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**ANTIQUES DEALER SENTENCED TO 37 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR
WILDLIFE SMUGGLING**

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Robert G. Dreher, the Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the Department of Justice, and Dan Ashe, the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announced today that QIANG WANG, a/k/a Jeffrey Wang, a New York antiques dealer, was sentenced in Manhattan federal court to 37 months in prison for his role in a conspiracy to smuggle Asian artifacts made from rhinoceros horns and ivory and violate wildlife trafficking laws. WANG was arrested in February 2013 as part of "Operation Crash," a nation-wide crackdown on the illegal trafficking in rhinoceros horns, for his role in smuggling libation cups carved from rhinoceros horns from New York to China. He pled guilty in August 2013 and was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Katherine B. Forrest.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara said: "With his sentence today, Qiang Wang is held accountable for his role in feeding the flourishing black market for artifacts made from endangered species. This Office will continue its work to prosecute those who contribute to the illegal wildlife trade, and to uphold the rules designed to protect wildlife."

Acting Assistant Attorney General Robert Dreher said: "Wang and others like him involved in smuggling these artifacts made from rhino horn and ivory have helped to create a market for wildlife products that is not sustainable. This is an active and ongoing investigation that is designed to send a clear message to buyers and sellers that we will vigorously investigate and prosecute those who are involved in this devastating trade."

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe said: "We're reaching a tipping point, where the unprecedented slaughter of rhinos and elephants happening now threatens the viability of these iconic species' wild populations in Africa. This slaughter is fueled by illegal trade, including that exposed by Operation Crash. We will continue to work relentlessly across the United States government and with our international partners to crack down on poaching and wildlife trafficking."

According to the Information, WANG's guilty plea, and statements made during court proceedings:

In China, there is a tradition dating back centuries of intricately carving rhinoceros horn cups. Drinking from such a cup was believed by some to bring good health, and antique carvings are highly prized by collectors. Libation cups and other ornamental carvings are particularly sought after in China and in other Asian countries, as well as in the United States. The escalating value of such items has resulted in an increased demand for rhinoceros horn that has helped fuel a thriving black market, including fake antiques made from recently, and often illegally, hunted rhinoceros.

Between approximately January 2011 and February 2013, WANG conspired with at least two others to smuggle objects containing rhinoceros horn and elephant ivory out of the United States knowing that it was illegal to export such items without required permits. Due to their dwindling populations, all rhinoceros and elephant species are protected under international trade agreements. WANG made and used false United States Customs Declarations for the packages containing rhinoceros horn and ivory objects in order to conceal the true contents of the packages, and did not declare them to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service U.S. Customs and Border Protection as required under U.S. law and international trade agreements.

Rhinoceros are an herbivore species of prehistoric origin and one of the largest remaining mega-fauna on earth. They have no known predators other than humans. All species of rhinoceros are protected under United States and international law. Since 1976, trade in rhinoceros horn has been regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), a treaty signed by over 170 countries around the world to protect fish, wildlife, and plants that are or may become imperiled due to the demands of international markets.

Operation Crash is a continuing investigation being conducted by the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), in coordination with other federal and local law enforcement agencies including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations. A "crash" is the term for a herd of rhinoceros. Operation Crash is an ongoing effort to detect, deter and prosecute those engaged in the illegal killing of rhinoceros and the unlawful trafficking of rhinoceros horns

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In sentencing WANG, Judge Forrest said that his behavior helped "create and sustain a marketplace for goods made from endangered wildlife." Judge Forrest also said that WANG's conduct was "illegal and extremely troubling."

In addition to the prison term, Judge Forrest ordered WANG, 34, of Flushing, New York, to forfeit certain ivory goods in his possession, and banned him from all future trade in elephant ivory and rhino horn. Wang was also sentenced to serve a term of three years of supervised release.

Mr. Bharara and Mr. Dreher commended the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations for their outstanding work in this investigation. They also thanked the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Law Enforcement for their assistance.

The case is being handled by the Office's Complex Frauds Unit. Assistant United States Attorney Janis M. Echenberg and Senior Counsel with the Environmental Crimes Section of the United States Department of Justice Richard A. Udell are in charge of the prosecution.

