

# The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

## October 2010 Report



### Highlights

- LAGA Director met the MINFOF Minister to sign the new MoU for the next two years.
- **An arrest operation carried out against 3 ivory dealers** in Yaounde – Center.
- **An Egyptian involved in the illegal trade of ivory** following an arrest operation in Yaounde – Center. His involvement in international ivory trade still being investigated.
- The LAGA Director visits **Malawi and Zambia** to give recommendations on how to re-launch wildlife law enforcement using the LAGA experience.
- **4 dealers were sentenced this month.**

### General

This month was marked by a very good operation in Yaounde against 3 ivory dealers.

**3 regular dealers** involved in the illegal trade of ivory arrested in Yaounde – Center. **One of the dealers is of Egyptian nationality** working with a construction company in Cameroon. Through the company, he is able to get ivory which he gives to his accomplices to either sell directly or get clients for the products. More investigations are being carried out on his international involvement in the illegal ivory trade. They were arrested with **4 carved elephant tusks.**

**4 dealers were sentenced this month** with a good prosecution obtained in Abong Mbang – East. The Court of First Instance of Abong-Mbang sentenced one dealer to **9 months of prison** and to pay **\$3504 as damages and fines.** He was arrested in Lomie - East for the killing of 1 gorilla and trying to trade in its parts. The Court of First Instance of Ambam - South sentenced 2 dealers – one of them to 3 months of prison suspended sentence during 3 years and another to 8 months of prison. Each has to pay **\$2153 as damages and fines.** They were arrested in Ambam for illegal trying to trade in 7 forest tortoise shells. In another case, the Court of First Instance of Dschang - West convicted a dealer to 10 days of prison and to pay **\$500 as damages and fines.** He was arrested in Dschang for illegally detaining a live mandrill.

**A trial procedure has been opened** in Douala – Littoral Region **against 3 international ivory traffickers** involved in the trafficking of 3.9 tons of ivory that was seized in Hong Kong in May 2006. 3 international high profile dealers **from Asian** were at the center of this illegal trafficking, and with the assistance of LAGA, a court case was opened against them in 2007 but due to complexity of the facts (profile of dealers, quantity and type of products seized) the State Counsel decided to open judicial investigations, and in October, the examining Magistrate closed the judicial investigations and decided to send the matter to court for trial. In the meanwhile the trial procedure will start according to the decision of examining magistrate even in the absence of the accused. It should be noted that the **3.9 tons of ivory seized in Hong Kong represents more than 300 killed elephants.** Cameroon received the Interpol Ecomessage award for the investigation it carried out together with LAGA on this large scale ivory trafficking.

The Director of LAGA was sponsored by WSPA to visit the **Wildlife Action Group Project (WAG) – in Malawi, and the South Luangwa Conservation Society (SLCS) Project in Zambia,** and give some recommendations using LAGA's experience. WAG is an NGO that is in charge of wildlife protection in two reserves in Malawi – Thuma Forest reserve and Dedza-Salima Reserve. The project has recently changed management and is trying to restart wildlife law enforcement. It has recently carried some important arrests that have resulted in a backlash from local communities and in some culprits released. Partial aerial survey in September reported 28 elephant carcasses. SLCS is an NGO that is in charge of wildlife protection in South Luangwa National Park and the

neighbouring Game Management Area. The project is experiencing increased threats mainly from snares. Poaching is still a problem, while some poachers were released on bail or avoided any legal procedure. This year 28 elephant carcasses have been discovered while the actual number of killings is estimated to be much higher. Both projects approached LAGA in search for ideas for more effective ways to carry enforcement; and they acknowledged that corruption is still a major obstacle in prosecuting cases.

Hubert, the coordinator of RALF – LAGA’s replication project in CAR travelled to Cameroon to carry out a one month training session on LAGA activities, values and results with the aim of getting skills and receiving tools and materials in order to improve on the effectiveness of RALF activities and save the project’s drop in results after LAGA pulled out. Under the supervision of the Head of Legal Department, he is trained on activities of each LAGA’s department: Investigations, Legal, Operations, Communication and Management. He had specific training sessions with various members of LAGA staff in various issues including the collect and exploitation of information, how to make field operations, the establishment of wildlife complaint reports, how to build a good and strong court case and how to follow up procedures in court with assessment of each party involved (magistrates, suspect, lawyers) and identification of practices of corruption and other irregularities until final decision is given, how to execute court decisions and how to publicize results of wildlife law enforcement in media. Hubert also attended one court hearing in Abong Mbang - East and received some training in how to make financial and activities reports. It should be noted that LAGA’s goal from 2003 has been to create a new model for NGO-Government collaboration establishing wildlife law enforcement. Our hope was that by bringing about results with an innovative approach, we will be able to change the existing system and trigger a paradigm shift in the way NGOs tackle wildlife crime. The model is essentially shifting away from targeting small-time poachers in the forest and focusing in prosecution of major dealers, fighting head the major obstacle to the application of the wildlife law in Africa – Corruption

