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The age of extinction

'We did it to ourselves': scientist says intrusion into nature led to pandemic

Leading US biologist Thomas Lovejoy says to stop future outbreaks we need more respect for natural world

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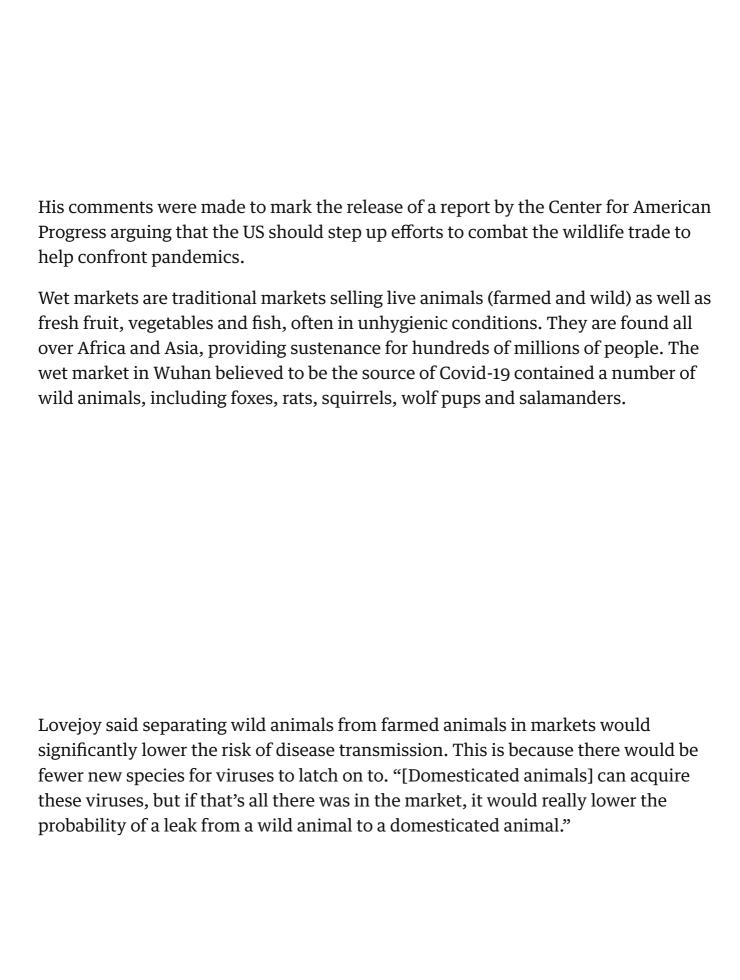
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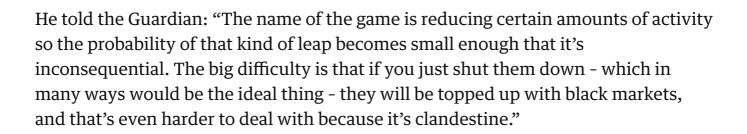
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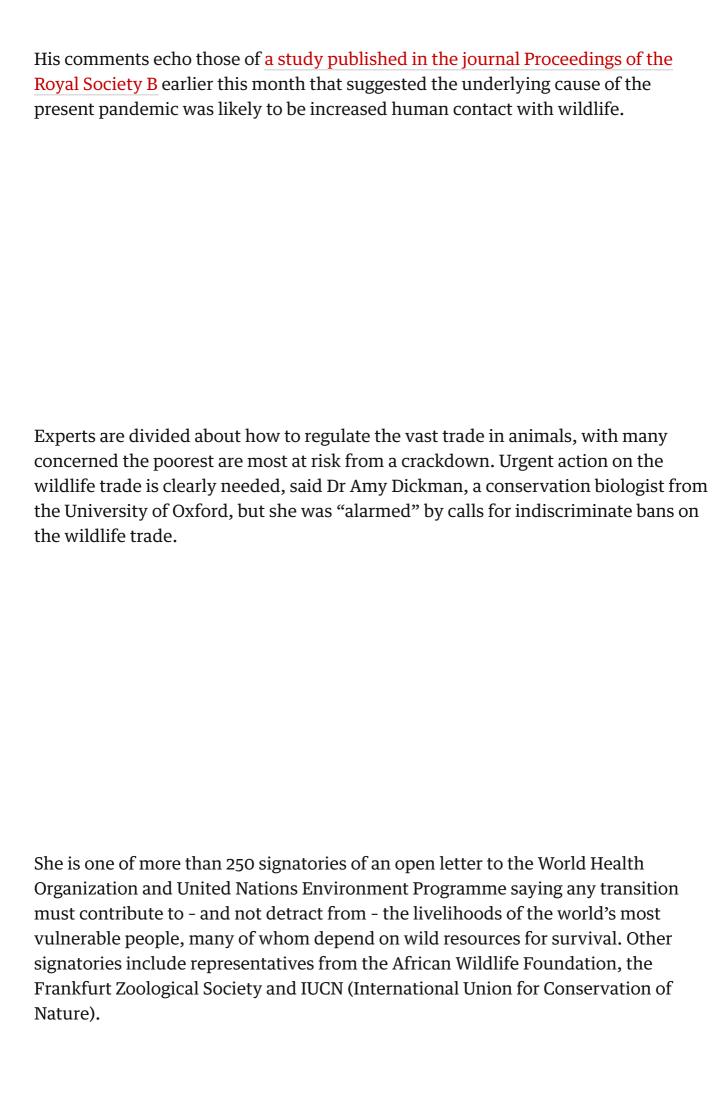
Scientists are discovering two to four new viruses are created every year as a result of human infringement on the natural world, and any one of those could turn into a pandemic, according to Thomas Lovejoy, who coined the term "biological diversity" in 1980 and is often referred to as the godfather of biodiversity.

