

March 2, 2017

Celebrities tell South Africa: “We don’t want your rhino horn!”

Hanoi (March 2, 2017) - A number of major Vietnamese celebrities including diva Hong Nhung, singer Thanh Bui, MC Anh Tuan and many others have joined with Education for Nature – Vietnam (ENV) to promote a [global petition](#) calling on South Africa to withdraw their plan to legalize the rhino horn trade.



The “We don’t want your rhino horn!” campaign in support of Born Free’s petition aims to collect 50,000 signatures from around the country and highlight that the proposed rhino horn trade legalization will fuel renewed demand, and threatens Vietnam’s progress in combating crime involving rhino horn and reducing demand for rhino horn.

On February 8, 2017 issue of the Government Gazette (Vol 620/Issue No. 40601) of the Republic of South Africa published draft regulations for the domestic trade in rhinoceros horn, or a part, product or derivative of rhinoceros horn. If these new regulations are approved, rhino horns can be legally imported into Vietnam and other countries.

In recent years, the international community has considered Vietnam as a major consumer market for rhino horns, and that the demand for rhino horn in Vietnam is pushing rhino populations in South Africa and other countries to the verge of extinction. However, Vietnam has been making great progress in addressing this problem through raising awareness, strengthening law enforcement, and improving legislation.

ENV Director of Policy and Legislation, Ms. Bui Thi Ha said: “*Opening the door to legal trade undermines enforcement in consumer countries, and would likely stimulate greater demand, putting further pressure on wild rhinos everywhere. This new development is in conflict with global efforts to conserve these endangered species and will inevitably hasten the end of the rhino.*”

According to Vietnam's new penal code, expected to become effective in 2017, any crime involving a small amount of rhino horn (50gram) will be subject to prosecution. However, it will be very challenging for Vietnamese authorities to enforce the law if South Africa legalize the rhino horn trade.

Diva Hong Nhung, another ENV rhino ambassador added: *"As a Vietnamese citizen who has witnessed the carnage personally in South Africa, I, together with other artists and Vietnamese people, want to send a clear message to proponents of the rhino horn trade in South Africa that we, the Vietnamese people, do not want your rhino horn!"*

Nhung urges the South African government to reject the proposed legislation and stand with Vietnam in protecting rhinos.

The petition is here: <http://bit.ly/wedontwantyourrhinohorn>

ENDS

For more information, please contact

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About ENV

Education for Nature – Vietnam (ENV) was established in 2000 as Vietnam's first non-governmental organization focused on the conservation of nature and the protection of the environment. ENV combats the illegal wildlife trade and aims to foster greater understanding amongst the Vietnamese public about the need to protect nature and wildlife.

ENV employs creative and innovative strategies to influence public attitudes and reduce demand for wildlife trade products. ENV works closely with government partners to strengthen policy and legislation, and directly supports enforcement efforts in the protection of endangered species of regional, national, and global significance.

Since 2007, ENV has focused its activities on three major program areas that comprise ENV's integrated strategic approach for addressing illegal wildlife trade in Vietnam. These include:

- Reducing consumer demand for wildlife products through investment in a long-term and sustained effort to influence public attitudes and behavior
- Strengthening enforcement through direct support and assistance to law enforcement agencies, and mobilizing active public participation in helping combat wildlife crime
- Working with policy-makers to strengthen legislation, close loopholes in the law, and promote sound policy and decision-making relevant to wildlife protection
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