### Investigations

- **30 investigation missions** of varying lengths were carried out in **7 Regions** of Cameroon- North West, South West, South, West, East, Littoral and Center.
- Investigations led to the arrest of 2 ivory dealers in Yaounde – Center.
- Investigations being carried out pertaining to the involvement of an Egyptian ivory dealer in international ivory and wildlife trade.
- Focused evaluation and new expectations and procedures continued this month with encouraging results.

### Operations

**An operation was carried out this month against 3 subjects.**

- **03/10/10 – 3 regular dealers** involved in the illegal trade of ivory arrested in Yaounde – Center. **One of the dealers is of Egyptian nationality** working with a construction company in Cameroon. Through the company, he is able to get ivory which he gives to his accomplices to either sell directly or get clients for the products. More investigations are being carried out on his international involvement in the illegal ivory trade. They were arrested with **4 carved elephant tusks**.

### Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **13 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 2 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Buea (South West), 2 in Abong-Mbang (East), 2 in Sangmelima (South), 1 in Ambam (South), 2 in Kribi (South), 1 in Dschang (West) and 2 in Bamenda (North West).

- There are **15 dealers behind bars during this month**: 2 in the East Region, 5 in the South West Region, 5 in South Region, 1 in West Region and 2 in Centre Region.
- **28 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **23 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 4 dealers were sentenced this month.
  - **05/10/2010**: The Court of First Instance of Abong-Mbang - East sentenced Ekokoh Arsene to 9 months of prison and to pay **\$3504 as damages and fines**. He was arrested in Lomie - East for the killing of 1 gorilla and trying to trade in its parts.
  - **07/10/2010**: The Court of First Instance of Ambam - South sentenced Ela Alo'o Christian to 3 months of prison suspended sentence during 3 years and Engwang Mengue Galax 8 months of prison. Each has to pay **\$2153 as damages and fines**. They were arrested in Ambam for illegal trying to trade in 7 forest tortoise shells.
  - **12/10/2010**: The Court of First Instance of Dschang - West convicted Ngoune Tsafack to 10 days of prison and to pay **500 as damages and fines**. He was arrested in Dschang for illegally detaining a mandrill.
- 1 appeal was registered this month against the ruling given by the Court of First Instance of Dschang in the matter of MINFOF Vs Ngoune Tsafack.
- **A trial procedure has been opened** in Douala – Littoral Region **against 3 international ivory traffickers** involved in the trafficking of 3.9 tons of ivory that was seized in Hong Kong in May 2006. 3 international high profile dealers **from Asian** were at the center of this illegal trafficking, and with the assistance of LAGA, a court case was opened against them in 2007 but due to complexity of the facts (profile of dealers, quantity and type of products seized) the State Counsel decided to open judicial investigations, and in October, the examining Magistrate closed the judicial investigations and decided to send the matter to court for trial. In the meanwhile the trial procedure will start according to the decision of examining magistrate even in the absence of the accused. It should be noted that the **3.9 tons of ivory seized in Hong Kong represents more than 300 killed elephants**. Cameroon received the Interpol Ecomessage award for the investigation it carried out together with LAGA on this large scale ivory trafficking.

### Media front

- **45 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to TV, radio and written press including: 3 TV news features (2 in English and 1 in French), 8 written press materials, 6 in English and 2 in French, 30 radio news flashes 16 in French and 14 in English, 3 radio talk shows all in English and 1 radio news feature in French.
- Guests include: Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, South West Regional Delegate MINFOF, MINFOF Dja and Lobo Divisional Delegate and WWF Technical Adviser.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including - Ambam dealer arrest of 7 tortoise shells and judgement; Meyomessala dealer arrest of parts of chimp, giant pangolin and wildlife species; Kribi arrest of dealer in Mandrill; Mamfe elephant dealer case - court appearance; leopard skin dealers arrest Sangmelima - court appearance; and arrest of gorilla killer in Lomie - Dja - Judgement
- 25 media pieces in English, 20 in French making a percentage of 44.4% in English and 46.7% in French.

