

## **Interventionism, global security and the new era of biodiversity conservation.**

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This paper explores an increasingly important question: what does it mean to extend the debates about global security and principles of interventionism to wildlife conservation? It applies a political ecology lens to existing debates on global interventionism, which thus far have focused on the human world; specifically they address questions of the duty or responsibility of the international community, notions of a just war and intervention in defence of vulnerable or persecuted communities (Elshtain, 2004; Zehfuss, 2014; Bellamy and Williams, 2011). However, these debates are changing and the arguments are increasingly invoked and extended to justify protection of non-human nature (Eckersley, 2007). This is especially the case in recent calls to respond more forcefully to rises in poaching of certain iconic and charismatic species, especially elephants, rhinos, tigers and lions (Masse and Lunstrum, 2016; Büscher and Ramutsindela, 2015; Büscher, 2015; Neumann, 2004). The purpose of this paper is to investigate this overlooked area of analysis and to interrogate what this shift means, in discursive and material terms.

This raises interesting questions about the exceptional status of iconic species, especially elephants and rhinos, and their status relative to that of certain human communities in Sub-Saharan Africa. Further, recent debates echo the earlier invocation of ideas of the development-security nexus, in which underdevelopment is reconceptualised as a global security threat (Duffield, 2001). Such ideas are mirrored in current arguments that wildlife losses constitute security threats because high value wildlife products generate 'threat finance' for organised crime, rebel groups and even international terrorist networks; therefore poaching and trafficking is rapidly being reconceptualised and presented as a major threat to the stability of states and even to the international system (White, 2014; Duffy, 2016; Nelleman et al, 2016). This raises a series of interesting conceptual issues because it intersects with ideas of ecocide and protection of the non-human world as well as the need to recognise the specific histories and politics of wildlife conservation, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa.