

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

April 2022 Report



Highlights

- **10 traffickers arrested during 4 operations.**
- **3 traffickers arrested with 386 kg pangolin scales during a crackdown on a pangolin scales trafficking network in Yaounde, Centre Region.**
- **5 traffickers arrested with 90 kg of pangolin scales in another crackdown on a trafficking network in Akonolinga, Centre Region.**
- **A trafficker arrested with 2 gorilla skulls, a chimp skull and 5 other primate skulls in Douala, Littoral Region**
- **A trafficker arrested and a mandrill rescued in Douala, Littoral Region**
- **The Deputy Director participated at workshop in Abidjan that focused on illicit economies and conflict in West Africa.**

General

This month was marked by the arrest of **10 traffickers, 8 for trafficking in 476kg of pangolin scales, one for trafficking in 8 primate skulls and another for mandrill trafficking.**

3 traffickers arrested with 386 kg pangolin scales in a crackdown on a pangolin scales trafficking network in **in Yaounde, Centre Region.** The traffickers, a Malian national and two Cameroonians, ran a lucrative illicit business in pangolin scales. They operated around the Yoko and Ntui areas that are notorious for wildlife trafficking and weak law enforcement.

5 traffickers arrested with 90 kg of pangolin scales in a crackdown on a trafficking network in **Akonolinga, Centre Region.** The traffickers were found in several different locations. They attempted to thwart arrest efforts by taking up different locations.

A trafficker arrested with 2 gorilla skulls, a chimp skull and 5 other primate skulls in Douala, Littoral Region. He was a regular trafficker in skulls and reptiles with international connections in Europe. He extensively used Facebook for his business. He sealed the skulls with plastic tapes and concealed them inside dresses in a plastic bag that is widely used in travelling across the country.

A trafficker arrested and a mandrill rescued in in Douala, Littoral Region. The mandrill was tied at the waist with a heavy metal chain to a tree in his dirty yard. The trafficker was supplied with the mandrill a few months before and was trying to get a high profit for it.

The Deputy Director travelled to Abidjan where he participated at workshop that focused on illicit economies and conflict in West Africa. Organized by Global Initiative Against Transnational Crime (GI TOC), participants were drawn mainly from areas linked to the fight against organized crime in the sub region.

Investigations

- **16 investigation missions** out in **4 Regions** out of 10 of Cameroon including: Littoral, West, Centre and East Regions.
- Credible information led to the arrest of a primate skulls trafficker with **2 gorilla skull, a chimpanzee skull and 5 other primate skulls in Douala**
- Good information in Douala led to the arrest of a trafficker with one live mandrill in **Douala.**
- Good investigation in Akonolinga led to the arrest of **5 traffickers with 90kg of pangolin scales**
- Good investigation in **Ntui** led to the arrest of 3 pangolin scales traffickers with **386kg of pangolin scales in Yaounde.**

Investigations Table

Investigation Missions	Regions	No. of Operations	No of traffickers arrested
16	4	4	10

Operation

3 operations carried out this month with MINFOF **arresting 10 traffickers.**

- **05/04/2022 –A trafficker arrested in Douala, Littoral Region with 2 gorilla skulls, a chimpanzee skull and 4 other primate skulls.** He was a regular trafficker in skulls and reptiles with international connections in Europe. He extensively used Facebook for his business. He sealed the skulls with plastic tapes and concealed them inside dresses in a plastic bag that is widely used in travelling across the region. He travelled from the crisis hit South West Region to the commercial capital Douala where he attempted to sell the skulls. The operation was carried in collaboration with the Czech-based NGO Save Elephants.
- **08/04/2022 - A trafficker arrested in Douala in the Littoral Region with a live mandrill.** A trafficker arrested and a mandrill rescued. The mandrill was tied at the waist with a heavy metal chain to a tree in his dirty yard. The trafficker was supplied with the mandrill a few months before and was trying to get a high profit for it. The animal was malnourished and weak.
- **19/04/2022 - 5 traffickers arrested in Akonolinga in the Centre Region with 90kg of pangolin scales.** The traffickers were found in several different locations. They attempted to thwart arrest efforts by taking up different locations They were chased down by the arresting team and each trafficker arrested with booty in hand. They also comprised a complete gang with a driver, middlemen and suppliers. They activated several smaller traffickers and poachers in villages around the town.

- **23/04/2022 –3 traffickers arrested in Yaounde, Centre Region with 386kg of pangolin scales.** The traffickers, a Malian national and two Cameroonians, ran a lucrative illicit business in pangolin scales. They operated around the Yoko and Ntui areas that are notorious for wildlife trafficking and weak law enforcement. They also had connections close to the Cameroon border with the Central African Republic where the Malian had hidden huge quantities of pangolin scales. He transported the contraband from a Garoua Boulai concealed in a truck that transported maize to the capital city Yaounde. When he arrived, they hid the contraband at the home of one of the traffickers. They also trafficked African grey parrots but were switching to other products. They claimed it was increasingly difficult to find parrots.

