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## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### IVORY TRAFFICKER ARRESTED IN NWOYA

**Kampala, February 23, 2026** - The Special Wildlife Crime Unit and the Uganda Police Force, have arrested a suspected ivory trafficker and recovered 154 kilograms of raw elephant ivory in an intelligence-led operation conducted in Nwoya District.

The suspect, Opiro Francis was arrested on February 22, 2026 in Nwoya District, while in possession of ten (10) pieces of raw elephant tusks. He will be produced before the Standards, Utilities and Wildlife Court for prosecution and charged with unlawful possession of protected wildlife specimens, contrary to the Uganda Wildlife Act Cap 315.

Commenting on the operation, Dr. James Musinguzi, Executive Director of Uganda Wildlife Authority, said the arrest demonstrates Uganda's firm stance against wildlife crime. "This seizure sends a clear and firm message that Uganda will not tolerate wildlife crime. Ivory trafficking is a serious offense that threatens our elephant populations, undermines conservation gains, and fuels organized criminal networks operating across borders."

Dr. Musinguzi emphasized the role of intelligence-led enforcement and inter-agency coordination. "The success of this operation reflects the strength of intelligence-driven enforcement and close coordination between Uganda Wildlife Authority and security agencies. We remain fully committed to dismantling wildlife trafficking networks wherever they operate." He warned traffickers that enforcement efforts are being intensified nationwide. "Northern Uganda has been exploited by traffickers as a transit route for illegal ivory, but our enforcement presence is stronger than ever. Anyone involved in wildlife trafficking should know that arrest, prosecution, and stiff penalties are inevitable."

The arrest shows the continued threat posed by ivory trafficking to elephant populations. Wildlife crime not only endangers biodiversity but also undermines national security, tourism revenues, and community livelihoods. Uganda Wildlife Authority remains committed to protecting Uganda's wildlife resources by disrupting wildlife trafficking networks at all levels. We urge members of the public to report any suspicious activities so that together we can protect Uganda's wildlife heritage for present and future generations.

**ENDS**