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Wildlife Crime Unit the Next Step in Tackling Illegal Wildlife Crime

26th August 2020, Kota Kinabalu: WWF-Malaysia commends the Royal Malaysia Police (PDRM) on its decisive actions to combat the burgeoning problem of illegal wildlife crime in Malaysia that is threatening the survival of many of the nation’s iconic wildlife including the Malayan tiger, the Sunda pangolin, and the Asian elephant.

“We welcome PDRM’s strict stance on curbing the use of firearms for illegal hunting and call for continued measures to control firearms, including the purchase of ammunition. It is only through such controls that we can ensure that weapons do not fall into the wrong hands. In this case, poachers looking to earn a handsome profit at the expense of our wildlife,” said Dr. Henry Chan, WWF-Malaysia’s Conservation Director.

To ensure the sustainability of hunting among indigenous people and local communities, WWF-Malaysia also urges law enforcement agencies to work together with these communities to protect natural resources. The involvement of indigenous people and local communities in patrolling work at WWF-Malaysia is proof that effective collaboration can ensure the protection of our forests.

“While there is a need to safeguard our wildlife and protect it from poachers, it is also important that we safeguard our communities. In particular, those who depend on hunting wildlife for sustenance and livelihood,” said Dr. Henry.

Poaching and wildlife crime has become increasingly more challenging to combat due to its largely borderless nature. Wildlife hunted on Malaysian soil and waters can make their way across the border to a foreign seller, who will then sell them at an international market. Likewise, the products of wildlife hunted outside Malaysia can be sold in our country, or passing through our seaports and airports as transit.

WWF-Malaysia commends the PDRM’s action to raid and close unlicensed premises which will lead to the shutdown of many physical stores. As illegal wildlife trade becomes more sophisticated, it will mean that activities will shift to other platforms, including the internet and these need to be tackled as well.

Wildlife crime is often highly organized, sophisticated, and widespread. This calls for the need for a central long-term mechanism with dedicated resources to match that, in collaboration with various enforcement agencies and stakeholders in order to tackle the problem effectively.

The complicated and dynamic nature of wildlife crime requires intelligence gathering and law enforcement at various levels. Establishing a Wildlife Crime Unit within PDRM will greatly help in crippling wildlife crime related networks as well as help institutionalise vital joint operations efforts such as Ops Bersepadu Khazanah that involve multiple government enforcement agencies and provision of annual national budget.
“Ultimately, the need for a Wildlife Crime Unit that is institutionalised under the PDRM is vital as the PDRM has the jurisdiction and capacity to deal with the complexities of organised wildlife crime, which often involves the same syndicates that commit cross-border crimes, money laundering, drugs and firearms trafficking, as well as possession of illegal firearms and man-made explosives,” said Dr. Henry.

A Wildlife Crime Unit under the PDRM will also allow for a streamlining of information, effective monitoring of wildlife networks including online trade, data collection and crime analysis, adequate training on intelligence sharing as well as support for wildlife officers in states across Malaysia.

“Such an establishment under PDRM will definitely send a signal to those involved in wildlife crimes as well as the international community that Malaysia is very serious in tackling these heinous crimes against wildlife,” he added.

We urge Malaysians from all walks of life to support this call to establish the Wildlife Crime Unit within the PDRM.

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About WWF-Malaysia
WWF-Malaysia (World Wide Fund for Nature-Malaysia) was established in Malaysia in 1972. It currently runs more than 90 projects covering a diverse range of environmental conservation and protection work, from saving endangered species such as tigers and turtles, to protecting our highland forests, rivers and seas. The national conservation organisation also undertakes environmental education and advocacy work to achieve its conservation goals. Its mission is to stop the degradation of the earth’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the nation’s biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. For latest news and media resources, visit [http://www.wwf.org.my/media_and_information/media_centre/](http://www.wwf.org.my/media_and_information/media_centre/)

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