

LAST GREAT APE ORGANISATION, CAMEROON (LAGA)

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



Executive Summary

Tangible achievements were made in LAGA's collaboration with MINFOF, despite the several old as well as new challenges and obstacles encountered during this period. Achievements were obtained in the fields of investigation, arrest, prosecution, media exposure, government relations and international activities with focus on the fight against corruption, illegal wildlife trade, principally trafficking in pangolin scales and ivory. The team focused on establishing relations with government departments involved in fighting wildlife criminality especially customs services around the country. These activities included the signing of a protocol agreement with Customs and the setting up of a committee to oversee the implementation of the agreement, meetings with regional customs officials and follow up of seizures made by customs. The team strengthened its procedures for greater efficiency and effectivity in order to maximise the use of financial and human resources. The EAGLE network's Central Coordination Unit continued to provide vital technical and organization support that facilitated several operations. A major trafficking network that stretched over CAR, Cameroon and Nigeria was dismantled and large quantities of ivory and pangolin scales were seized. Five traffickers including the son of a former finance minister were arrested for ivory trafficking and a baby chimp was rescued in another operation.

32 major traffickers were arrested, at a rate of one per 11 days; approximately 78 % stayed behind bars from the day of arrest. 32 new cases were brought to the courts and 39 traffickers were found guilty. The court ordered the payment of damages totaling 200,211,000 F CFA (about \$400,522) to MINFOF by the convicted traffickers. Media exposure was at a rate of one media piece per day.

The EAGLE network obtained good results as 171 traffickers were arrested across the 8 countries within the network. Exchange visits continued among the countries specifically with a legal adviser from Senegal arriving the country for a month-long training and experience sharing mission.

Several meetings were held by the Deputy Director with government and diplomatic officials in Yaounde and with many other stakeholders within the wildlife law enforcement domain.

The work of LAGA was supported by: Wildcat, US Fish and Wildlife Service, AVAAZ, CIDT, Dutch Gorilla Foundation, The Born Free Foundation, NABU International Foundation for Nature, No Wildlife Crime, Remembering Wildlife, , RGS .

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ANNUAL REPORT
January – December 2019

OVERVIEW

Investigations

- A total of 194 investigation missions (of varying lengths) were carried out in 7 regions.
- The network of informants continued producing results leading to good operations.

Operations

- Operations were carried out in 5 regions arresting 32 major traffickers at a rate of 1 per 11 days; resulting in 32 court cases. LAGA provided legal assistance to some law enforcement units in 7 other cases and was not part of the initial arrest operations.
- Operations on pangolin scales and ivory accounted for 73% of the total number of operations
- The rate of imprisonment of arrested traffickers was 78%.
- A notorious network of pangolin scales and ivory traffickers involving Cameroon The Central African Republic and Nigeria was busted with the arrest 4 and the seizure of 1.7 tons of pangolin scales and 73 ivory tusks.
- The son of a former finance minister was arrested alongside 4 others for ivory trafficking.

Legal

- 32 new cases were brought to court and represented (many of the cases began during the period have not yet reached the judgement stage but procedures are ongoing). 7 other new cases from operations not initiated by LAGA were brought to court. These operations were initiated and carried out either by police, customs or wildlife officials.
- 39 traffickers were found guilty and handed prison sentences, fines, damages and penalties. Damages amounted to some 200,211,000 F CFA (about \$400,522) to be paid to MINFOF.
- 18 court judgements were passed during the year although very week sentences necessitated the lodging of 5 appeals which is a very high number.

Media

- A total of 372 media pieces were produced in national media (television, radio, press and internet) achieved at a rate of one media piece per day.

Management

- A protocol agreement was signed with the Customs Department in view of collaborating in tracking wildlife traffickers.
- Focus was on stepping up collaboration with government departments involved in fighting wildlife criminality.

- Several team building activities were planned and carried out.
- The annual report for 2018 was made available online.

