

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

July 2011 Report



Highlights

- **3 dealers in elephant tusks arrested** in Djoum - South with **ivory, arms and ammunition.**
- **Dealer in primates arrested with a live mandrill in Djoum – South.**
- **3 cases sentenced this month against 4 dealers.**
- LAGA Director held a **series of meetings in Kenya** on the strategic vision of creating animal welfare movement in Africa, wildlife enforcement, forest corruption and activism.
- LAGA continued with contact meetings with **Nigerian authorities on the replication of LAGA activities** in that country.
- **AALF – Gabon Investigator and Jurist end 5 weeks training in LAGA office.**

General

This month was marked by good operations against 4 major dealers and advances in regional collaboration and replication.

4 dealers were arrested in Djoum – South in 2 separate operations within 2 days. In the first operation, 3 dealers were arrested with elephant tusks, arm and ammunition. This operation was initiated by some Ecoguards and LAGA was involved in the investigations and operational phases, legal procedure. In the second operation, a dealer in primates was arrested with a live mandrill while trying to illegally trade in it. His father who happens to be a military officer stationed in Djoum initially tried to intimidate the operations team and later on attempted to bribe the arresting officers for the release of his son to no avail. These attempts were vigorously fought against by the LAGA team in the field.

LAGA Director held a series of meetings in Kenya with the steering committee of the Pan African Alliance for Animal Welfare producing strategic vision for the attempt of creating an Animal Welfare movement which is African and based on African values. LAGA represents central Africa on the steering committee. There were more meetings in Nairobi on the vision for wildlife law enforcement in Africa and fighting forest corruption; and with ACPPP platform in Nairobi for empowering civil society in front of donor agencies and governments and on various issues of activism and reform in the development business.

Replication prospects advanced in Nigeria and Chad. The Head of Legal Department travelled to Nigeria and held a series of meetings with the Federal Ministry of Environment, Nigerian Environmental Standard and Regulation Enforcement (NESREA), and WCS – Nigeria which agreed to host the new replication project. LAGA Director met with SOS elephant of Chad in Nairobi towards the replication in Chad.

For further improvement and more operations in regional enforcement, training session continue to be held in the regional headquarters in Cameroon. During this month, an Investigator and a Jurist from AALF – Gabon ended a 5 weeks training in Yaounde under the regional exchange program. Training and exchange of project personnel in regional enforcement will continue with the other projects in the forthcoming months. Others that had been trained before include the Coordinator of RALF – CAR (Central African Republic), Jurist – PALF Congo, Investigator – PALF Congo, and Jurist - AALF Gabon.

Investigations

- **20 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **6 Regions** of Cameroon- South West, West, East, Littoral, South and Center.
- AALF Investigator from Gabon Congo was trained in LAGA for 5 weeks. He was trained on procedures of Investigations, Operations, Legal follow-up of court cases and media publication. He also received training on how to work on the Investigations Organic system and how to write field activities and financial reports. Training and exchange of Investigators will continue with the other projects in the forthcoming weeks. This training exercise was carried out with an Investigator from PALF – Republic of Congo and will continue with RALF – CAR (Central African Republic).
- Investigations led to successful operations after targeting major dealers in Djoum-South.
- Training of Investigators on operations procedure continued this month so that they could start to actively assist and help in controlling some operations in the field.
- Attention shifting to the Northern part of the country after a long time without focused attention.
- This month saw continued involvement in investigations and operations procedures in the replication projects especially PALF – Congo and RALF – CAR.

Operations

2 operations were carried out this month against **4 major dealers**.

- **19/07/11 – 3 dealers were arrested in Djoum – South with elephant tusks, arm and ammunition** used in the killing of elephants and other protected wildlife species. This operation was initiated by some Ecoguards and LAGA was involved in the investigations and operational phases, and has been in charge of writing the complaint reports (PV), ensuring that the culprits were transported and locked-up in Djoum while at the same time following up the cases in the Court.
- **21/07/11 - A dealer in primates was arrested with a live mandrill** in Djoum while trying to illegally trade in it. His father who happens to be a military officer stationed in Djoum initially tried to intimidate the operations team and later on attempted to bribe the arresting officers for the release of his son to no avail. These issues were vigorously fought against by the LAGA team in the field. The mandrill was rescued and taken to the Mvog-Betsi Zoo in Yaounde for proper up-keep.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **24 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 4 in Douala (Littoral), 4 in Buea (South West), 1 in Mamfe (South West), 1 in Limbe (South West), 2 in Abong-Mbang (East), 3 in Kribi (South), 2 in Djoum (South), 1 in Ebolowa (South), 1 in Bengbis (South), 1 in Sangmelima, 1 in Bafoussam (West), 1 in Dschang (West), 1 in Bafang (West), and 1 in Foumban (West).
- There are **15 dealers behind bars during this month**: 2 in the East Region, 1 in the South West Region, 9 in South Region, 2 in West Region and 1 in the littoral Region.
- **43 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **41 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 3 cases sentenced this month against 4 dealers.
 - **01/07/2011**: The court of First Instance of Douala- Littoral sentenced NDJANDAKO Siméon and MENGUE Ango to pay **\$10,202** suspended for five years and to pay **\$650 as damages as fines**. They were arrested in Douala for illegal detention, transformation and trading of ivory tusks.

