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SPECIAL RELEASE

9TH MARCH, 2022



**JOINT STATEMENT OF OYO STATE GOVERNMENT AND THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN ON THE DEMISE OF A STRAY ELEPHANT FOUND IN SAKI WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA.**



1. The officials of the Zoological Garden, University of Ibadan, and those of Saki West Local Government Area differently raised concerns to the State Government on an elephant seen roaming within the said Local Government Area.
2. The State Government was aware that elephants are threatened by poachers interested in their tusks for economic benefits, and they could also be hunted for meat. In addition, the said elephant could pose threats to the people of the community and its environs.
3. By a letter dated 14 February, 2022, through the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, the State Government thus solicited the support of the University of Ibadan for the evacuation of this animal to the Zoological Garden of the Institution.
4. The teams of the Zoological Garden, State Government and the Veterinary Teaching Hospital of University of Ibadan separately visited the Saki Local Government for an on the spot assessment.
5. On Thursday 17 February, 2022 at about 5:30a.m., a joint team of the Zoological Garden and Veterinary Teaching Hospital of the University of Ibadan, and the Chairman and officials of Saki West Local Government left Saki town to the community with the aim of securing the elephant, and transporting it to Ibadan.
6. The Veterinary Teaching Hospital team was made up of two well trained and experienced wildlife specialists (a Professor and Chief Consultant, and Resident), and a Surgeon (Professor and Chief Consultant) with expertise in resuscitation and vital signs monitoring.
7. On getting to the area where the animal was usually found, our team immediately set to work and lured the animal to a vast farm land, however, as our team prepared to immobilize the animal, they met stiff opposition from boundary communities of Kwara State. The youths in the community chased our team members away from the site and drove the elephant back into the bush. It took the intervention of His Royal Highness, the Okere of Saki Land and the local Emir overseeing the Kwara boundary communities to calm nerves and allow the operation to proceed.
8. The elephant had been successfully lured out of the valley (relatively dried river) to the plains but had shifted in position during the earlier explained crises as youths sought to drive it into Kwara State territory.
9. The animal when finally darted by the Veterinarians made an immediate run back to the valley, succumbing to the anaesthesia therein and slumping into a segment of muddy water headlong with the tusks burying deep in the mud and the face in water.

10. It took a while to bring the animal out of this condition. Eventually, it was lifted by a crane machine from the valley into a waiting trailer and moved to Ibadan.

11. At about midnight, the Director of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital was informed while the team was in transit that no vital signs of the animal were detected.

12. The animal was brought in dead to the Zoological Gardens at about 4a.m. on Friday 18 February, 2022. The Oyo State Government and Vice-Chancellor were immediately briefed. The Commissioner for Environment, Oyo State sent a team same day to view the animal.

13. Interim findings of post mortem done on the day of arrival showed fluid in the lungs, thorax, internal “blood pooling” in some organs with a preliminary diagnosis of congestive heart failure.

14. The post mortem ended with the removal of the tusk for safe keeping, and with plans to bury the animal. The tusks were handed over to the Director of the Zoological Garden, who then handed them over to the representative of the Vice Chancellor. Based on request, the tusks have been handed over to the Minister of Environment through the Director General of the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA).

15. The Oyo State Government and the University of Ibadan greatly appreciate the administrative skills of the Chairman, Saki West Local Government, Councillor, Baales of the Villages through which the animal had been roaming for their show of responsibility, oversight and concern for the animal since it was sighted.

16. The University of Ibadan incurred some expenses on transportation, incidentals and other logistics.

17. The Oyo State Government and the University of Ibadan kindly ask the public to disregard misinformation and disinformation on this matter but rather convey their enquiries to the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Oyo State, or the Directors of the Zoological Garden, and the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, University of Ibadan.

18. The Oyo State Government and the University of Ibadan feel a deep sense of loss on the demise of this prized animal and also console with everyone in the nation who had hoped to see the elephant alive.

19. With the permission of the Director General of NESREA, the body of the elephant was buried at the Zoological Garden at 2:00p.m. On Saturday 19 February, 2022.

20. Thank you, and God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

**Olubunmi O. Faluyi (MCIPM)**  
**Registrar**