External Relations and Policy

- Several meetings were held with MINFOF, Customs officials, the diplomatic community, national and international NGOs to discuss corruption issues, wildlife law enforcement, conservation in general, etc.
- LAGA participated at the CBFP organized ministerial conference that held in Ndjamena Chad to tackle threats posed by transhumant pastoralists and armed groups in the region.

Strategic Highlights

- The strategic focus over this period was on trafficking in pangolin scales representing 39%, 34% for ivory trafficking, 10% for leopard skins and hippo teeth trafficking each while 5% was on chimp trafficking and there was a case of lion skull trafficking.
- The focus was on stepping up collaborative efforts with the various law enforcement departments involved in fighting wildlife crime.
- New investigative strategies and techniques were developed and old ones revamped to keep abreast with the ever evolving traffickers.

EAGLE Activities

- A total of 171 traffickers were arrested across 8 countries of the network during the year.
- Exchange visits continued among the countries specifically with a legal adviser from EAGLE Senegal arriving the country for a month-long training and experience exchange visit while the CCU financial officer visited the country to provide assistance on financial management.

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Also available:

1. Annual Financial Statement and Semester I & II reports 2019
2. Monthly Financial and Activity Reports January to December 2019
3. Media archive – Excel database linked to recorded media pieces
4. Photo archive for media use

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NARRATIVE REPORT

Investigations

LAGA's investigation unit carried out 194 investigation missions in 7 regions of the country during this period. Improvements in the collaboration with all departments were made and the EAGLE Central Coordination Unit (CCU) provided vital investigation support, guidance and some of the field investigations were carried out with their collaboration. The internet investigations section provided essential technical support to the various investigators and operations team and launched several investigations some of which are ongoing. Weekly meetings were held in the department to plan activities, develop strategies, techniques and team spirit to improve results, identify and cover key trafficking areas.

New investigative methods and techniques were devised to meet up with the ever changing tactics used by traffickers to circumvent enforcement. During the second part of the year, old strategies and techniques were analyzed and revamped, evolving them into highly target specific strategies, taking into consideration several socio-cultural dimensions of the various targets. One of the revamped strategies that was used this time around concerned grouping investigators on specific cases and swapping them as the situation warranted. This is an old strategy that was reshaped to meet some investigations requirements. The recruitment process for a new generation of high caliber and specialized investigators and informants that was initiated last year continued

The department held several meetings with some wildlife and customs officials to build collaborative platforms; enabling effective investigations and information exchange. Meetings were held with customs and or police officials in Douala (Littoral Region), Yaounde (Centre), and in Meiganga in the Adamawa with customs and gendarmerie officials. The Head of the Investigations Department accompanied by the Assistant Head of Department held meetings with some customs and security officials at the Nsimalen International Airport to initiate collaborative platforms; enabling effective investigations and information exchange. He equally held meetings with some security and customs officials at the Douala International Airport for the same purpose and was accompanied by the Head of the Legal Department. The focus was to create collaborative platforms at this strategic points.

A new investigator was recruited after going through the rigorous volunteer training programme and meeting up with the requirements of being a capable field investigator. It is expected that this would improve on results in the department. The department head and his deputy carried out several training sessions for the benefit of investigators.

Investigations were not carried out in some regions of the country because of the challenging security situation in these areas and shall be covered immediately the situation gets better.

Number of Missions



Figure 1: Number of Investigations Missions per Month

2. Operations

LAGA and the Government of Cameroon carried out operations in 5 regions against 32 individuals at a rate of one per 11 days and 32 new cases were brought to the courts this year. A further 7 cases were taken on by LAGA from operations carried out by the police, customs or wildlife officials who solicited support. The drop in results proved how complicated it was to manoeuvre and get the traffickers who have become very tricky and weary about being caught and are making it tough each time an operation has to be carried out. This was further complicated by the long procedures in getting wildlife and police officials ready for the crackdown. The rate of imprisonment stood at 78% of the cases with the individuals behind bars while awaiting trial.

