



KERATAN AKHBAR

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Tackle illegal online wildlife trade too, cops urged

KUALA LUMPUR: The war against poachers by the police would be a great help in addressing the rampant illegal wildlife trade and selling of exotic meats in the country.

Traffic (the wildlife trade monitoring network) senior communications officer Elizabeth John said poachers and smugglers were well established, connected and funded.

Hence, the commitment showed by the police in weeding out the activities and bringing wildlife criminals to justice was most welcome.

“Addressing persistent demand for wildlife, such as for exotic pets and meats or wildlife trophies and souvenirs, is a

challenge that needs to be addressed.

“Enforcement agencies like the Wildlife and National Parks Department have traditionally been understaffed and under-funded.

“This is why support from police, especially commitment from the highest levels of the force, would be of great help.

“Their expertise is critical in dismantling organised criminal networks, which have been using Malaysian logistics centres as entry and exit points to move wildlife and their parts such as ivory, rhino horns, pangolins, and critically endangered tortois-

es, and the laundering of gains from illegal wildlife trade in Malaysia.”



Elizabeth John

She said the police should expand their scope. For example, to scrutinise the illegal online

wildlife trade, as the Internet was a booming marketplace for poachers and smugglers.

“Many species like our tigers could be wiped out soon if we do not step up our fight against poaching and illegal trade.”

John said there was room for improvement when it came to legislation and enforcement.

“While Peninsular Malaysia has very strong wildlife protection laws and Sabah has strengthened its law in recent years, Sarawak still has a long way to go before it catches up, from the perspective of offering full protection from hunting and trade and in terms of higher penalties.”

Protection of the Natural Her-

itage of Malaysia president Puan Sri Shariffa Sabrina Syed Akil said while she lauded the move by the police, she believed that the root cause of illegal poaching was logging.

“We should stop logging as opening logging roads will increase access for poachers to the wildlife habitats, causing a serious decline in our wildlife population.”

Shariffa Sabrina suggested that the death penalty be imposed on those found guilty of poaching.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Bador said on Friday the police had declared “total war” on wildlife poachers and restaurants serving exotic meats.