RI 1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**Killing Fields**

**Ivory Trade Puts African Elephants in Harm's Way**

Desire Dontego was a brutal killer. For years, the 39-year-old prowled the jungles of Africa in search of elephants to hunt.

It was Dontego's job to kill two of the animals on each trip to the forest. After slaying the beasts, Dontego and other **poachers1** took the animals' meat and precious ivory, leaving only the skin.

“I was known as the killing machine," he told a reporter.

That all changed 10 years ago when Dontego heard an American conservationist talk about why poaching was not only illegal but also wrong. Although Dontego killed the elephants to feed his family, he felt guilty about being a poacher. Now Dontego works for an environmental group that wants to protect the elephants and end the ivory trade.

**Hub of Ivory Trade**

According to Care for the Wild International, elephants need all the protection they can get. The wildlife conservation group recently released a report stating that poachers slaughter between 6,000 and 12,000 elephants each year. Officials estimate that there are 400,000 to 500,000 elephants in Africa.

The group says that Sudan has become the hub of Africa's ivory trade. Researchers found that ivory gifts, such as jewelry, are openly sold on the streets of Khartoum, the capital of Sudan. Esmond Martin, who conducted the study, said that most of the poachers are members of Sudan's military.

**Huge Market**

Trading in ivory is permitted in Sudan as long as the shopkeeper has a government license. The merchants may sell only old ivory, carved before 1990. That's when an international treaty made the sale and **importation2** of ivory illegal.

However, most of the ivory sold in the **bazaars3** is new ivory, carved after 1990. Martin said he counted more than 11,000 ivory items in 50 shops in Khartoum, where ivory is inexpensive. A ring can cost $2 and a pair of chopsticks, $13.

Chinese citizens are the driving force behind the ivory trade, the report said. About 5,000 Chinese people live and work in Sudan. They purchase about three-quarters of all ivory items in Sudan. Although the Chinese government has tried to intercept illegal ivory imports, China is the largest importer of illegal ivory.

However, Sudan is not the only African nation involved in the ivory trade. Merchants and poachers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, and Kenya also do a **robust**4 business.

**Massive Crackdown**

Poaching had become so widespread in the Congo River Basin, an area

consisting of six African countries, that governments and wildlife

organizations had to institute a massive crackdown.

Police in Cameroon recently began raiding hotels, houses, and

airports, hoping to stop the illegal ivory trade in that country. Some

nations in the basin have also established protected areas for

elephants and other endangered animals.

In addition, wildlife groups have hired former poachers, such as

Dontego, to patrol the vast area. The crackdown seems to be working.

"There has clearly been a change," said a coworker of Dontego. "Poaching in the region has gone down."

**1 poachers:** people who hunt illegally

**2 importation:** bringing goods into a country from another country

**3 bazaar:** market place containing rows of small shops; a place where many kinds of goods are sold

**4 robust:** strong and vigorously healthy

1. The author includes Desire Dontego’s story to
   1. Make him look bad
   2. Introduce the main idea
   3. Explain the process of poaching
   4. To support the idea that ivory is valuable
2. The author states: “The wildlife conservation group recently released a report stating that poachers slaughter between 6,000 and 12,000 elephants each year. Officials estimate that there are 400,000 to 500,000 elephants in Africa.” We can infer from this detail that
   1. Poachers are not killing many elephants
   2. Poachers are using the elephants for their ivory
   3. Poaching is illegal
   4. Elephants in Africa are endangered
3. Why is most of the ivory sold in shops in Sudan illegal?
   1. It was carved before 1990
   2. It was carved after 1990
   3. It is being sold for a much lower price than what it’s worth
   4. It is being sold for a much higher price than what it’s worth