The illegal trade in pangolin scales and ivory made up the bulk of trafficking that was targeted during the year and 39% of the operations were on the busting of networks dealing in pangolin scales and while ivory trafficking attracted a significant number of operations and represented 34%. A slightly significant number of traffickers were arrested dealing in leopard skins and this represented 10% of the arrest operations while 10% equally represented operations against four traffickers in hippo teeth and a live chimpanzee was seized and two arrested representing 5% while a lion skull trafficker was arrested. 2 very high profile arrests were made during the year and include the arrest of 4 traffickers in Douala, with 73 ivory tusks and 1.7 tons of pangolin scales. The 4 are big time professional traffickers who have been exporting contraband to Nigeria permanently. The son of a former finance minister was arrested in September with 4 other accomplices trafficking two large elephant tusks.

In January, 2 traffickers were arrested in Douala, Littoral Region with a live baby chimpanzee. The couple had been planning to export the chimpanzee as they have been doing

in the past with the support of one of their sons who is based in Europe. They had been trafficking live animals for a long time, shipping chimpanzees to Europe. The man claimed to have sold gorillas and chimps.

The second operation of the month saw the arrest of 4 traffickers in Douala, Littoral Region with 54kg of pangolin scales, 5 hippo teeth and 2 unidentified precious stones. The pangolin scales were packed inside 3 bags and transported in a taxi car that was watched and followed closely by one of the traffickers on a motorbike. The traffickers, who seemed to be very professional in their dealings as testified by the precaution they took in moving the scales, activated a network of poachers and smaller traffickers in towns and villages around Douala. The hippo teeth were brought in from Chad by two of the traffickers. Two of them have been in the pangolin scales business for long time.

A trafficker was arrested in Doume, East Region with 40kg of pangolin scales. He was found pulling a bag of pangolin scales out from his home. He was one of two traffickers targeted for their involvement in a pangolin trafficking ring in the area and a sudden influx of gendarmerie officers passing through the town scared one of the traffickers who immediately escaped when he saw the trucks ferrying the gendarme officers stationed in the town. The ring is known to be heavily involved in trafficking pangolin scales in large quantities in an area that is fast becoming the center for pangolin scales trafficking in the East Region. Truck drivers use the town as a resting spot and traffickers seem to be taking advantage of the presence of transport facilities that can hold bulks which is a main condition for trafficking in pangolin scales.

In February, 2 traffickers were arrested in Yaounde, Centre Region with 42kg of pangolin scales. The two are very popular with bushmeat sellers in a notorious neighbourhood that is well known for illegal trafficking in bushmeat and other parts especially pangolin scales in Yaounde. The neighbourhood has proven over the years to be very tough to tackle, with several law enforcement attempts aborted in the area. They activated a whole network of smaller poachers and traffickers in a number of towns especially Nanga Eboko and villages around the town.

The month of March saw the arrest of 4 traffickers in Douala, East Region with 73 ivory tusks and 1.7 tons of pangolin scales. The four are big time professional traffickers who have been exporting contraband to Nigeria. They activated a complicated chain of smaller traffickers and poachers in three regions of the country including Centre, East and South. Several towns and villages (Batouri, Messanmena, Ngoyla, Abong Mbang Yoko Ayos) known for being hotbeds for wildlife trafficking are among centers where they collected the contraband that was assembled and stored in Douala before export. They equally used front businesses to cover up their illegal trafficking and adopted sophisticated concealment techniques to move the products around. One of the traffickers owns a telephone shop in the Douala central market which was used as a front business and he had made trips to China. A second trafficker dealt in pepper and a local spices called “djansang”. He concealed ivory and pangolin scales inside the djansang bags when transporting the contraband from the three regions where they activated several small traffickers and poachers.

