

Wildlife Security and International Relations

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Abstract: Kenya is endowed with an enormous biodiversity of ecosystems and wildlife species. This rich wildlife together with other attractions has for decades made the country an important tourist destination and hub for the lucrative tourist industry. Nonetheless, wildlife species continue to face threats such as commercial poaching for trophies and human wildlife conflicts that hinder their survival. It is important to mitigate these threats to ensure wildlife species do not go extinct and Kenya continues to pull tourists into the country. The absence of wildlife security poses a threat to international relations. This is because wildlife crimes increase global crime rates that often lead to instability in the global arena. Furthermore, wildlife crime has, throughout history, been a source of funding for rebel groups, militias and extremist groups like the Alshabaab in Somalia. These groups undermine good governance and development efforts of states. This study aims at analyzing the key threats to wildlife security in Kenya and international relations, examining the severity of wildlife threats both locally in Kenya and globally and establishing probable solutions that can be tailor-made to address threats to wildlife security in Kenya and international relations.

I. INTRODUCTION

Kenya is ranked high in terms of biodiversity. Its enormous biodiversity includes 25,000 different animal species (Natural Habitat Adventures, 2021). Because of this, concerted efforts between the government of Kenya and its' citizenry have been made to protect this wildlife heritage. This has been possible through establishing conservation areas that account for 12.6% of the country's total area. In Kenya's tourism sector, wildlife heritage offers 10% of its Gross Domestic Product. This makes the tourism sector the third largest contributor to GDP after the manufacturing and agricultural sectors. Moreover, wildlife tourism generates about US 1 billion per year, making it the leading foreign exchange earner in Kenya. Nonetheless, the conservation of many of the world's large, charismatic, and legally protected species is in crisis for a variety of reasons including illegal taking and trafficking (Douglas and Alie, 2014).

The illegal trade in wildlife and its products has been the subject of an impressive array of international conferences, journal articles and conservation programs. As a result, 'wildlife crime' is now a buzzword. Despite this attention, the effective management of these issues is far from clear, and some components of the phenomenon, such as the ivory trade, are reportedly escalating rapidly. Moreover, rapid increase in human population has also contributed to a decline in wildlife population (Macmillan, 2016). This is because the increase in population often results in expansion in agriculture, settlements and development of infrastructure. This has led to the reduction and modification of wild areas leading to a threat of or/ extinction of wildlife species and natural areas which act as

their habitat. Wildlife security and International relations are linked in that; the absence of wildlife security leads to increased crime rates that often lead to instability in the global community. Illegal wildlife trade for example, is ranked top fourth in global illegal enterprises alongside international drug trade, human trafficking and trade in illegal arms. According to a report done by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, between 2016 and 2018, about USD 400 and USD 230 was generated for ivory and rhino horn trafficking respectively (UNODC, 2020).

Furthermore, wildlife crime has over the years become a source of funding for rebel groups, militias and extremist groups like the Lord's Resistance Army of Uganda and Alshabaab of Somalia (Cameron Lagrone & Josh Busby, 2015). These groups' operations jeopardize good governance and much of their unlawful activity takes place in already unstable countries, jeopardizing development efforts. The unlawful supply of guns used by local poachers is facilitated by corrupt security officers, porous borders, and endemic violence among communities in northern Kenya. (Sam Weru, 2016) Pastoralist communities are said to be obtaining weapons from Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, and Ethiopia, fueling violence over land, water, and livestock. This long-standing conflict is just as dangerous to wildlife as the possibility of links between poaching gangs and armed groups like al-Shabaab.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In order to combat threats against wildlife in Kenya and globally, we need to first understand how these threats come about in order to find the best solutions to these challenges. Little information is available to the public concerning wildlife threats. According to Okello and Kiringe, there is a general lack of research on the types of threat factors to protected areas, and their prevalence and severity in Kenya (Okello and Kiringe, 2004). This study seeks to document a series of these threats as well as offer solutions to these threats. The main threats that face Kenya's wildlife include; commercial poaching for trophies and bush meat, human wildlife conflicts and corridor and dispersal areas. The movement of trophies such as illegal tusks and rhino horns in Kenya is made easy due to the country's proximity and accessibility to the Indian Ocean coastline where tusks may be smuggled out of the country (porous border). The US and China are the biggest markets for these trophies.

III. OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the key threats to wildlife security in Kenya and international relations

2. To examine the severity of wildlife threats in Kenya and international relations
3. To establish probable solutions that can be tailor-made to address threats to wildlife security in Kenya and international relations

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been certain laws and policies that have been put in place in the global community to protect wildlife. One of it is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (CITES) also known as the Washington convention (Conference of the Parties, 1973). It was created in response to a resolution passed by members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature in 1963 (IUCN). In 1973, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) was opened for signatures, and it went into effect on July 1, 1975. Its main objective is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species (UNEP, 2016).

