

The Last Great Ape Organization - LAGA

August 2008 Report



Highlights

- **A wildlife dealer prosecuted** in Nanga-Eboko, Center Province.
- **A US Court sentences a Cameroonian** born lady for **illegal ivory trade**
- LAGA has **been experiencing a serious cash flow problem.**

General

This month was marked by a special focus on international wildlife trafficking and serious cash flow problems.

A 32-year-old Cameroonian born lady, Tania Siyam has been sentenced to serve **5 years in jail** and to pay a fine of **100 000 US dollars** for smuggling elephant tusks from Cameroon to the United States of America. The judgement was passed by a District Court Judge in Akron, Ohio in the US, on August 7, 2008. She is the daughter of the former Director General of Ports Authorities, Siyam Siewe who is presently in jail for embezzlement of public funds. This is part of LAGA efforts to sensitize the public on this international wildlife case and offers a good opportunity for LAGA to demonstrate the relations between wildlife crime and corruption.

LAGA has been experiencing a **severe cash flow problem** in the month of August that **slowed down the work and results** of LAGA's departments.

Investigations started against an **Internet scammer** in Yaounde (Center) and Limbe (South West) engaged in fraud and wildlife trade over the Internet following reports to us from a victim in Poland who had earlier sent **2000 Euros** to the scammer.

The Court of First Instance of Nanga-Eboko in the Center Province sentenced a wildlife dealer for illegally trading in live chimps. He was **sentenced to serve a prison term and to pay damages amounting to about 1.000 Dollars.** He is a worker of SOSUCAM - a sugar company. Has been a dealer in live chimps for many years, selling them to foreigners.

LAGA participated in 2 workshops on the **enforcement of wildlife legislation and procedures for suppressing poaching** held at Bafoussam – West Province and at the national level in Yaounde – Center Province organised by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife. LAGA was represented by Alain Ononino (Legal Adviser).

Investigations

- **10 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **5 Provinces** – Extreme North, Adamawa, South West, North West and Center.
- Recruitment of field investigators continued and field test continued. The process will continue until competent investigators are recruited. Before the recruitment process is finished, the investigation unit is in low capacity and sending candidates to “**test missions**” **results in low return rate of produced operations.**
- **International collaboration** with **Polish victim** led to a start of investigations against an Internet Scammer following reports to LAGA.

Operations

- No operations succeeded in this month due to **problems in cash flow** and test missions” **results in low return rate of produced operations.**

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **11 missions** out of Yaounde - Center Province: 1 in Bamenda (North West), 2 in Buea (South West), 3 in Limbe (South West), 1 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Bertoua (East), 1 in Maroua (Far North), 1 in Bafoussam (West). 1 special mission was carried out in Yaounde.
- There are **12 dealers behind bars during this month**: 1 in East Province, 3 in the West Province, 5 in South West Province, and 2 in Center province and 1 in South Province.
- **21 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **16 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **7 cases** are in the process of appeal and still have to reach the Court of Appeal. 4 in the West, 1 in the Littoral, 2 in the South provinces. The court of first instance has not completed the file needed for the transmission to the attorney general.
- **2 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the Courts of Appeal this month: 1 in the Court of Appeal of Littoral (Eroko Roger) and 1 in the Court of Appeal of Center (Pashalidis Christos).
- Meeting between Legal Department and the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife to discuss the evolution of the parrot cases.
- **Prosecutions**: One wildlife dealer was sentenced this month
-**04/08**: The First Instance Court of Nanga-Eboko convicts Zoua Albert 1 month of prison and to pay 50.000 Frs. as fine and 350.000 Frs. as damages for illegally trading in live chimps.

