and colleagues throughout the Corps. He leaves behind his wife Zoe, who is expecting their first child, parents Alyson and Stephen and siblings Lucy and Ben.

Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster said:

It is with great sadness we must confirm the death of Lance Corporal George Partridge. It's clear from the testaments of his colleagues that he had a bright future in the Army and was held in the highest regard. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this extremely difficult time.

Lance Corporal Ash Skerten said:

If I could be half the man he was I would be proud, he was the best soldier.

Corporal Anthony Matthews said:

George was a motivated and determined individual, who was a role model to all those around him. His peers also looked up to him and would come to him for advice. He was a family-orientated man who was looking forward to starting his family with wife Zoe. He was both a physically and mentally fit person who relished any challenge thrown in his direction.

Sergeant Chris Brignull said:

I have had the honour and pleasure of knowing LCpl George Partridge for well over 2 years now, from the start he was an outstanding character and a great role model for younger Sappers within the troop.

George had a very calm and collected approach to everything he did, robust and professional during all tasks put his way, which he always tackled head on. He was a true leader and had the potential to progress through all ranks. Well liked throughout the whole Regiment and Corps, he will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him. Royal Engineers like George are a special type of person who are hard to find.

His Troop Commander, Lt David Thorne said:

Lance Corporal George Partridge was a gift to me as a Troop Commander. He had everything that I could have expected of a Junior Non Commissioned Officer. He could always be relied upon to carry out a task to the best of his ability and to get the best out the individuals who were working for him. Having already been selected to promote to Corporal, I have no doubt he would have climbed through the ranks with ease and had a very successful Army career. On top of this he was genuinely a good bloke who knew how to make people laugh, he will be sorely missed.

His Squadron Commander, Major Matt Walker said:

Every member of the Squadron, regardless of rank, looked up to and respected Lance Corporal George Partridge – we all aspire to be as fit, humble and capable as he was. The loss of this epic Junior Non Commissioned Officer leaves a void in the Squadron that can't be filled.

His Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Simon Doyle said:

Quietly determined, hard-working and immensely popular, Lance Corporal George Partridge was an exemplary soldier. Humble but hugely capable, he was always ready to lend a helping hand where it was needed the most and at some point everyone in the Regiment has had cause to be grateful for his ability to find you a car when the vehicle park seemed empty. Our clearest memories of him will always be on the rugby pitch and in the gymnasium, where he was the epitome of a Royal Engineer Junior Non-Commissioned Officer, always pushing himself and his soldiers to the next level, and always with

a smile on his face. He will be sorely missed, and our thoughts are with his wife and family at this sad time.