

## Why is poaching in Africa increasing?

Lately, elephant poaching in Africa has been increasing at an alarming rate. It is now becoming a big problem and we are likely to see a sharp decline in the population of the African elephant if poaching remains unchecked. But how did this sudden increase occur and how can we solve it?

What happened is that a one-off auction made legal ivory available in the market and that was the danger. The sudden availability of a significant amount of ivory revitalized a market that had disappeared. Now, there is no way that legal ivory could satisfy demand in this enlarged market. The current drought in Kenya has made the situation even worse.

We also know that the majority of African elephant range states have no effective policing mechanisms to contain this problem.

A solution needs to be found and the way forward is to try and get the total ban on ivory trade reinstated. Once the ban is reinstated, ivory disappears from the market. Possession of ivory becomes a crime. Policing thus gains some effectiveness.

Furthermore, lack of a market will drive the price of raw ivory in Africa down.

Until something is done, poaching will continue to escalate. The time to act is now.

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