Media front

- **20 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, TV and written press including: 2 written press materials in English and 5 in French, 3 radio talk shows (all in English), 1 radio news feature, 8 radio news flashes (2 in English, 6 in French), 1 TV feature (in English).
- **Guests include**: Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, wildlife research student in University of Vrige in Netherlands, Provincial Delegate of Forestry and Wildlife South West Province, Manager of Community Forest Limbe, Technical Adviser N° 1 of the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; British dealer in two giant tortoises, Tania Siyam convicted in USA for trafficking in ivory, Mamfe arrest of dealers in elephants. A 32-year-old Cameroonian born lady has been sentenced to serve **5 years in jail** and to pay a fine of **100 000 US dollars** for smuggling elephant tusks from Cameroon to the United States of America. The judgement was passed by a District Court Judge in Akron, Ohio in the US, on August 7, 2008. The lady is reported to have in 2002 moved her business base from Canada to Cameroon. From the Cameroon base, **she operated a sophisticated scheme on smuggling out of the country raw elephant ivory** using a network of local artists and craftsmen, international commercial shipping lines and trade partners in Canada and the US. The illegal export of raw elephant ivory products for which the lady, who has a Canadian citizenship, was indicted in the US on March 3, 2004, is reported to have caused the slaughtering of at least 21 African elephants. The illegal hunting of elephants for ivory trade is believed to be the main cause for the decline in the elephant population in Central Africa. This is part of LAGA efforts to sensitize the public on this international wildlife case and offers a good opportunity for LAGA to demonstrate the relations between wildlife crime and corruption.
- 9 media pieces in English, 11 in French making a percentage 45% in English and 55% in French.
- Online sensitisation still stood at more than 500 visits to the LAGA website in the month of August.

External Relations and Policy

- LAGA met with the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife to discuss on the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife and LAGA.
- Meeting between Legal Department and the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife to discuss on the evolution of the parrot case.
- LAGA participated in 2 workshops on the **enforcement of wildlife legislation and procedures for suppressing poaching** held at Bafoussam – West Province and at the national level in Yaounde – Center Province organised by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife. LAGA was represented by Alain Ononino (Legal Adviser).
- The Director of LAGA held meeting with WWF Auditors to discuss issues of corruption.
- LAGA met with US Embassy, issues discussed were on wildlife in general, CHOC and corruption in particular.

Management

- LAGA members functioned this month without salaries showing their commitment to fulfil their missions despite the financial constraints and other difficulties facing the organization.

Finance

- LAGA has been experiencing a severe cash flow problem in the month of August that slowed down the work and results of LAGA's departments.

LAGA Expenditure by budget line for August 08

Amount CFA	Budget line	Details	Amount USD
1,115,347	Investigations	10 inv,5 provinces	\$2,534.9
360,000	Operations		\$818.2
2,488,655	legal	follow up 21 cases 12 locked subjects	\$5,656.0
1,497,785	Media	20 media pieces	\$3,404.1
139,382	Policy & External Relations	Preparations Congo	\$316.8
874,500	Management	Coordination	\$1,987.5
916,672	Office		\$2,083.3
7,392,341	TOTAL EXPENDITURE AUGUST		\$16,800.8

LAGA Expenditure by donor for August 08

AmountCFA	Donor	Amount USD
1,068,750	Born Free	\$0.0
2,183,665	FWS	\$4,962.9
2,719,434	Rufford Foundation	\$6,180.5
780,000	WSPA	\$1,772.7
300,000	ProWildlife	\$681.8
1,214,992	Arcus	\$2,761.3
7,198,091	TOTAL	\$16,359

La fille de Siyam Siwé condamnée aux Etats-Unis

Tania Siyam vendait illégalement de l'ivoire grâce à des complicités au port de Douala.

D'après des organisations de protection de l'environnement, Tania Julie Siyam, 32 ans, d'origine camerounaise a été condamnée le 7 août 2008 à 5 ans d'emprisonnement ferme et à 100 000 dollars (quelque 45 millions de Fcfa) pour trafic illégal de pointes d'ivoire entre le Cameroun et les Etats Unis. Le jugement a été rendu un juge de la ville d'Akron, dans l'Etat de Ohio aux Etats-Unis, rapporte un cadre de la Last great ape Organisation (Laga).

