

MEDIA RELEASE
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EIA Supports Investigative Efforts into Ghana’s Illicit Rosewood Trade and Commits to Enhance Publicly Available Rosewood Data

Washington, DC – The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)’s report ***BAN-BOOZLED: How Corruption and Collusion Fuel Illegal Rosewood Trade in Ghana***, released a month ago, has generated much-needed discussion among journalists, activists, academics, and officials both in Ghana and internationally. EIA welcomes the two investigations that have been recently launched in Ghana, and EIA plans to release data every month showing the value and volume of rosewood declared as imported to China from Ghana. This will enable Ghanaian citizens and others around the globe to monitor the impact of the 5th ban on trade in rosewood as well as the Ghanaian government’s prohibition on export permits from the Convention on International Trade in Wild Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES).

EIA appreciates the creation of the “[Committee to Investigate Allegation of Corruption in Rosewood Trade in Ghana](#),” announced on August 26th by the Ghanaian Minister for Lands and Natural Resources. According to the official communiqué, the Committee is expected to thoroughly investigate the rosewood sector and to propose remedial actions. EIA would welcome the opportunity to share its findings and evidence with the Committee, and to learn about the Committee’s actions and recommendations. As EIA’s findings revealed that the illegal rosewood trade in Ghana is deeply connected to high-level officials, the approach taken by the Committee to pierce through the underground trafficking networks and identify the high-level traffickers will be key.

EIA welcomes the Office of the Special Prosecutor’s prompt decision to investigate ongoing corruption and collusion in the rosewood sector in Ghana. As with the Committee, EIA can provide video, audio, and photographic evidence to the Special Prosecutor to aid the investigation, upon request. Among other evidence, EIA can produce the picture of the CITES export permit discovered during its investigation, which was issued on May 2019, many weeks after the announcement of the 5th ban, and also after the rosewood shipment had already arrived in China.

EIA also would be willing to assist the Committee and the Special Prosecutor to examine what appears to be large scale and systemic mis-declaration of timber exported by Ghana. For instance, in 2017, China reports the import of 146,122 cubic meters of timber (for a value of US\$91.3 million) from Ghana, while Ghana reported the export of only 14,627 cubic meters of timber (for a value of US\$14.6 million) to

China, according to the United Nations Comtrade Database.¹ For this year alone, China reports ten times more timber imported from Ghana, than Ghana reports in its exports to China.

In order to support the ongoing investigations, contribute to the many initiatives from the civil society, communities and journalists that have repeatedly exposed the rosewood issue, and build on the [Report on Export of Wood Products](#) released by the Ghanaian authority until last year, EIA commits to share publicly every month the value and the volume of rosewood declared as imported from Ghana to China.

Lisa Handy, Director of Forest Campaigns for EIA-US, says: “The nexus between corruption, lack of transparency, and organized wildlife crime needs to be broken. To this end, EIA offers to do all that it can to assist the investigations launched in Ghana and thereby contribute to public transparency and to saving Ghana’s rapidly vanishing dry forests.”

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¹ The United Nations Comtrade Database can be accessed at: <https://comtrade.un.org/>. Consulted on August 30, 2019.