



Scientists performed DNA tests on over 4,000 elephant tusks from seized shipments, and the DNA showed family connections among African elephants.

Officials can use the connections to track and identify **poaching** areas and **ivory** trafficking networks at the center of an illegal trade that still continues to harm the population of Earth's largest land animal. According to Samuel Wasse, a biologist at the University of Washington, once the ivory leaves Africa, it becomes very difficult to follow. The largest amount of ivory is now being smuggled out of Uganda through the Mombasa seaport. However, smugglers also use ports in Kenya and Nigeria.

Every year, people who poach kill at least 20,000 African elephants for their tusks. People can stop this illegal activity if they identify the **middlemen** in the whole network of poaching. If middlemen get arrested, nobody can buy the tusks from the poachers.

Difficult words: **poach** (to illegally hunt or catch animals), **ivory** (the hard white thing like a bone or tooth that makes the tusks of elephants), **middlemen** (the people who help buy things or sell things for other people).

**Discussion Questions****Topic Talk**

1. Define the following words: *poach*, *ivory* and *middlemen*
2. Why did scientists perform DNA tests on over 4,000 elephant tusks from seized shipments?
3. How can officials use the data results from the DNA tests?
4. Where is the largest amount of ivory being smuggled?
5. How many African elephants do poachers kill each year for their tusks?
6. What can people do to stop the illegal killing of African elephants?

Express Your Thoughts

1. Are there elephants in your country? *If yes*, is it legal to kill them for their tusks?
2. Is ivory business legal in your country?
3. Where does ivory in your country generally imported from?
4. Is collecting ivories popular in your country? Do you have your own collection of ivories?