



INFORMATION PAPER

FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)

TENTH MEETING

Montréal, 10-13 September 2018

Agenda Item 2: Recent facilitation developments in the UN and other international organizations

**ENSURING THAT AIRLINES AND AVIATION CONTRIBUTE TO
COMBATTING THE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE**

(Presented by the International Air Transport Association (IATA))

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The international illegal wildlife trade is the fourth largest illegal global trade (after drugs, counterfeit products and human trafficking). Transnational organized criminal networks are increasingly exploiting air transport to traffic wildlife on a global basis.

1.2 The illegal trade of wildlife is perceived by criminals to be a high profit and low risk activity, which is not only driving many endangered species towards extinction but also strengthening criminal networks, posing increasing risks to global health and undermining national and international security¹.

1.3 Recent reports^{2,3} have highlighted the nature and scale of the exploitation of the air transport network. Wildlife trafficking incidents have been reported at airports in over 130 States since 2009⁴. Historically, the perception of the illegal wildlife trade and its exploitation of aviation was that air cargo was the primary mode of transport, however, it is now apparent that at least 54% of known illegal wildlife is transported by passengers (both on their person and in their baggage)⁵.

¹ United Nations General Assembly. 2017. *Resolution 71/326: Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife*. [Online]. A/RES/71/326. [Accessed 22 August 2018]. Available from: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/326

² Utermohlen, M. and Baine, P. 2017. *Flying Under the Radar: Wildlife Trafficking through the Air Transport Sector*. [Online]. C4ADS and USAID Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species (ROUTES). [Accessed 22 August 2018]. Available from: http://routespartnership.org/industry-resources/publications/flying-under-the-radar_final.pdf/view

³ Utermohlen, M. and Baine, P. 2018. *In Plane Sight: Wildlife Trafficking in the Air Transport Sector*. [Online]. C4ADS and USAID Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species (ROUTES). [Accessed 22 August]. Available from: <http://routespartnership.org/industry-resources/publications/in-plane-sight/view>

⁴ See footnote 3.

⁵ See footnote 3.

1.4 Although the trade in protected species has been regulated through the Convention On International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) since 1975, wildlife seizure counts at airports have increased dramatically over the past decade⁶.

1.5 While States have the primary responsibility for identifying, apprehending and prosecuting traffickers, it is recognized that aviation staff working for transportation companies, including airlines and aviation companies, can play an important role in preventing wildlife trafficking.

1.6 The level of exploitation by wildlife traffickers means that many enforcement agencies are now increasingly focussing their efforts on outbound flights⁷, necessitating additional checks on passengers, baggage and cargo shipments. These activities represent a direct challenge to timely clearance procedures but can be mitigated by the sharing of intelligence with enforcement authorities.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The airline industry is committed to helping States combat the illegal wildlife trade and was highlighted in June 2016 when IATA's 72nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) adopted a Resolution on the Illegal Trade in Wildlife⁸ (Appendix A) which provides a clear and unequivocal statement that the airlines industry will not tolerate the trafficking of wildlife using its sector.

2.2 Furthermore, over 60 aviation stakeholders, including IATA, ACI, regional airline associations and over 57 airlines, have made an individual commitment by signing the United for Wildlife Transport Taskforce Buckingham Palace Declaration⁹, established by The Royal Foundation of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and The Duke and Duchess of Sussex. The Declaration outlines 11 Commitments based on raising customer and staff awareness; improved staff training and reporting; exchange of information between the public and private sector; and promotion of the Declaration across the global supply chain.

2.3 The US adopted a national strategy against wildlife trafficking following an Executive Order¹⁰ issued by President Obama in July 2013. As part of this strategy, IATA has joined with a consortium of international conservation organizations, as a Core Member of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species (ROUTES) Partnership. This five-year program aims to support the transport sector by providing information on high-risk species, routes and concealment methods, awareness raising activities with staff, passengers and cargo customers and facilitating the reporting of suspected traffickers and suspicious cargo.

2.4 Seizure information is collected internationally by national customs and border agencies and is being analysed by multiple organizations engaged in both the United for Wildlife Transport

⁶ See footnote 3.

⁷ World Customs Organization. 2018. *SAFE FRAMEWORK OF STANDARDS*. [Online]. [Accessed 22 August 2018]. Available from: <http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/topics/facilitation/instruments-and-tools/tools/safe-package/safe-framework-of-standards.pdf?la=en>

⁸ IATA. 2016. 72nd IATA Annual General Meeting Resolution on the Illegal Trade in Wildlife. [Online]. [Accessed 15 August 2018]. Available from: <https://www.iata.org/pressroom/pr/Documents/resolution-agm-2016-wildlife.pdf>

⁹ United for Wildlife. 2016. *UNITED FOR WILDLIFE TRANSPORT TASKFORCE BUCKINGHAM PALACE DECLARATION*. [Online]. Buckingham Palace, London. [Accessed 15 August 2018]. Available from: https://www.unitedforwildlife.org/custom/uploads/2016/03/01_UfW_Taskforce-Declaration_FINAL.pdf

¹⁰ Office of the Press Secretary. 2013. *Executive Order – Combating Wildlife Trafficking*. Executive Order. No. 13648, p.78. [Online]. The White House. [Accessed 15 August 2018]. Available from <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/07/01/executive-order-combating-wildlife-trafficking>