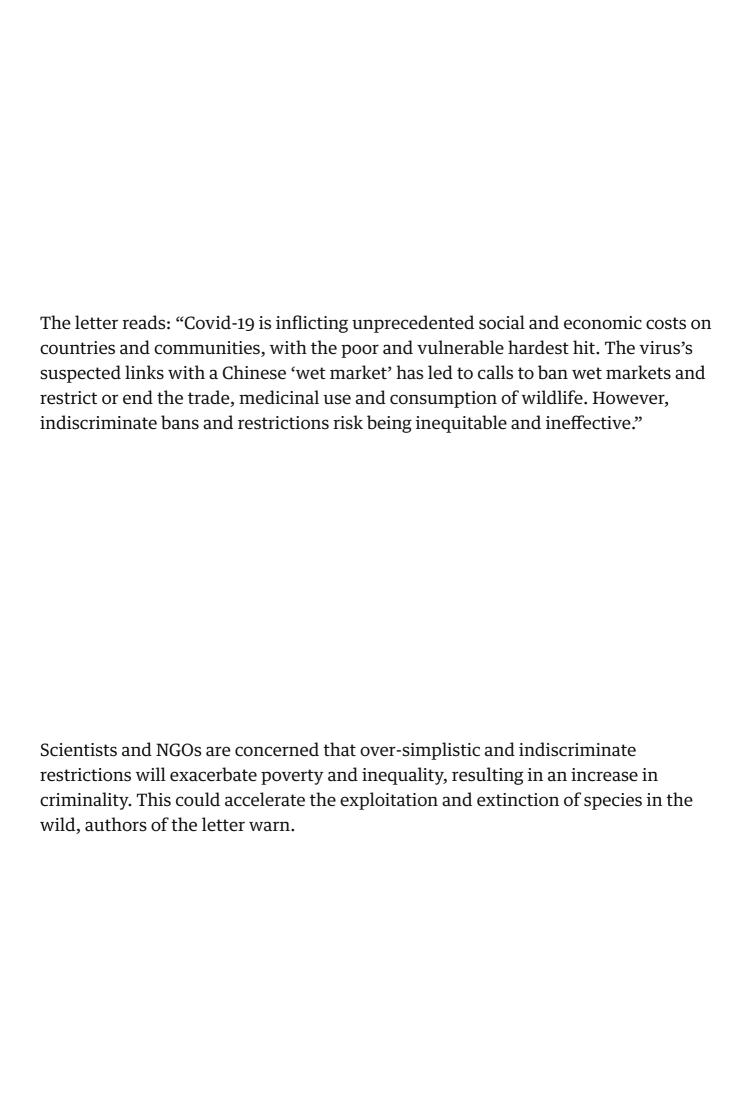
"This pandemic is the consequence of our persistent and excessive intrusion in nature and the vast illegal wildlife trade, and in particular, the wildlife markets, the wet markets, of south Asia and bush meat markets of Africa... It's pretty obvious, it was just a matter of time before something like this was going to happen," said Lovejoy, a senior fellow at the United Nations Foundation and professor of environment science at George Mason University.

