



U.S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

ILLEGAL IVORY IMPORTERS SENTENCED TO IMPRISONMENT

Loretta E. Lynch, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, announced that Kemo Sylla and Mamadi Doumbouya were sentenced to 10 months' and 14 months' incarceration, respectively, for their felony convictions under the Lacey Act, which, together with the U.S. Endangered Species Act, prohibits the sale or transportation of protected wildlife, including elephant ivory. Doumbouya was sentenced on February 11, 2010, and Sylla's sentencing proceedings were held yesterday afternoon, both before United States District Judge Kiyoo A. Matsumoto, at the federal courthouse in Brooklyn, New York.

Sylla and Doumbouya were the final two defendants to be sentenced among six defendants convicted of illegally importing elephant ivory as charged in an indictment unsealed in December 2008. All the ivory was imported through John F. Kennedy Airport in Queens, New York, disguised as African handicrafts and wooden instruments. The six defendants received sentences ranging from one year of probation to 14 months' incarceration. A number of the defendants were also ordered to pay fines to the Lacey Act Reward Fund, which supports efforts to enforce the Lacey Act.

Importation of ivory into the United States has been criminalized since 1975 when the United States became a party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), an international treaty regulating trade in endangered species. The African elephant is listed as a threatened species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, which implements CITES in the United States. The global demand for elephant ivory led to devastating declines in the number of these giant animals, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. Despite international efforts to control the ivory trade and stop the decline of elephant populations, prices and demand remain high causing continued elephant poaching and illegal ivory finding its way into international and domestic markets.

In announcing the sentences, United States Attorney Lynch expressed her grateful appreciation to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for their investigative work and assistance during the investigation and

prosecution.

The government's case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Patrick Sean Sinclair and Sree Vamshi Reddy.

The Defendants:

KEMO SYLLA

Age: 35

MAMADI DOUMBOUYA

Age: 42