### External Relations and Policy

- The Director of LAGA was sponsored by WSPA to visit the **Wildlife Action Group Project (WAG) – in Malawi, and the South Luangwa Conservation Society (SLCS) Project in Zambia**, and give some recommendations using LAGA's experience. WAG is an NGO that is in charge of wildlife protection in two reserves in Malawi – Thuma Forest

reserve and Dedza-Salima Reserve. The project has recently changed management and is trying to restart wildlife law enforcement. It has recently carried some important arrests that have resulted in a backlash from local communities and in some culprits released. Partial aerial survey in September reported 28 elephant carcasses. SLCS is an NGO that is in charge of wildlife protection in South Luangwa National Park and the neighbouring Game Management Area. The project is experiencing increased threats mainly from snares. Poaching is still a problem, while some poachers were released on bail or avoided any legal procedure. This year 28 elephant carcasses have been discovered while the actual number of killings is estimated to be much higher. Both projects approached LAGA in search for ideas for more effective ways to carry enforcement; and they acknowledged that corruption is still a major obstacle in prosecuting cases.

- LAGA Director met the MINFOF Minister to sign the new MoU for the next two years.
- Meeting between LAGA Director and Dutch embassy employee to orientate her on study topic of corruption in Cameroon.
- LAGA Director held meeting with Marian Namzaoui, a CED volunteer and discussed the following; corruption and conservation, APT-AID principles, and wildlife conservation. Top on the agenda also included engaging committees in denouncing wildlife crime.
- The Israeli Embassy and LAGA Director held meeting and discussed on fostering community activism.
- Meeting between LAGA Director and Dutch Ambassador to discuss on wildlife law enforcement, challenges towards the election and the APT-AID principle.
- European Union First Secretary and Head of projects received LAGA Director in a meeting, issues discussed were wildlife law enforcement, challenges towards the election and the APT-AID principles.
- The Director of LAGA held meeting with UNDP to discuss on challenges towards election, the APT-AID principle.
- Meeting between World Bank team of forest sector and LAGA Director on corruption in conservation, wildlife law enforcement, APT-AID principles and new strategy for investment in conservation projects.
- COMISUD met with LAGA to discuss issues on wildlife law enforcement, the APT-AID principle and the challenges on the upcoming election in Cameroon.
- David Hoyle, WWF Director of Project- Cameroon received LAGA Director in a meeting to discuss on animal trafficking in the South East.
- GTZ trainee met with LAGA Director and discussed on conservation, corruption and wildlife law enforcement.
- Meeting between British High Commission and LAGA Director on corruption and challenges towards the election and wildlife law enforcement.

## **Management**

- One LAGA member left this month from the Legal Department. He claims that promises made to him were not accompanied by concrete action. A general LAGA meeting has been scheduled with him so as to decipher the area of misunderstanding.
- Hubert, the coordinator of RALF – LAGA’s replication project in CAR travelled to Cameroon to carry out a one month training session on LAGA activities, values and results with the aim of getting skills and receiving tools and materials in order to improve on the effectiveness of RALF activities and save the project’s drop in results after LAGA pulled out. Under the supervision of the Head of Legal Department, he is trained on activities of each LAGA’s department: Investigations, Legal, Operations, Communication and Management. He had specific training sessions with various members of LAGA staff in various issues including the collect and exploitation of information, how to make field operations, the establishment of wildlife complaint reports, how to build a good and strong

court case and how to follow up procedures in court with assessment of each party involved (magistrates, suspect, lawyers) and identification of practices of corruption and other irregularities until final decision is given, how to execute court decisions and how to publicize results of wildlife law enforcement in media. Hubert also attended one court hearing in Abong Mbang - East and received some training in how to make financial and activities reports. It should be noted that LAGA's goal from 2003 has been to create a new model for NGO-Government collaboration establishing wildlife law enforcement. Our hope was that by bringing about results with an innovative approach, we will be able to change the existing system and trigger a paradigm shift in the way NGOs tackle wildlife crime. The model is essentially shifting away from targeting small-time poachers in the forest and focusing in prosecution of major dealers, fighting head the major obstacle to the application of the wildlife law in Africa – Corruption.

### **Activism Front**

Education activities were carried out on the following as well as fostering Activism Manual - <http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Activism/tabid/77/Default.aspx>

#### **1) Women's Rights and the law in Cameroon**

- The presentation looks at women's rights enshrined in Cameroon's constitution, and international conventions ratified by Cameroon, it then compares them with the actual laws that till now discriminates women.

Presented by Kelly Showker – US Embassy, Cameroon

#### **Questions**

1. Why do we need rights for women?
2. Compare the national laws with the constitution of Cameroon
3. Are women's rights kept in your community?
4. Are there contradictions between the principles of women's rights and tradition?
5. How can women as well as men improve the situation – nationally and in the community level?