Species regulated by CITES are categorized into three appendixes namely; Species threatened with extinction, which are or may be affected by trade (Appendix I), Species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but may become so unless trade is strictly regulated to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival (Appendix II) and species where international trade is permitted but regulated. CITES regulates international trade but species become extinct for many reasons other than global trade (The Economics, Trade and Environment Unit UNEP, 2021). These reasons may be habitat destruction and fragmentation, overkill for local use or chains of extinction where the extinction of one species leads to the extinction of another. Other factors affecting the effectiveness of CITES include, poor law enforcement and less resources given to a specific protected area.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is a multilateral treaty that was open for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro on June 1992 and entered into force in 1993 (United Nations, 1992). Its main goals include; the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of its components; and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources. It has two supplementary agreements; the Cartagena Protocol (United Nations, 2000) that was adopted in 2000 and entered into force in 2003; and the Nagoya Protocol (United Nations, 2011) that was adopted in 2010 and entered into force in 2014. The CBD Secretariat was the focal point of the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010. In December 2010, the UN named 2011 to 2020 as the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, after a suggestion from CBD signatories at Nagoya.

On the other hand, the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act was established in 2013 and entered into force in 2014. The Act provides for protection, conservation and management of wildlife in Kenya and related matters. (Republic of Kenya, 2013) It also strives to establish a fair and just connection between humans and wildlife by guaranteeing that people can profit from wildlife without endangering ecosystems and

habitats (Robert Kaai et al., 2015). This helps prevent human-wildlife conflicts. Individuals can, for example, seek compensation from the County Wildlife Compensation Committee for loss of life, injury, or property damage caused by a variety of wildlife, including snakes, elephants, buffalo, lions, leopards, and crocodiles. Roles, responsibilities, offenses, and punishments for noncompliance are all defined by the law.

The Aichi Biodiversity Targets are included in the convention's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, which was created in 2010. The Aichi targets have five strategic goals that include; Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society, Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use, To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity, Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services, Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building (United Nations, 2013). The CBD in general has been weakened in implementation. Furthermore, most countries still lack adequate cross-sectoral interaction and coordination mechanisms, with current sectoral policies and agencies working in silos, frequently with contradictory and competing policies and failing to capitalize on potential synergies (IUCN, 2020).

V. KEY WILDLIFE THREATS IN KENYA

According to a report prepared by the taskforce on wildlife security, Kenya's wildlife is under siege. The jewel that is the hallmark of the country's crown is under serious and ever-increasing threat from a diversity of sources (Rotich, 2014).

Commercial poaching for trophies

Commercial poaching of wildlife for trophies such as ivory and rhino horn represents one of key threats to Kenya's wildlife today. This is driven by a very significant and growing demand for wildlife products, especially in Asia. Illegal wildlife trade is now a multi-billion Dollar business, which attracts transnational organized crime networks of the character and scale easily comparable to other types of global criminal activities, such as trafficking in drugs, human beings, firearms and counterfeit goods. Emblematic species like elephants and rhinoceros are particularly affected by wildlife trafficking to a point where their survival in the wild is in jeopardy. According to Sam Weru, the exit point for poached wildlife is mainly JKIA and the Mombasa port (Weru, 2016). To ensure poaching is curbed, there needs to be better collaboration, better screening, better vetting of agents and better detection capability. In the past, Mombasa, Kenya was the main source of illicit ivory shipments; but, since 2016, Nigeria has become a prominent collection and transit site (UNODC, 2020). Similarly, while China previously dominated, Viet Nam has risen to become the primary destination for these shipments.

VI. GLOBAL IMPACTS OF ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

Illegal trophy trafficking is believed to cost more than \$20 billion per year, making it one of the most lucrative industries after drugs and human trafficking (Nancy Kabete, 2016). Illicit trophy items, such as rhinoceros horn, can now cost more than gold. The markets for these trophies are East and Southern Asia, Europe and US (Sam Weru, 2016). Poaching and trafficking networks are usually diffuse but highly integrated. Across Africa, elephants and rhinos are being targeted by poachers and armed non-state actors including rebel movements such as the Lord's Resistance Army to satisfy increasing demand from growing middle classes across the world, particularly in Southeast Asia where ivory products and rhino horn are considered status symbols and used as ingredients in traditional medicine. Meanwhile, transnational organized crime groups and armed non-state actors are able to exploit institutional weakness, civil conflict and legislative loopholes in both source and consumer countries to feed this rising demand for rare commodities, acquiring vast profits.