Au Cameroun, Tania Siyam aurait bénéficié de la couverture de Alphonse Siyam Siwé, qui est, rappelle la décision de la justice américaine rapportée par l'Environment news service, le père de la condamnée. M. Siyam Siwe, était, indique certainement par erreur la décision judiciaire américaine, directeur général des ports camerounais à l'époque où le trafic s'est constitué. Mais l'ancien ministre de l'Energie et de l'eau qui croupit en prison depuis février 2006 avait plutôt dirigé le port de Douala entre 1998 et 2005. Dans l'entourage des Siyam, des sources familiales confirment que c'est bien la fille d'Alphonse Siyam Siwe née au Canada, pays dont elle a la nationalité, il y a 32 ans, qui a été condamnée. Selon la Laga, au courant de l'année, Tania Julie Siyam avait transféré



TANIA SIYAM.

son commerce du Canada pour le Cameroun. Au Cameroun, " elle opérait " à travers un " réseau sophistiqué de trafic illégal de pointes d'ivoire d'éléphants comprenant des artistes et artisans, des compagnies maritimes interna-

tionales et des partenaires basés au Canada et aux Etats-Unis ". Les défenses emballées étaient décorées de manière à être déclarées comme ouvrages d'art, rapportent des sources judiciaires. Malgré ce subter-

fuge, la collaboration des polices canadienne et américaine a permis de mettre hors d'état de nuire Mme Siyam.

La condamnée avait déjà été provisoirement interpellée par la police canadienne à Toronto en 2004, rappelle une dépêche de l'Environment news service. Entre 1998 et 2005, " son activité, indiquent encore les nouvelles venues des Usa, consistait à effectuer de nombreux achats d'objets d'art du Cameroun sur Internet depuis le Canada et, à l'aide d'autres outils de télécommunication, faire la publicité et vendre à travers le monde les produits fauniques réglementés et protégés. "

L'exportation illégale d'ivoire procuré par des défenses d'éléphants qui envoient Tania Siyam derrière les barreaux, aurait causé la mort d'au moins 21 éléphants africains, soit 42 pointes éléphantiques. " La chasse illégale d'éléphants en vue d'approvisionner le commerce illégal d'ivoire est considérée comme le principal facteur du déclin de la population d'éléphants en Afrique Centrale. L'on estime à 20.000 le nombre d'éléphants abattus en 2006 suite à la demande sans cesse croissante d'ivoire en Asie, en Europe et en Amérique du Nord ", a indiqué un communiqué de la Laga.

J.B. KETCHATENG

Tania Siyam sentenced to serve 5 years in jail and to pay a fine of 100 000 US dollars for smuggling elephant tusks from Cameroon to the United States of America. The illegal export of raw elephant ivory products for which the lady, who has a Canadian citizenship, was indicted in the US on March 3, 2004, is reported to have caused the slaughtering of at least 21 African elephants.



The illegal hunting of elephants for ivory trade is believed to be the main cause for the decline in the elephant population in Central Africa. This is evidenced by some of the recent cases including: The Siyam case reported to have caused the slaughtering of at least 21 African elephants, the 3.9 tons case for which 3 main suspects were indicted represents more than 300 elephants killed. A principal ivory business veteran was arrested in Brazzaville the Republic of Congo – he has been trading ivory for several decades, with contacts in DRC, China, Japan, West Africa.

Links of this month

A US Court Sentences a Cameroonian Born Lady for Illegal Ivory Trade –Cameroon National Radio Broadcast. A Cameroonian lady, Tania Julie Siyam, International dealer in African ivory was convicted in U.S.A for illegal trade in ivory. She is the daughter of the former Director General of Ports Authorities, Siyam Siewe who is presently in jail for embezzlement of public funds. This is part of LAGA efforts to sensitize the public on this international wildlife case.

<http://www.zshare.net/audio/1817493751e96d90/>