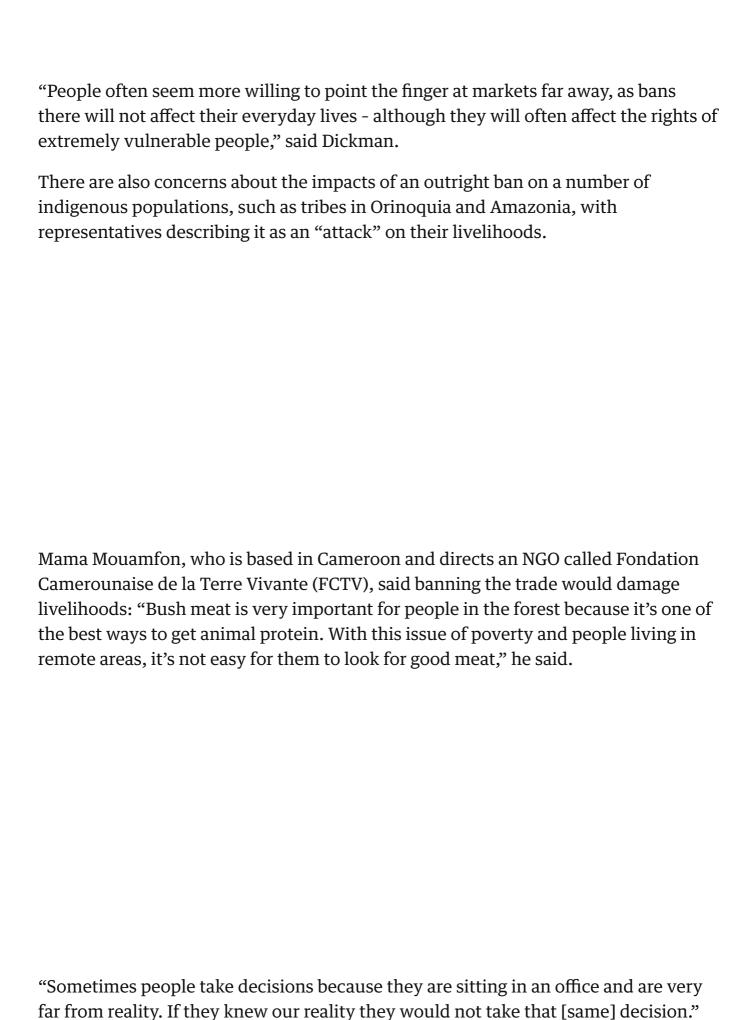




The pandemic will cost the global economy \$1tn this year, according to the World Economic Forum, with vulnerable communities impacted the most, and nearly half of all jobs in Africa could be lost. "This is not nature's revenge, we did it to ourselves. The solution is to have a much more respectful approach to nature, which includes dealing with climate change and all the rest," Lovejoy said.







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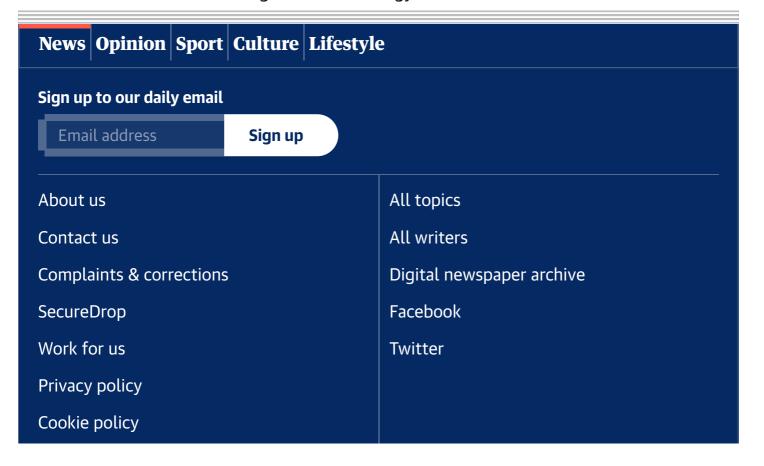
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