A discordance between national legislation and institutional capacities for implementation on the one hand, and multilateral environmental agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) on the other, means that national legislation often remains inadequate to support these initiatives, protect endangered species and regulate cross-border trade. (The Economics, Trade and Environment Unit & UNEP, 2021). Attempts have been made to enhance support for the implementation of national wildlife regulations, such as the creation of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC). However, regulations stipulating which animal products can be legally traded vary greatly by country, resulting in a parallel legal and illegal trade. The legal trade in wildlife products is estimated at over \$300 billion per year; a figure that can obscure the lesser but still significant value of the illegal trade.

Illegal wildlife trade erodes state authority and fuels civil conflict, threatening national stability and bringing great economic losses globally. (UN Environment Assembly, 2021) But the true scale of the trade is unknown, as are its indirect costs in security and political implications. Restricting an analysis of the global implications of environmental crime to biodiversity considerations limits the focus to wildlife supply countries. The illegal wildlife trade involves poachers, armed non-state actors from source nations, international crime groups and institutional corruption across global network chains and a range of players involved in demand countries from organized crime syndicates and non-state actors to legitimate authorities. To combat the threat, leaders in the international community, especially from supply and demand countries, need to collectively expand and deepen their levels of cooperation. Better and shared information will position governments to counter this transnational crime more

effectively, as will be enhancing the design and implementation of national and regional legislation and invoking stricter penalties against illegal traffickers and trader.

Commercial poaching for bush meat

It has reached high levels and has led to the rise in commercial bush meat trade (Lindsey et al., 2013). KWS has been urged to mobilize support for cross-sectoral enforcement against bush meat poaching activities as well as increase policing and surveillance of bush meat trade by all enforcement agencies.

Pressures on Marine and Coastal life

The country has rich assets comprised of; coral reefs, sea-grass beds, estuaries, mangrove forests and other wetlands resources. They offer great services to the community in addition to providing crucial nursery habitats for marine animals and sanctuaries for wildlife species. They also grow tourism while creating job opportunities. However, there is an increased pressure and illegal grabbing of such land, thus posing a big threat.

Human – wildlife conflicts

Human-wildlife conflicts have become more frequent and severe in recent years. This is mainly due to human population growth, extension of access networks and expansion of agricultural and settlement activities which together have led to increased human encroachment on previously wild and uninhabited areas (Huaping, 2019). As a result, there is a rise in human-wildlife conflicts. To address this, there needs to be proper land use planning as well as come up with a human-wildlife conflict reduction management strategy. Moreover, concrete programs for education, collaborative management and benefit-sharing with local communities and county governments should be encouraged.

VII. SEVERITY OF WILDLIFE THREATS IN KENYA

The lands outside parks are important to wildlife as they act as dispersal areas. These lands are threatened by land sub division, unplanned developments for tourist accommodation and agricultural expansion. This often led to human wildlife conflicts. In a case where wildlife make damages to people's lives and property and the damage is not addressed by the government or conservation stakeholders, the local community might result in retaliation to conservation initiatives. This has been seen in Amboseli, Tsavo and Maasai Mara (Ogotu, 2018). On the other hand, wildlife in protected areas is also under threat. Protected areas in Kenya comprise of 23 terrestrial National Parks, 28 terrestrial National Reserves, 4 marine National Parks, 6 marine National Reserves and 4 national sanctuaries. (KWS, 2020) The threats include; human encroachment, poaching for commercial and subsistence use, loss of migration and dispersal areas, human wildlife conflicts and habitat degradation as shown in the table below (Okech, 2011).

Table 1: The threat factors that operate against biodiversity in Kenya's protected areas, their prevalence and severity as stated by protected area officers

Threat factor identified by protected area officers	Number of protected areas where the threat factor exists	Prevalence Threat Index (PTI)
Illegal killing of wildlife for their bush meat for the local or regional markets	48 (96%)	78,5%
Human - wildlife conflicts.	41 (82%)	58,0%
Poaching for international commercial purposes.	40 (80%)	66,0%
Loss, conversion and degradation of wildlife migration and dispersal corridors important for the protected area	35 (70%)	53,5%
Agricultural expansion and other land use changes incompatible to biodiversity requirements	18 (36%)	31,0%

Source: Wildlife-community conflicts in conservation areas in Kenya, Roselyne Okech

VIII. THEORETICAL REVIEW

The liberal theory can be used to analyze this study. This theory states that states exist not solely as individuals but as part of an international system that limits their behaviors (Moravcsik, 1997). It does this by shaping the underlying preferences on which the foreign policy of states are based on. Three main assumptions in the liberal theory include; the fundamental actors in world politics are individuals and privately established groups with autonomous preferences, interstate behavior is controlled not by state power but the pattern of state preferences and governments are the main political unit. In the field of International Relations, liberalism seeks to elaborate how progress, human reason, individual rights and freedoms can give rise to more peaceful interstate relations.