Operations Table

No of Operations	Regions	No of Traffickers Arrested	Contraband
4	2	10	2 gorilla skulls, a chimpanzee skulls and 4 other primate skulls a live mandrill 90kg of pangolin scales 386kg of pangolin scales

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **11 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 1 in Ebolowa (South), 1 in Ambam (South), 1 in Sangmelima (South), 3 in Douala (Littoral), 2 in Ngoumou (Centre), 1 in Akonolinga (Centre), 1 in Dschang (West) and 1 in Bafang (West).
- There are **20 traffickers behind bars this month:** 4 in East Region, 5 in South Region, 3 in Centre, 2 in Littoral Region and 6 in West Region.
- **35 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **31 cases** were scheduled in court this month.
- **No trafficker** was convicted this month.
- **Prosecutions:** There were no court rulings this month.

Legal Table

No of Missions (Out of Yaoundé)	No of Court Judgements	No of Traffickers Given Prison Sentence	Prison term (in)	No of Traffickers Sanctioned (No prison sentence)	No of Appeals lodged	No of Cases Tried in Courts
11	0	0	0	0	0	31

Media

- **36 media pieces** were produced and pushed to the media including: written press, radio, and internet. That is 9 written press (5 in French language and 4 in English language), 24 radio news flashes (14 in English language, 9 in French language and 1 in Pidgin English), and 3 internet production (2 in French and 1 in English).
- Giving a total of 19 media pieces produced in the English language, 16 in the French and 1 in Pidgin English making 52.8% in English, 44.4% in French, and 2.8% in Pidgin English.
- Interviewee: none.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: the sentencing a trafficker arrested with 246kg of pangolin scales in Bertoua, the Yaounde arrest of a traditional ruler with 2 baby chimps, the Sangmelima arrest of 4 traffickers with 5 ivory tusks, the Douala arrests of a trafficker with a mandrill and another with primate skulls.

Media table

<i>No of media pieces</i>	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet
36	0	24	9	3

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director travelled to Abidjan where he participated at workshop that focused on illicit economies and conflict in West Africa. Organized by Global Initiative Against Transnational Crime (GI TOC), participants were drawn mainly from areas linked to the fight against organized crime in the sub region.
- He held a meeting with the Dan Chandler and Matt Shirley from the IUCN SSC Pangolin Specialist Group to discuss the fight against pangolin scales trafficking and the management of seized scales in Cameroon.
- The Head of the Legal Department and a legal adviser held a meeting with the State Counsel of Douala – Bonaberi on legal strategies after an operation and the two held another meeting with the State Counsel of Yaounde – Ekonou on a wildlife case.
- He and another legal adviser also met with the State Counsel of Akonolinga to discuss legal strategies after an operation in the town.
- The Head of Department and a third legal adviser held a meeting with the State Counsel of Douala - Bonaberi to discuss legal strategies concerning a matter pending before the court and the two had another meeting with the State Counsel of Ngoumou to discuss legal strategies concerning ae matter pending before the court
- A legal adviser held a meeting with the Attorney General of Ebolowa to discuss legal strategies concerning a matter pending before the Appeal Court.
- He held another meeting with the State Counsel of Dschang to discuss legal strategies concerning a wildlife case at the court.
- Two legal advisers held a meeting with the State Counsel of Yaounde - Ekounou to discuss legal strategies after carrying out an operation.
- A legal adviser held a meeting with the Attorney General of Douala to discuss legal strategies concerning a matter pending before the Appeal Court.
- Another legal adviser held a meeting with the State Counsel of Bafang to discuss legal strategies concerning a matter pending before the court and she held another meeting with the State Counsel of Sangmelima on a case pending at the court there.

- During the various missions, they distributed legal books and kits to some judicial and administrative authorities.

Management

- Preparations for celebrations to mark the 2022 Labour Day were carried out.
- Preparations for the receiving and hosting of an investigator from Cote d'Ivoire were carried out.

Activism Front:

All the activism fostering 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>.

Finance

In preparation and would be made available soon as possible on the LAGA website www.laga-enforcement.org .

Link of the month

Camer be, an online news site this month published the story of four traffickers arrested with 5 ivory tusks in Sangmelima. One of the traffickers was first arrested attempting to sell attempted to sell the ivory and the ring of ivory trafficking was dismantled during the crackdown operation.

<https://www.camer.be/mobile/90702/11:1/cameroun-four-traffickers-arrested-with-4-elephant-tusks-and-other-wildlife-species-cameroon.html>

This Month in Pictures



Malian and Cameroonian arrested for trafficking 386kg of pangolin scales



One of five traffickers arrested with 90kg of pangolin scales



Arrested for trafficking several primate skulls; at wildlife office (left). Mandrill chained with heavy metal at a trafficker's residence; animal was rescued and trafficker arrested (above)