In April, 3 traffickers were arrested in Sangmelima, South Region with 5 ivory tusks and an elephant tail. 5 tiny elephant tusks and a tail were seized from the traffickers who shot and

killed baby elephants at the Dja Biosphere Reserve. A retired policeman's gun was used in shooting the baby elephants. The tusks were cut out of the heads of the elephants and taken to Sangmelima where the traffickers tried to sell them and this led to their arrest. 5 fresh little tusks that measured about 14 centimetres long each and weighed a total 1kg for all of the five tusks were seized. The sight of the tusks was heart-breaking and this kind of destruction was rarely seen in ivory trafficking. Over the years this reserve was protected to some extent by its natural borders such as rivers but it is now increasingly coming under attacks from traffickers who have been selecting and using very difficult entry points to discourage ecoguards from going after them, while they butcher elephants and other wildlife in the reserve.

May month saw a senior police constable arrested in Yaounde with an ivory tusk, leopard skin and 5 lion skulls. The policeman who was in charge of protecting the Bouba Ndjidda National Park travelled more than 1000km from the park with products hidden inside his car and arrived Ngaoundere where he boarded a commercial bus that took him to Yaounde. He was sent on duty to protect the park but organized a poaching ring that sourced wildlife products from animals poached in the park. He used his police cover and credentials to protect traffickers in that part of the country while also ferrying wildlife products to various cities.

4 traffickers were arrested in Tonga, West Region with 96.5kg of pangolin scales. The group that was made of two women and two men, was very organized and ran a network specializing in pangolin scales and was the main part of a chain that connected pangolin scales traffickers from big cities to several local traffickers and bushmeat sellers in the area.

In June, a trafficker was arrested in Douala with 95kg of pangolin scales. He belongs to an international network of pangolin scales traffickers that was the focus of an operation last year but seemingly the network was not totally dismantled. He linked up traffickers in Cameroon with those based in Bangui in the Central African Republic thereby facilitating the illegal wildlife trade from the Central African Republic. The pangolin scales are sent through trucks plying the Douala – Bangui corridor and sold in Douala. The notorious network has been trafficking in several tons of pangolin scales and at least one of its members who was arrested last year and released was connected to the present deal. The modus operandi for these international trafficking networks is simple, and consist of buying the scales from smaller traffickers in Cameroon, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and exporting to Nigeria via Cameroon.

In July, 3 traffickers arrested with 4 leopard skins in Loum, Littoral Region. On a bike, they arrived to the place of transaction under torrential rains and were arrested during an attempt to sell the skins. One of them attempted to escape when he realized that they were to be arrested but law enforcement officials moved swiftly and stopped him. They are regular suppliers of illicit leopard skins in an area that is notorious for leopard skins trafficking. They also took advantage of an easy and flexible transport mood - a motorbike

In September, 5 traffickers were arrested in Yaounde, Centre Region with 2 ivory tusks weighing 53kg. The son of a former finance minister who was the main trafficker in the deal was arrested alongside four others during the operation that was the result of an investigation that was started following operations carried out in Douala. Leads from the past operations were followed by the investigation and this led to the arrest in the heart of

the capital city of the traffickers with two extraordinarily large elephant tusks that were transported in a black Toyota Prado car belonging to the son of the former minister. Tusks with this size are rarely seen nowadays because poachers kill elephants even when they are still babies with very small tusks.

November month saw the arrest of 2 traffickers in Bertoua, East Region with 2 ivory tusks. The two are international ivory traffickers plying the border areas between Cameroon and the Central African Republic. They are part of an international network of ivory traffickers based in Kenzou who supply ivory to some main cities in the country including Bertoua, Yaounde and Douala. Prior investigations show one of them had been arrested in Yokadouma in March 2019 by the gendarmerie and released without any charges made and without the matter handed over to wildlife officials who have competence over the handling of wildlife offences. The same trafficker had once also been arrested in Gamboula in the East Region and released without prosecution.