#### **2) Neria - the battle of one woman against traditional inheritance law**

- In this melodramatic film, Neria has just lost her husband and her brother-in-law has decided to take full advantage of the situation. He not only reduces Neria to servitude, but tries to bribe her children so that they turn against her. One day, she stands up for her rights, and seeks out a good lawyer. In a legal battle she challenges her oppressor opening a debate on the issue of tradition, modern African life and the rights of women.

A film provided by Ofir

#### **Questions**

1. Was Neria right in her actions?
2. Was the brother in law right according to traditional rules or was he abusing tradition?
3. What did the grandmother think of Neria in the beginning of the film, and in its end?
4. Do you agree with Neria's argument that we should behave differently in city and in a the village?
5. Do you have similar examples in your community?
6. Could Neria do the same thing has she been a Cameroonian?

#### **3) Children's parliament in Cameroon**

- The film presents the historical background, aim and evolution of children's parliament in Cameroon 10 years after its introduction. In the film, different actors explain the process, the political and social importance of the activity of the children. That has to do with children's

right, expression and more importantly nesting the spirit of democracy, at the tender age.  
 But the question is how can the children's parliament be institutionalized?  
 Presented by Serge – Media and External Department

### Questions

1. How can the children's parliament be institutionalized?
2. What are the criteria in selecting children parliamentarians to junior parliament?
3. Are children represented from all corners in the country?

#### 4) Battle in Seattle – protest against WTO

- Battle Seattle is a film on the non-violent protest against WTO by the civil society, economist, and environmentalist. The protesters condemn the WTO monopolisation, imposition of prices over markets under the pretext of free market among countries. It rather has very little to do with trade and it is certainly not free as claimed by members of the organisation. But it is a manipulation of certain countries, governments and large cooperation to control and rule the world. A system where money is valued more than human lives, rights and environment to the benefit of certain group.  
 The determination and non-violence of the protesters in the film resulted to successful achievements of most of their outlined points against the organisation.

A film provided by Ofir

### Questions

1. Did the protesters succeed because of their determination?
2. Were they able to control the non-violent aspect of the protest?

#### 5) Biya's speech at the 65<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly

- The presentation is based on the analysis of the speech made by President Paul Biya in the 65<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly that took place in September 2010 in New York. The paper appreciates issues raised by Mr Biya in his speech vis a vis his country, African leaders and his country Cameroon in particular.

Presented by Anna – Media and External Department

### Questions

1. Should Biya be in the right position to make a speech on behalf of Africa?
2. How serious can other state members consider the speech of Biya as a person?
3. Does poverty prevent the practice of democracy as pointed out Biya in his speech?
4. Why is Africa neglected in the Security committee of the United Nation quoted Biya in his speech?

## Finance

### LAGA Expenditure by budget line for October 2010

Amount CFA	Budget line		Amount USD
2,705,250	Investigations	30 inv, 6 Regions	\$5,780
546,300	Operations	1 Operation against 3 subjects	\$1,167
1,499,805	legal	follow up 28 cases 15 locked subjects	\$3,205
1,852,435	Media	45 media pieces	\$3,958
1,139,356	Policy & External Relations	Congo/Gabon/Kenya/Malawi/Zambia/Ethiopia/Uganda/CAR/France	\$2,435
906,700	Management	Coordination	\$1,937
2,277,186	Office		\$4,866
10,927,032	TOTAL EXPENDITURE OCTOBER		\$23,348

**LAGA Expenditure by donor for October 2010**

AmountCFA	Donor	Amount USD
4,313,455	FWS	\$9,216.8
876,256	FWS-Replication	\$1,872.3
	Rufford Foundation	\$0.0
284,250	World Parrot Trust	\$607.4
3,086,925	BornFree Foundation	\$6,596.0
2,366,146	Neu Foundation	\$5,055.9
10,927,032	TOTAL	\$23,348.4



## THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



**2 ivory dealers arrested in Yaounde – Center while trying to illegally trade in 4 elephant tusks. 3 regular dealers involved in the illegal trade of ivory arrested in Yaounde – Center. Their main supplier is of Egyptian nationality working with a construction company in Cameroon. More investigations are being carried out on his international involvement in the illegal ivory trade. They were arrested with 4 carved elephant tusks (below).**





## **Links of this month**

Two leopard skin dealers arrested with a leopard skin - Cameroon National Television Broadcast. The wildlife traffickers were arrested while trying to sell a large fresh leopard skin in Sangmelima thanks to the timely intervention of MINFOF, the Forces of Law and Order, the Judiciary and LAGA technical assistance.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KVeugZv-nI>