

Open Letter To the President of Botswana: His Excellency Masisi

12th July 2018

Your Excellency, President Masisi,

Please allow us to address you today with a great concern. For years, we have been watching and appreciating Botswana's very well-founded role in international elephant conservation. The KAZA project - which has been discussed for years - raises high hopes that in the long term it will provide a secure home for elephants and other animals in the entire region. Also on account of the trophy hunting ban in 2014, Botswana is considered a flagship country for the development of Africa.

Studies have shown that many elephants apparently choose to stay in Botswana because of the massive poaching and hunting that is happening in adjacent countries. We are aware that the current number of elephants seems to have caused considerable conflicts with local residents in different regions. The proposals to solve the situation by hunting have filled us with great worry!

Past experience shows that neither hunting nor culling are promising concepts for population control. Alternative options that have proved successful are the opening of old elephant trails and the reduction of human intervention.

There is also a strong ethical issue about killing off individuals of this iconic species that is on the brink of extinction world-wide - not only because of their extraordinary intelligence, but also on account of their emotional capacities, which are strikingly similar to human sentiments.

We would like to urge you strongly to seek alternative solutions to hunting! This could be achieved in cooperation with neighbouring countries taking part in KAZA, and also with the affected regions themselves. We are currently working on a compilation of pragmatic alternative strategies to hunting, which we will send to you shortly.

Botswana has earned an outstanding reputation as a prime tourist destination and pioneer in elephant conservation. The consequences of elephants being hunted again in Botswana would be unpredictable. Please preserve Botswana as a safe haven for elephants and other wildlife!

Yours Faithfully,

Heike Henderson,
Mitglied Vorstand,
Future for Elephants e.V.

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