



Media Release

For immediate release
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Chris Mullin, MP, joins animal campaigners in call to UK government over shocking plight of primates in Cambodia

The **BUAV**, with the support of **Chris Mullin MP** for Sunderland South and **Chair of the All Party Cambodia Group**, has today visited the Foreign Office to call on the British government to express its concerns to the government of Cambodia regarding the unacceptable cruelty and suffering that are being inflicted on the country's indigenous population of long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*), concerns regarding the conservation status of this species and issues surrounding the implementation of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) regulations.

The call comes following an investigation carried out by the **BUAV** which gathered shocking video and photographic evidence of the dreadful suffering endured by monkeys trapped in the wild in Cambodia to populate industrial-scale factory farms which supply the international animal testing industry. Primates from Cambodia have already been imported into the EU in 2008 and a CITES export permit was granted by the Cambodian authorities for primates to be exported to a UK primate supply company.

According to the latest available CITES data, over fourteen thousand macaques were permitted to be exported to China, Vietnam, Europe and the USA in 2008 (1). This is almost double the figure reported to CITES for 2007, which was 7,280.

The evidence obtained by the BUAV raises concerns about the exploitation of Cambodia's indigenous population of long-tailed macaques through a largely unregulated trade which has resulted in the indiscriminate and intensive trapping of wild monkeys to establish the numerous breeding and supply farms that have been set up within the country. Despite the establishment of captive breeding, the BUAV investigation has shown that monkeys are still being taken from the wild in large numbers to replenish breeding stock.

Cambodian primate trade industry is also failing to comply with international animal welfare guidelines - the International Primatological Society's (IPS) guidelines on the acquisition, care and breeding of nonhuman primates. Of particular concern were the inhumane and cruel methods used to trap wild monkeys and the inadequate conditions in which captive primates were housed at one primate breeding company.

BUAV investigators filmed trappers as they illegally hunted primates in the tropical swamps and jungles of Cambodia, including inside a specially protected wetland nature reserve. The film

shows how habitat is destroyed to catch the monkeys, and gives graphic evidence of the obvious misery the animals endure as they are ripped from their families and homes.

A recent published paper from the Asian Section, IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group, has raised concerns about the status of the long-tailed macaque in the Indochinese region, especially Cambodia, and stated that the available data "...on the present status of populations such as numbers, distribution and population trends are deficient for most species, especially those that are widespread geographically, such as *Macaca fascicularis*..." The paper concludes: "It is imperative that the conservation status of *M. fascicularis* be reassessed, particularly taking into account the impact of trade on the species, requiring as such a careful assessment by the CITES Secretariat." (2)

The BUAV has also recently learnt of the deaths, earlier this year, of over 200 long-tailed macaques destined for the research industry. The macaques, all captured from the wild in Cambodia, apparently suffocated to death during transit. The monkeys were on their way by road to China. The deaths occurred when the truck in which they were being transported was detained for many hours at the Cambodia border.

BUAV Chief Executive Michelle Thew said: "Our investigation has uncovered major concerns regarding the conservation status of the long-tailed macaque in Cambodia and the shocking cruelty that is being inflicted on this species for the research industry. The plight of these monkeys must no longer be ignored. We urge the UK government to make representation to the government of Cambodia on this important issue expressing the concerns of the British people."

Chris Mullin, MP and Chair of the All Party Cambodia Group said: "I appeal to the government of Cambodia to put an end to this awful trade and to do what it can to conserve this endangered species."

References:

1. CITES trade statistics derived from the *CITES Trade Database*, UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Cambridge, UK
2. Eudey, Ardith A. (2008) The Crab-eating Macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*): Widespread and Rapidly Declining. *Primate Conservation* (23): 129–132.

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Notes:

Footage and stills are available from the BUAV press office - contact details below.

The BUAV has been campaigning for over 100 years to achieve a world where nobody wants or believes we need to experiment on animals. We are committed to achieving our aims through reliable and reasoned evidence-based debate.

For more information contact: Sarah Kite at sarah.kite@buav.org or Erin Seymour +44(0) 20 7619 6978/Out of hours mobile: 07850 510 955 / Erin.Seymour@buav.org