



Embassy of the
United States
MADAGASCAR



British Embassy
Madagascar



Ambassade d'Allemagne
Antananarivo

Joint statement of the US, the UK, the EU, and Germany

We are saddened to learn that more than 10,000 radiated tortoises were the object of illegal wildlife trafficking last week in Toliara, and that there continue to be significant, on-going challenges in the case, including theft of some of the recovered tortoises and the discovery that many have been slaughtered for meat. Nonetheless, we are pleased with the coordinated and quick response of the government leading to the recovery of these animals and the arrest of three suspects in this case. We congratulate the regional management of the Ministry of Environment, Ecology and Tourism in Toliara, (DREEF), the prosecutor serving as the local representative of the Ministry of Justice, and the Anti-Corruption Bureau (BIANCO) in Toliara, as well as the local authorities for their excellent collaboration and their perseverance in handling this case.

At the same time, we strongly encourage the Government of Madagascar to act quickly to protect the tortoises already recovered, and follow through with the official investigation of this affair, so that all involved parties, including the unethical offenders who are the ringleaders and principal beneficiaries of illegal trafficking, may be held responsible and duly punished.

At the same time, given that many of the tortoises were likely destined for the international market, we recognize the need to address the networks that facilitate the buying and selling of trafficked species, and we are willing to offer all possible assistance to work with destination countries in order to stem the demand for tortoises.

Wildlife trafficking is a problem that has negative consequences in Madagascar for the environment, for local development, for social cohesion, and for security. There is a lot of work to be done to put an end to this illegal behavior, including involving all relevant parties from the justice sector in the process from arrest and investigation through prosecution and sentencing.

Although we are aware that the state has limited resources, we nevertheless call on the government to provide sufficient resources to those institutions responsible for protecting the environment, most importantly the decentralized regional and local offices, to develop an effective response on the ground.

This case is a crucial opportunity to demonstrate to the Malagasy people and to the international community that wildlife trafficking will not be tolerated in Madagascar, and that those who engage in this practice – whatever their positions -- will pay for their crimes.

The Embassy of the United States

The Embassy of the United Kingdom

The European Union Delegation to Madagascar

The Embassy of Germany