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May 2, 2005

His Excellency Robert Mugabe
President of Zimbabwe
c/o His Excellency S. V. Mubako
U.S. Ambassador, The Republic of Zimbabwe
1608 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Mr. Mugabe,

I am writing to you on behalf of the nine million constituents of The Humane Society of the United States, to urge an end to proposals that Zimbabwe's precious wildlife be used as a food source. Conceding the primacy of your responsibility to feed the disadvantaged people of your nation, we nevertheless ask that you rescind your directive concerning the slaughter of wild animals for this purpose. The short term benefits that might arise from this approach must be weighed against the long term losses for Zimbabwe, which will be substantial.

Zimbabwe's wild animal population is one of its greatest assets, and wildlife-related tourism can be a productive and lucrative industry in the future. But this cannot be the case if animals are not properly safeguarded by national authorities. The wildlife sector has sustained severe damage in recent years, and this proposal may exacerbate an already tenuous situation.

Mr. President, we ask that your nation reconsider its previous refusal to accept food relief from international relief agencies. Acceptance of relief will eliminate the perceived necessity of using Zimbabwe's wild animals as a food source.

Through our international division, Humane Society International, The HSUS is working to bring an end to poaching, illegal trophy hunting, illegal animal export, and other depredations to Africa's wildlife. As someone who has always felt a special kinship to Zimbabwe because I was born there, the possibility that wild animals - part of the birthright of all Zimbabweans - will be eliminated from the country (as happened in large areas of Angola) is especially distressing. The country will be the poorer for it.

Sincerely,

Andrew Rowan
Executive Vice President for Operations

Promoting the protection of all animals

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