

《Who is the ' Ivory Queen ' ? 谁是“象牙女王” ? 》

导读:根据坦桑尼亚国家及跨国重罪调查组公布的信息,“象牙女王”杨凤兰十余年内秘密走私了价值250万美金的706枚象牙,意味着大约350头大象因此被盗猎杀害。



A 66-year-old bespectacled Chinese woman may not be most people's idea of an ivory smuggling kingpin, but that's exactly what Tanzanian investigators say Yang Feng Glan is.

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She is accused of leading one of Africa's biggest ivory smuggling rings, responsible for more than 700 elephant tusks worth \$2.5m illegally leaving Tanzania for the Far East.

????????????????????——???250????700????????????????????

Ms Yang denies all charges and her trial is set to begin in Dar es Salaam on Monday.

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So what do we know about the woman dubbed the "Ivory Queen" and what exactly is she accused of?

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Originally from Beijing, Ms Yang first went to Tanzania in the 1970s. She was one of the first Chinese students to graduate in Swahili and worked as a translator for Tazara, the Tanzania-Zambia Railway project that China was helping to fund and build.

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According to China Daily, after the railway was completed in 1975 she returned to Beijing to work in the government's foreign trade department.

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It wasn't until 1998 that she decided to set up business in Tanzania. In fact, she set up two.

1998????????????????????????????

She rented a two-storey building in downtown Dar es Salaam, opening a Chinese restaurant on the ground floor and establishing an investment company, Beijing Great Wall Investment, on the floor above.

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The restaurant proved to be a success but in 2014 she told China Daily: "Now I do not count on the restaurant to make money. Instead, I see it as a place where people from China and Tanzania can communicate, get to know more friends and conduct information exchanges."

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She has spoken of her attachment to Tanzania, both physical and emotional. Her daughter is named Fei, the first character of the word for Africa in Mandarin.

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By 2012 she was secretary-general of the Tanzania China-Africa Business Council.

2012????????????????????

"I know I should have retired, but whenever I think that my language advantage and network can help many Chinese and Tanzanians and increase mutual trust and confidence, I do not want to stop. I myself am the best illustration of China-Tanzania friendship," she said in 2014.

[illegible]

But at the same time, investigators say, Ms Yang was a major player in a far darker relationship developing between Tanzania and China - the illegal ivory trade. They say she was a key link between poachers in East Africa and buyers in China for more than a decade.

[illegible]

Tanzania's National and Transnational Serious Crimes Investigation Unit tracked her for more than a year. She was arrested after a high-speed car chase in October 2015 and charged with ivory smuggling between 2000 and 2014.

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Poachers and ivory traffickers are threatening the very existence of elephants in Central and East Africa. Tanzania lost more than 60% of its elephants between 2009 and 2014.

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The role of Chinese buyers in this hardly comes as a surprise - demand for ivory in China is high because of its use in ornaments and even in holistic medicine.

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Most of the time those arrested are small-time smugglers - which is why Yang Feng Glan's arrest was welcomed by wildlife groups.

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Ms Yang denies the charges against her. If found guilty she faces up to 30 years in jail.

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