As a part of LAGA’s newly established collaboration with customs and following the arrest by customs of a long time Ghanaian parrot trafficker with 20 African grey parrots, LAGA assisted customs and wildlife officials with interrogation and prosecution procedures. The repeat offender has been arrested twice for the same offence and released by officials with no prison sentence. In 2015 he was arrested in the South with a consignment of African grey parrots and released. In 2017 he was arrested with an accomplice in Yaounde with over 200 parrots but was released. These two incidents explained why he could feel free to continue trafficking in parrots. He is connected to an international group specialized in the illegal export of parrots from the country to Europe, Asia and other African countries.

Operations Table

<i>Number of Operations</i>	<i>Number of Traffickers</i>	<i>Contraband</i>
11	32	54kg pangolin scales, 40kg pangolin scales, a live baby chimpanzee 42kg pangolin scales, 73 ivory tusks weighing 150kg, 1.7 tons pangolin scales, 5 ivory tusks and an elephant tail, 96,5kg pangolin scales, an ivory tusk, a leopard skin, 5 lion skulls, 95kg pangolin scales 4 leopard skins, 2 ivory tusks weighing 53kg, 2 ivory tusks

Figure 2: Operation Table

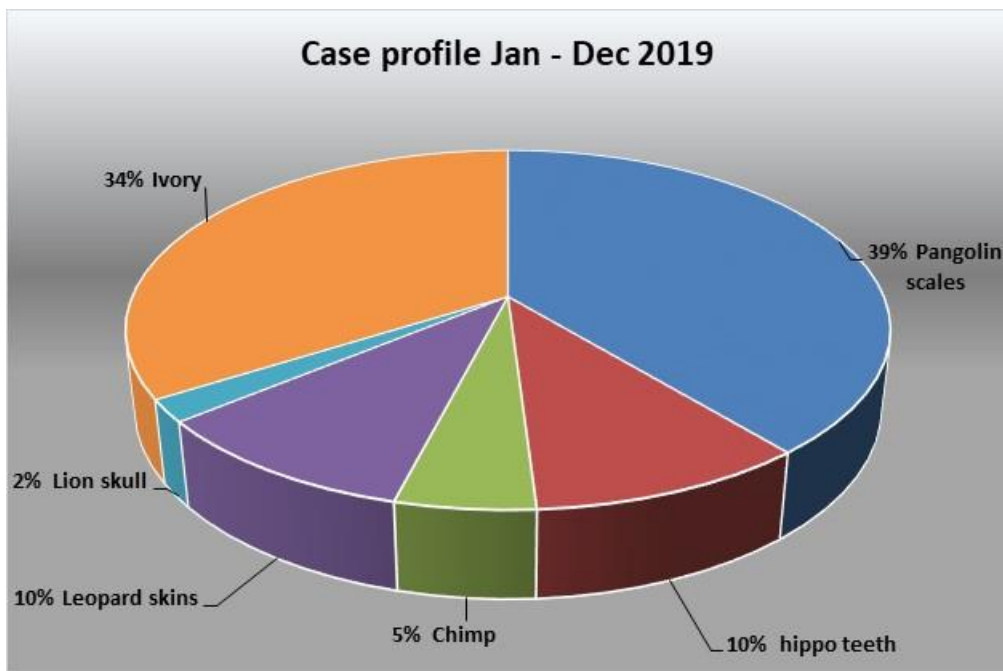


Figure 3: Case profile

3 Legal

32 court cases were initiated, followed up and represented. Most of the cases initiated within this period have not yet reached the judgement stage, and most of the offenders are imprisoned throughout the process instead of being allowed to move freely and conduct further criminal acts. 78% of those arrested were locked while on trial. 7 other cases resulting from the work of police, customs and or wildlife officials were followed up by the organization.

107 missions were done out of the Center Region for follow-up, new cases and the creation and strengthening of relations with customs and judicial authorities. More emphasis as a direct result of operations was on pangolin scales and ivory.