- **05/07/2011:** The court of First Instance of Kribi sentenced TCHOUONTO Emmanuel to pay **\$1,200 as damages and fine**. He was arrested in Kribi for illegal detention and selling of sea turtle shells.
 - **18/07/2011:** The court of First Instance of Fouban sentenced NGAHA MAMA to pay **\$ 10,949 as damages and fine**. He was arrested in Fouban for illegal detention and selling of 4 worked ivory and one African civet skin.
- **1 appeal** was registered this month against the ruling given by the court of first instance of Fouban in the matter of MINFOF Vs NGAHA MAMA.

Media front

- **39 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, TV and written press including: 23 written press materials (16 in English and 7 in French), 2 talk shows all in English, 1 TV news feature in English, 1 news feature in English and 12 news flashes (3 in English and 9 in French).
- Guests include: Minister of forestry and wildlife and Head of Legal Unit LAGA.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; extinction of elephant- ivory dealer arrest Douala, DNA – Ivory dealer arrest Douala, prosecution of Cameroonian traffickers in Gabon, upcoming wildlife cases against defaulters Congo prosecution of 2 ivory dealers, Djoum arrest of a traffickers with live mandrill and arrest of three ivory traffickers in Djoum.
- 23 media pieces in English, 16 in French making a percentage of 58% in English and 42% in French.

External Relations and Policy

- LAGA Director held a series of meetings in Kenya with the steering committee of the Pan African Alliance for Animal Welfare producing strategic vision for the attempt of creating an Animal Welfare movement which is African and based on African values. LAGA represents central Africa on the steering committee. Another meeting was with the Ushahidi team in Nairobi on using SMS crowd-sourcing in Central Africa. There were more meetings with Dr. Roz Reeve in Nairobi on vision for wildlife law enforcement in Africa and forest corruption; with ACPFP platform in Nairobi for empowering civil society in front of donor agencies and governments and on various issues of activism and reform in the development business; and with WSPA in Tanzania discussing future support for LAGA.
- The Head of Legal Department travelled to Nigeria and held a series of meetings with the Federal Ministry of Environment, Nigerian Environmental Standard and Regulation Enforcement (NESREA), and WCS – Nigeria which agreed to host the new replication project.
- LAGA met with the Head of Interpol Central Africa Region Bureau and finalized collaboration in preparation of simultaneous sting operations in four countries by the projects – Cameroon, Gabon, Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic (CAR).
- A presentation was given to Peace Corps volunteers on fostering community activism for the development of an educational manual for fostering activism to transform rural communities in Cameroon.
- Anti-corruption Cameroon won the development marketplace contest as the first project out of 236.
- A meeting was held with Peace Corps concerning the use of art for social change, fostering activism education program and wildlife law enforcement.
- LAGA Director meeting at the US Embassy concerned wildlife law enforcement, illegal parrot trafficking and regional wildlife enforcement briefing for ambassadors.
- LAGA Director meeting with British High Commission to discuss on enforcement and corruption issues.

- Visit of 18 Peace Corps volunteer exposing them to LAGA's unique way of work.

Management

- The various Departments are effectively putting in place plans to reconstruct and measures to cut costs while maintaining the good results.
- A volunteer in Management ended her functions with LAGA this month. It was judged that she was not effective enough and it was also part of the measure to reduce cost in that department since her activities can still be carried out by others.

Activism Front

All the education activities carried out by the LAGA family are online; this could be gotten at the LAGA website – <http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Activism/tabid/77/Default.aspx>. Education activities for this month were on:

1) Ted Presentation – Cheetahs vs Hippos by George Ayittey

George talks of two generations of Africans, the cheetahs and hippos: The cheetah generation being the new breed of Africans who take no nonsense about corruption; they understand what accountability and democracy is. They are not going to wait for the government to do things for them and Africa salvation rest on the backs of these cheetahs. The hippo generation are the ruling elites who sit and complain of the system but reluctant to take action because they benefit from the rotten system in place. In a nut shell, the problem of Africa is the silence from intellectuals, politicians, administrators, civil society etc; and the ills of Africa – corruption, bad governance just to name this few.

