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September 5, 2012

His Excellency Perezi Kamunanwire
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Embassy of the Republic of Uganda
5911 16th Street, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20011

Dear Ambassador Kamunanwire:

I write to express my concern regarding the March 15th, 2012 slaughter of twenty-two elephants in Garamba National Park.

On March 15, 2012, an illegal helicopter of unknown origin was carrying a marksman who shot twenty-two elephants for the purpose of obtaining and profiting from their ivory tusks. Despite the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wildlife Fauna and Flora's (CITES) 1989 ban on ivory trade, this practice continues to devastate Africa's elephant population. Since the 1970s, the elephant population has fallen by more than 750,000, and because of the recent surge in poaching, is estimated to be as low as 472,269 by the International Union of Conservation of Nature.

In recent years, increased demand for ivory in China and other Asian countries has caused poaching to grow exponentially. Additionally, rebel groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army and Darfur's Janjaweed have been dealing in the poaching and sale of elephant tusks to finance their activities. Today, a single pound of ivory can cost as much as \$1000 in China, with demand vastly surpassing supply.

This recent incident is just one example of the global crisis of illegal trafficking of wildlife occurring today. Recent studies have reported that the incidents of elephant poaching are a higher level today that at any other time since the ivory trade ban. It is imperative that we do all that we can to protect the lives and future populations of the elephant.

According to a September 4, 2012 article in *The New York Times*, "Elephants Dying in Epic Frenzy as Ivory Fuels Wars and Profits," the Garamba National Park's authorities and the Congolese government believe that members of the Ugandan military are responsible for the March 15th poaching. The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) is conducting an investigation into this mass elephant killing. I ask that you fully cooperate with this investigation and work to protect the endangered elephant population.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding any information you may have regarding this incident.

Sincerely,

Dennis J. Kucinich

Dennis J. Kucinich
Member of Congress