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EU Advocates For The Slaughter of Rhinos And Protecting Criminal Syndicates



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union at the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES CoP20)

(Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 24 November - 5 December 2025)

9.	Ceratotherium simum simum (Southern Square-lipped Rhinoceros, Southern White Rhinoceros)	Amend the annotation of the population of Ceratotherium simum simum of Namibia listed in Appendix II For the exclusive purpose of allowing international trade in: a) live animals for in-situ conservation only; b) hunting trophies; and c) trade in rhino horn stocks owned by the	Namibia	The proposal should not be supported unless the scope is significantly reduced, in particular by excluding the trade in rhino horn, and additional safeguards are added for trade in live animals.	(-)

Neo-colonial conservation politics are helping drive a species to extinction

In a decision that will be remembered as one of the greatest failures of modern conservation, the **European Union has once again chosen to block Namibia's proposal to regulate rhino horn trade under the CITES convention**.

Behind the technical language and diplomatic phrasing lies a devastating truth: **the EU's decision strengthens illegal trade, protects the profits of criminal syndicates, and pushes Africa's rhinos closer to extinction**.

This is not conservation. It's hypocrisy.

Africa Is Fighting Alone

In 1950, Africa was home to more than 100,000 rhinos. Today, fewer than 20,000 remain. Over 80,000 have been lost to **illegal poaching and black-market horn trafficking**, driven by international criminal networks.

If current trends continue, rhinos could vanish from the wild within 15 years. Of the nine African countries that still have rhinos, **Namibia and South Africa protect over 80% of what's left** — at enormous financial cost. Rangers patrol daily, private landowners invest millions in fencing and security, and conservationists live with the constant threat of poachers.

Meanwhile, **the EU sits thousands of kilometres away, contributing almost nothing to frontline protection**, yet wielding the power to decide how Africans are allowed to defend their wildlife.

Illegal Trade Thrives When Legal Tools Are Blocked

Let's be clear: illegal horn trade exists *because it is profitable*. And it is profitable due to a limited supply of horn originating **only from illegal activity** keeping the value artificially high. Black markets thrive when there is no regulated alternative.

Namibia's proposal aimed to **take the power away from poachers and traffickers**, to make horn traceable, controlled, and useless to criminals.

Instead, the EU chose to **maintain the status quo** — a status quo where syndicates smuggle horn through porous borders, where honest landowners are targeted, and where African governments are left to bleed financially in their fight against an industry worth billions on the black market.

The EU has not offered a better solution. It has offered *no solution at all*.

Neo-Colonial Conservation: "We Decide, You Pay"

The decision is a textbook example of **neo-colonial conservation**. European bureaucrats, with no rhinos, no poaching crisis, and no skin in the game, impose ideological policies on African nations that actually protect these animals.

Namibia is told:

• You may not use your natural resources to fund protection.
• You may not use trade mechanisms to collapse the black market.
• You must keep spending millions to protect rhinos — but on our terms.

This is the same paternalistic mindset that has crippled African conservation policy for decades: **Europe decides, Africa pays**.

The Real Beneficiaries: Criminal Syndicates

Every time a legal pathway to manage rhino horn is blocked, the illegal networks cheer. Poachers and traffickers thrive in a world where legal systems are shut down. By opposing Namibia's proposal, the EU has **sided with the very criminals driving rhinos to extinction**.

These syndicates don't care about moral arguments. They care about opportunity. And the EU has just handed them a golden one.

A Strategy to Eliminate Illegal Trade

Namibia's vision is simple: **starve the black market**. Use existing international systems, DNA technology, and strict controls to make horn traceable, verifiable, and ultimately unprofitable for criminals.

This is not about flooding markets. It's about **undercutting them**. It's about removing the financial oxygen that illegal networks rely on. It's about taking control away from poachers and putting it back into the hands of legitimate conservation authorities.

The EU, by blocking this strategy, has chosen to let the illegal trade continue unchecked — while pretending to be moral guardians of wildlife from their comfortable offices in Brussels.

Europe Must Stop Undermining Africa

Namibia is not asking for charity. We are asking to be **allowed to fight the illegal trade effectively**. The EU's position leaves us with the worst of all worlds: rampant poaching, no financial sustainability, and a shrinking rhino population.

If Europe truly wants to save rhinos, it must stop **dictating from afar** and start **supporting African solutions**. Otherwise, the extinction of rhinos won't just be an African tragedy — it will be a European shame.

History Will Judge This Decision

The EU's vote was not neutral. It was a deliberate choice that will have consequences for decades. Every rhino killed, every horn trafficked, every reserve forced to give up its rhinos because it can't afford protection — all of it traces back to policy decisions like this one.
History will ask: **Why did Europe side with criminals over conservationists?**
And the answer will not be flattering.

"Europe's decision is not neutral — it has consequences measured in carcasses. While Brussels congratulates itself for being 'cautious,' poachers are pulling triggers and communities are burying the animals they've spent decades protecting. Namibia will not apologise for wanting to dismantle the illegal trade. We live this crisis every day. Europe only debates it."
— **Alex Oelofse**, Conservationist and Member of HORN (Help Our Rhinos Now, Namibia)