Question

1. Can the cheetahs change Africa?
2. What does it take for Africa to abandon corruption?

2) Film - Mugabe and the White African

The film is centered on farm issues in Zimbabwe and precisely between a white farmer and the president of Zimbabwe which eventually ended up in court and had a good ruling in favour of the white farmer in an international court. What is amazing is the possibility for an individual to drag a president in court at the international level and wins. What is more disturbing is that there is no follow up and tyrants will also win by force.

Question

Can a European be a white African?

What if the white farmer was a black would he have won the case in an international court?

Replication

The replication of the LAGA model and the transfer of LAGA experience in other countries throughout the sub-region is a continuous process whereby LAGA works with other NGOs. More information on replication is available on

<http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Replication/tabid/166/Default.aspx>

A jurist and an investigator from Gabon were trained in the regional headquarters in Cameroon under the regional exchange program. This training exercise has been carried out with an Investigator from PALF – Republic of Congo, a jurist from PALF – Congo, another jurist from AALF – Gabon and the Coordinator of RALF – CAR (Central African Republic).

This month saw effective arrests in Cameroon and Congo against trade in ivory, primates, and leopard skins. In Cameroon emphasis was regional on the south (Djoum) as being a trafficking hot spot depleting the Dja reserve as well as an international trafficking junction for ivory from Gabon.

In Congo the emphasis was species based and arrests and prosecutions focused on the trade in leopard skins as a less known but nevertheless extremely disturbing illegal trade.

Replication advanced this month in Nigeria and Chad. Meetings in Nigeria were held with the Federal Ministry of Environment and Nigerian Environmental Standard and Regulation Enforcement (NESREA), and WCS which agreed to host the new replication project.

LAGA Director met with SoS Elephant President in Nairobi concerning the replication of LAGA activities in Chad.

Collaboration finalized with Head of Interpol Central Africa Region Bureau in preparation of simultaneous sting operations in four countries by the projects.

On a daily basis all LAGA Departments assist in the various activities of the replication projects (PALF – Congo, AALF – Gabon and RALF – Central African Republic etc.) on all managerial and financial issues especially reports; Investigations and Operations planification and supervision; legal follow-up of all court cases; and publishing and pushing through all the media pieces with all the necessary information posted on the various project websites. For this month, LAGA assisted in:

- Assisting PALF in the coordination of investigation missions and preparation of operations, working specifically with Adelphe on procedures in Manual from Investigations through to operations planification and strategies. Assisted in the arrest of dealers in leopard skins in Brazzaville.
- Assisting Hubert (RALF) on Investigations and Operations procedures – discussing directly with the investigators concerned.
- Ensuring that the media pieces concerning the various operations were produced and pushed through to the respective national media.
- Ensuring that the activity and financial reports of the past months are all updated and posted on the various websites.

Finance

LAGA Expenditure by Budget Line for July 2011

Amount CFA	Budget Line		Amount USD
1,979,997	Investigations	20 inv, 6 Regions	\$4,304
731,300	Operations	3 Operation against 4 subjects	\$1,590
3,172,735	Legal	follow up 39 cases 17 locked subjects	\$6,897
1,702,955	Media	44 Media pieces	\$3,702
1,689,415	Policy & External Relations	Congo/Gabon/CAR/Nigeria/Kenya	\$3,673
954,000	Management	Coordination	\$2,074
1,542,592	Office		\$3,353
11,772,994	TOTAL EXPENDITURE JULY		\$25,593

LAGA Expenditure by Donor for July 2011

AmountCFA	Donor	Amount USD
2,808,600	FWS	\$6,105.7
1,639,415	FWS-Replication	\$3,563.9
885,177	BornFree Foundation	\$1,924.3
1,125,455	Rufford Foundation	\$2,446.6
2,711,297	Neu Foundation	\$5,894.1
1,094,185	Future for Nature	\$2,378.7
1,508,865	ARCUS Foundation	\$3,280.1
11,772,994	TOTAL	\$25,593.5

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



Dealer (left) arrested in Djoum – South for illegally trying to trade in a live mandrill (right). The mandrill was rescued and taken to the Mvog – Betsi Zoo.

Links of this month

- LAGA in enforcing the wildlife law in Cameroon - France 24 – International Television Broadcast. Enforcing wildlife law in a country ruled by corruption is not easy nor could it go smoothly. This documentary narrates an ivory operation and the kidnap of a LAGA investigator by notorious ivory traffickers. Follow the story as you click on the play button above.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUOsqavJ1Ik>

- Interview of Ofir at the Future for Nature Award 2011 in Holland: One of the most awaited achievements Ofir seeks to see is working together with many countries beside those of the sub region to get wildlife traffickers behind bars. The Director in this interview also thinks that the larger problem is not just the wildlife criminals but the current trends in conservation.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ea9NhFhrtBM>