



April 14, 2021

Dear Mr. Habeck, Ms. Baerbock, Dr. Blaufuss and Ms. Lemke,

A ban on trophy imports will only harm conservation and African rights to self determination

[Resource Africa](#), supports the work of southern African rural communities represented by community leaders under the banner of the [Community Leaders' Network \(CLN\)](#). We want to see recognition of local communities and indigenous people's rights to sustainably use and manage their natural resources and their enjoyment of these rights. We are all too familiar with the harsh yoke of social injustice carried by peoples who have been subjected to decades of colonialism and stripped of their rights to self-determination. As such, we applaud and endorse the German Green Party's commitment to social transformation and human rights.

It is with dismay, therefore, that we note the Green Party has included in its party manifesto that "**trophy hunting and wildlife trade must be effectively prevented**", following this up with a parliamentary question suggesting that legal, sustainable hunting is contributing to the decline of iconic species.

With respect, we believe you have been misled by animal protection and animal rights campaigners. These campaigners perpetuate the mistaken and dangerous claim that banning hunting outright, or banning hunting imports, will save Africa's iconic animals from extinction. In fact, the best available evidence indicates that a ban on hunting imports could have catastrophic consequences for wildlife conservation.

Moreover, these campaigns devalue black lives, deny local communities the right to self-determination, and jeopardise community-based approaches to wildlife conservation that have been proven to work for decades. These campaigns are launched by western organisations without any consultation with rural African's who own and live amongst this wildlife, or our governments. This is because bans on trophy imports will have detrimental effects on rural African lives and livelihoods. The perspective of Africans is not sought and our voice unwelcomed.

Resource Africa encourages and welcomes Western citizens and governments' contributions on important debates about biodiversity conservation globally. However, we insist on equitable, respectful discussions between external interests and local people, whose rights to sustainably manage and benefit from their wildlife on their land are enshrined in national and international laws. We also recognise that there is no one perspective on, or solution to, conserving biodiversity. As the African proverb goes, "Hunt in every jungle, for there is wisdom and good hunting in all of them".

African communities have been conserving their natural resources – land, water, soil, plant genetic resources, and wildlife — for millennia, according to their own conservation, management and governance systems. They have achieved great success in conserving often dangerous animals – while wolves, brown bears, bison, and other iconic animals were driven to the brink of extinction in Europe and North America. Local people's perspectives, grounded in their lived realities of coexisting with wildlife and nurturing it, together with science-based evidence of the benefits to people and wildlife associated with sustainable rights must be the starting point for constructive discussions – not misinformation or the uninformed opinions of people far removed from African realities.



Respecting Rights, Resources, and Livelihoods

Banning hunting imports from Africa will have devastating consequences for our beloved iconic species and the livelihoods of people whose rights are continuously and systematically denied by outside interests. Bans will reduce the value of wildlife, especially those that are prone to raiding crops or killing livestock, to a dangerous liability that will result in increased human wildlife conflict. A greater injustice will be to relegate this and future generations of rural African communities to the same plight as previous and elder living generations who were thrown off their land and denied the rights to thrive and sustain from their land in tandem with nature. The result then was loss of wildlife and habitat – a disaster for conservation, local traditions and livelihoods. We reject the myth that western value systems are superior to those of Africans. It has never been more important to respect the rights of local people.

Resource Africa believes that the Green Party and local African communities will be natural allies on many issues, especially those at the intersection of conservation and human rights. We invite you to come to the table with local African communities and scientists to discuss our commonalities and hear African perspectives on African issues. We respectfully ask that you accept this invitation and allow us to provide space for an open, honest, and productive discussion to enable you to develop policy positions that will affect the livelihoods of millions of Africans as well as the future of conservation from an appropriately informed and knowledgeable position.

Sincerely,

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