Leading ivory trade investigator murdered in Kenya

A world-renowned ivory investigator whose detailed reports contributed to the fight against elephant poaching and the illegal wildlife trade, was killed at his home in Kenya, police said on Monday, 5 February.



Image source: www.pixabay.com

Esmond Martin, 75, died after being stabbed at his house in the Nairobi suburb of Langata on Sunday afternoon.

"He was found dead in his house and had stab wounds," said a police officer. "An investigation has been launched."

Martin, an American who lived in Kenya for decades, focused on the demand end of the illegal ivory supply chain, describing, quantifying and analysing the Asian ivory markets in China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Laos and elsewhere.

His groundbreaking investigations are credited with contributing to China's decision to close its legal ivory markets last year, said Paula Kahumbu, a leading Kenyan elephant expert and chief executive of Wildlife Direct, a conservation group.

"He was one of the most important people at the forefront of exposing the ivory trade, addressing the traffickers and dealers themselves," Kahumbu said.

Poaching has killed an estimated 110,000 elephants over the last decade, with transnational organised crime syndicates taking over the illicit trade.

The most recent figures, for 2016, showed the illegal ivory market continues to thrive with with record ivory seizures despite a decline in poaching.

Source: AFP

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