Taskforce and the ROUTES Partnership (including WCO, INTERPOL, UNODC, United for Wildlife and C4ADS). Increasingly, evidence indicates that the illegal wildlife trade represents a threat to national security¹¹ and may even represent an indirect threat to aviation safety and security measures¹². Evidence shows that:

2.4.1 Illegal wildlife and their products can have a high-value on the black market with rhino horn worth more than cocaine, gold or diamonds¹³, enabling poachers and wildlife traffickers to intimidate and corrupt stakeholders along the supply chain. They are able to compromise and/or infiltrate both public and private sector staff at airports, undermining the overall security of the supply chain¹⁴. Annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation recognises the threats posed to aviation by the international trafficking in narcotics and it is clear that the illegal wildlife trade now poses a similar level of threat¹⁵.

2.4.2 Traffickers attempt to bypass border controls, by using a wide variety of obfuscation methods, from taking circuitous routes purchased with separate tickets, last minute bookings and amendments, concealing products within consumer goods to wearing specifically modified clothing, and may smuggle wildlife on their person, within checked baggage, cargo consignments or mail¹⁶.

2.4.3 Information and intelligence indicates that some States are missing up to 90% of known cases which are instead seized in transit or at the destination¹⁷. Prosecutions of convicted traffickers in transit or at destination entails the cooperation of multiple States and can be complex and lengthy. As a result, States are increasingly focussing their efforts on outbound flights¹⁸, necessitating additional checks on passengers, baggage and cargo shipments. These activities represent a direct challenge to timely clearance procedures but can be mitigated by the application of robust risk management engines, cross border sharing of intelligence and coordinated activities between enforcement authorities.

2.4.4 Furthermore, concealed wildlife and products are not subject to health and sanitary checks and as a result, are at high risk of spreading infectious diseases¹⁹. Live animals that are not transported in accordance with IATA's Live Animals Regulations²⁰ (LAR) may represent a safety threat to both the animals themselves and to the handling personnel.

2.5 Global awareness raising activities have indicated that information related to the nature, scale and consequences of the illegal wildlife is rarely exchanged between Contracting States, operators and airports.

2.6 The efficient clearance of aircraft and passengers, goods and mail, with respect to the requirements of customs, immigration, public health and agriculture authorities, has made a positive contribution to aviation's sustained growth. However, the increasing ease and affordability of air travel is now being exploited by criminals to transport illicit goods such as wildlife from source to demand markets. As the nature and scale of exploitation of the air transport sector becomes more evident, many States are now focusing enforcement efforts on outbound flights, which could constrain facilitation.

¹¹ See footnote 1.

¹² See footnote 3.

¹³ Biggs, D. et al. 2013. Legal Trade of Africa's Rhino Horns. *Science*. [Online]. **339** (6123), pp.1038-1039. [Accessed 20 August 2018]. Available from: <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/339/6123/1038>

¹⁴ See footnote 3 on pp.64.

¹⁵ See footnote 1.

¹⁶ See footnote 3.

¹⁷ See footnote 3.

¹⁸ See footnote 7.

¹⁹ See footnote 3 on pp.13.

²⁰ IATA. 2018. *IATA Live Animals Regulations*. 44th ed. Geneva: IATA.

Airlines and aviation sector companies could partner with States to ensure the sector can continue to grow sustainably whilst helping prevent the illegal wildlife trade.

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APPENDIX A

72ND IATA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

RESOLUTION ON THE ILLEGAL TRADE IN WILDLIFE

NOTING that the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products threatens the survival of many endangered species and noting the importance of wildlife conservation efforts for global tourism and the airline sector;

EXPRESSING CONCERN that transnational criminal groups are exploiting the increasingly interconnected air transport system to traffic such products illegally;

ACKNOWLEDGING that, while the responsibility to apprehend and prosecute offenders rests with national enforcement authorities, airlines and airline staff have a role to play in addressing the problem;

RECOGNISING that airlines fully support the objectives of the Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and do not knowingly facilitate or tolerate the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the concealed carriage of wildlife and wildlife products in the air transport system may pose a risk to health and safety;

RECOGNISING that passengers and shippers have a duty to comply with customs and quarantine laws, and may face fines or imprisonment as a penalty;

NOTING the vital role that education and awareness programs may have in minimizing inadvertent carriage of wildlife and wildlife products and the likely contribution of such programs to a reduction in final demand; and

EMPHASISING that a coordinated approach to combatting the illegal trade in wildlife between governments and conservation groups, supported by the air transport sector, would be more effective than individual actions alone;

The 72nd IATA Annual General Meeting:

1. denounces the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products;
2. calls on member airlines to increase passenger, customer, client, and staff awareness about the nature, scale, and consequences of the illegal wildlife trade;
3. calls on governments and their enforcement agencies to devote additional resources to eliminating this illegal trade;
4. calls on airlines, airports, freight forwarders and all other stakeholders within the air transport sector to work proactively with enforcement agencies and conservation organizations to address the problem;
5. calls on member airlines to consider the adoption of appropriate policies and procedures that discourage this illegal trade, taking into account the importance of awareness programs, information sharing and incident reporting systems; and
6. encourages member airlines to sign the United for Wildlife Transport Taskforce Buckingham Palace Declaration.

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