



MEDIA ADVISORY

ASIAN GOVERNMENTS ALERTED: CLOSE WILDLIFE MARKETS TO PREVENT MORE VIRUS OUTBREAKS

CHINA NOT THE ONLY COUNTRY WITH THRIVING BLACK ANIMAL TRADE

New Report Reveals Extensive Criminal Supply Chains Feeding Markets Across Asia

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Bangkok— The counter-trafficking organization Freeland is alerting Asian nations to more virus risks from wildlife trafficking. Freeland has produced a new report detailing extensive criminal trafficking supply chains smuggling pangolins and other protected species into markets in 6 Asian countries. Wildlife traffickers not only threaten these species with extinction, but also are supplying a direct threat to wider human populations.

The report shows that major wildlife trafficking supply chains that originate in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia are not just ending up in China; they are also transiting Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam, with increasing percentages of animals and body parts being offloaded and sold to local consumers.

The report reveals the involvement and methods of specific organized crime groups that, on a weekly basis, are trafficking tons of carcasses and body parts of pangolins, lions, turtles, rhinos, elephants, sharks, as well as live cargo of turtles, snakes, birds, and many more species into Asian markets.

“This illegal trade is massive and threatens many species with extinction, and as we have seen with Coronavirus, people’s lives too,” said Steven Galster, Freeland Founder. “China is the number one consumer, but there are other thriving wildlife markets across Asia. Jakarta hosts wild animal markets, as does Bangkok, Hanoi, parts of Laos and Myanmar, not to mention numerous restaurants and new online platforms.”

The report, *“Wildlife Trafficking in Asia: Evolution, Trajectory and Ways to Stop it”* will be released in English, Thai, Vietnamese, and Chinese at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand in Bangkok this month (exact date and time to be announced within days). Law enforcement officials will join Freeland to provide a detailed look at Asia’s wildlife trafficking crisis and options for ending it. **Freeland cautions governments and the public NOT to destroy the animals.** Closing markets and refraining from consumption of the animals is the only sure way to prevent the spread and reoccurrence of outbreaks.

For more info: info@freeland.org www.freeland.org