



# Baby Elephant Abductions

## Wildlife Unit Investigates

Young African elephants have been taken from their herds and are being held in a warehouse style building less than an hour's drive from Johannesburg.

Each elephant stands with its front legs tied together. One front leg and one back leg of each young elephant are chained. Movement is so restricted that the elephant cannot turn around. It would be impossible for them to lie down on the concrete floor. They stand in line and stare in front of them. These elephants are destined for sale and exportation for working or exhibition purposes.

These juvenile elephants used to roam across the veld with their families. Now their only release from confinement is to be taken outside - to undergo 'Mahout style' training by Indonesian workers who were brought to South Africa for this specific purpose.

National Council of SPCAs Inspectors witnessed a training session and confirm that elephants were repeatedly struck around the head with a metal 'training hook'. Blows from the flat end of the hook were even more worrying. Examination revealed a metal object protruding from it. Elephants had marks and scars on their heads.

Wildlife Unit officials needed to obtain a search warrant and a police escort to enter the premises. What they witnessed shocked them and confirmed their suspicions that cruelty and unnecessary suffering were taking place. A Supreme Court interdict was then brought against the NSPCA to prevent video footage of what was

uncovered being made public through the media.

The NSPCA rejects any claims that the abductions, confinements or training methods contribute in any way to conservation.

One young elephant was returned to the building after a training session outdoors. Whilst it was being chained into position, it slipped on the wet concrete floor and fell heavily. Once upright again, it was secured in place and given a piece of apple.

Parts of the building are still under construction. This suggests long term plans. Only half the available holding space was occupied. This suggests more elephants are expected.

In depth investigative work by the NSPCA Wildlife Unit uncovered this scheme. It now

needs public support to stop it. Our concerns include the physical suffering of the young elephant, the stresses involved, the grief of the families from whom they were taken, the manner and length of their confinement, the training methods plus the quality of life which awaits them. Animal welfare is our concern and we are deeply concerned.

The investigation incurred costs. Defending our position at the Supreme Court hearing incurred costs. Despite the cost, the NSPCA Wildlife Unit will continue to take all possible action to stop what we believe to be a cruel, money making scheme. Donations, no matter how small, would help us enormously in this quest. Please see the inside back page for details.

## Tuli Elephants