Moreover, liberals claim that democratic states are less likely to go for war. They are also more likely to engage in global trade and investment opportunities that enhance their economic development. Also, they are likely to collaborate with other states via international institutions to help solve common issues or threats (Cavelty et al., 2010). In the study, it is ideal for states to join forces to combat wildlife threats. This is because some threats have a spillover effect. A good case example is poaching for commercial uses where ivory from Elephants and rhinos is traded and targeted by poachers and armed non-state actors, including rebel movements such as the Lord's Resistance Army, to satisfy increasing demand from growing middle classes across the world, particularly in Southeast Asia where ivory products and rhino horn are considered status symbols and used as ingredients in traditional medicine.

IX. INFLUENCE OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ON HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT (HWC)

Several international organizations have pitched camp in Botswana and are engaged with wildlife conservation efforts. Among these notable international conservation societies include; (KCS) which remains as one of the longest serving international NGO, dedicated to protecting the country's wildlife and community wellbeing. It has been an instrumental advocacy society, whose mandate entails protection of wildlife and natural resources particularly for communities which reside close to wildlife conservation areas. The KCS has enumerated all the population of the elephants in Botswana and estimates that the country has and approximately 130,000 elephants which are freely roaming. This international NGO has documented that Botswana is home to a world critically endangered species of wild dog and that, 25% of world cheetah are remaining. The international conservation society is also engaged in global awareness campaigns, aimed at fundraising for wildlife protection and conservation efforts with an overriding mandate of diffusing HWC in Botswana which is quite alarming.

The NGO has influenced HWC through continued investment in fencing of wildlife sanctuaries and habitats as well as advocacy of protection of endangered species. Additionally, another internationally renowned wildlife organization is SWCF which operates in Botswana conserving the country's wildlife. The international NGO has been instrumental in feeding wild animals during drought seasons and ensuring their stay in their habitats, where they manage their movements which ensures minimizing the occurrence of HWC. The European commission has also been pivotal in conservation end overs in Botswana. It plays an integral role in developing CSO's capacity to hold the government accountable in the event of HWC which requires compensation. It has also been engaged in supporting community-based adaptation to ecosystems, particularly where wildlife is in close proximity.

X. CONCLUSIONS

Managing population increases, improved livelihoods and poverty reduction can help reduce human impacts within and around protected areas. Involving local communities in sustainable natural resource use and conservation must be encouraged. A national land use plan can also help and will put into perspective land use practices that are compatible with the socio-economic needs, natural resource endowment, and ecological and climatic constraints within different regions of the country. This study article concludes that, HWC takes place when the essential demand/needs of human being and those of wildlife clash with each other resulting to a conflict. In this regard, the study concludes that, HWC is a threat to human security of the people in North Africa, where local people regard values of wildlife being prioritized than theirs and thus, feel inadequately employed to deal with the conflict. Further, this article concludes that, the role of international community is double edged with positive and negative attributes. In this regard, the engagement of international community in the

escalation of HWC, several studies document the positive aspect of international community, which is realized through funding, research and advocacy. Finally, several strategies have been initiated which feature international cooperation partnership and research aimed at combating WHC. In essence, collaborative approaches which entail all stakeholders (community stakeholders, policy formulators, institutions, governments, NGO's) have proved to be effective.

XI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Some of the recommendations offered to curb illegal wildlife trade include;

1. Gather empirical evidence on the actors involved in the illegal wildlife trade
2. Analyze the long-term political and security implications of the wildlife trade in order to formulate a long-term action plan against wildlife trafficking.
3. Map actors and understand the illegal wildlife trade chain to make it easier for governments to implement effective strategies.
4. Enforce CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) through national and regional legislation.
5. The article recognizes that, the strategies employed currently are commonly applied globally and were just adapted without having tested them to the environment, to determine their suitability which may explain their failure. Secondly, they are not sustainable because they address short term objectives. Therefore, in order to find long term sustainable solutions, the study recommends that; Government should engage in scientific research to find solutions that are proven with data.
6. All stakeholders should be engaged and involved in formulating strategies to mitigate HWC with solutions that are not imported from outside but coming from the community and suitable to the local situation.
7. Implementation of the preferred strategies should be decentralized to foster local community participation and empowerment. The private sector investment should be engaged in the identified projects in the communities to expand the projects and create more opportunities and employment, to reduce reliance on hunting and dependency syndrome from government.

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