During the year, 18 court judgements were passed with 39 traffickers found guilty and 20 of them given prison sentences while 17 others were either given only fines and or damages to pay and a further 9 were given suspended prison sentences and one was found not guilty. The high numbers of weak sentences and a no prison sentences account for the high number of appeals (2) lodged. LAGA assisted the Ministry in the follow up of 7 cases that were not initiated by the organisation. Damages amounted to some 200,211,000 F CFA (about \$400,522) to be paid to MINFOF.

The Douala – Bonanjo Court of First Instance found the accused HAPPY Mathias, NGHOUROUPOUO Shouiboua and TUMUYA Seidou guilty as charged and sentenced them as follows: HAPPY Mathias 2 months imprisonment term; NGHOUROUPOUO Shouiboua and TUMUYA Seidou to pay 50,000 FCFA (about \$100) as fines each. They were also ordered to pay 100,000,000 FCFA (about \$200,000) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Douala on the 09/11/2018 for illegal possession of 472 kg of ivory tusks.

The Abong-Mbang Court of First Instance found the accused NJOYA NSANGOU Mouhamed guilty as charged and sentenced him to 6 months suspended sentence during 3 years and to pay 50,000 FCFA (about \$100) as fines and 1,500,000 FCFA (about \$3000) as damages. He was arrested in Doume for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 24kg of pangolin scales.

The Douala – Ndokoti Court of First Instance found the accused NDOKO Chacard, KOUNGOUE Simon Pierre, OUNWE Sariga and NYAMSI Dipelec guilty as charged and sentenced them to 45 days imprisonment each and to pay 500,000 FCFA (about \$1,000) each as fines and 10,000,000 FCFA (about \$20,000) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Douala on the 24/01/2019 for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 54kg of pangolin scales.

The Yaounde – Centre Administratif Court of First Instance found the accused MESSI MEDOU Jean Pierre and MBAH Timothé guilty as charged and sentenced them to 1-month imprisonment each. The court also sentenced them to pay 100,000 FCFA (about \$200) each as fines and 2,000,000 FCFA (about \$4,000) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Yaounde on the 20/02/2019 for illegal possession of 42kg of pangolin scales.

The Abong-Mbang Court of First Instance found the accused NGUELE Jean and MINKANG ABONDO not guilty, but the Court found the accused NGONO NGOUE Julienne, ATEK Elodie and MPOUMEDA MPANDA Thierry guilty and sentenced them to pay 100,000 FCFA (about \$200) each as fines, 41,500 FCFA (about \$90) each as court charges and 1,000,000 FCFA (about \$2,000) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Abong-Mbang for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 31kg of pangolin scales.

The Douala - Bonanjo Court of First Instance found the accused ARREY ETA Morine, MBAH Jacqueline MUBANG, PEYUKKUE Mama and PEPOUNA NJIKANZIE Abdou guilty as charged and sentenced them to pay 1,000,000 FCFA (about \$2,000) each as fines and 21,000,000 FCFA (about \$42,000) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Douala for the illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 432 Kgs of pangolin scales.

The East Region Appeal Court, found the accused NJEUDJI Jules, TIKAYA Franc and TOUE Moussa Liboire guilty of illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of a live chimpanzee. They were ordered to pay 2,000,000 FCFA (about \$4,000) as civil damages and 38,000 FCFA (about \$78) as court cost. They were arrested in Batouri for illegal possession and commercialization of a live chimpanzee.

The Douala - Bonaberie Court of First Instance found the accused TEGOUM Alphonse Raoul, BOUGNIA Kamta Francis and TCHAMTCHEU Francis Romuald not guilty, but the court found the accused AKANZE AKONGLO Bertrand guilty and sentenced him to 6 months imprisonment term and to pay 945,000 FCFA (about 1,890) as fines and 15,000,000 FCFA (about \$30,000) as damages. They were arrested in Douala on the 14/03/2019 for the illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 156kg of ivory tusks and 1.500kg of pangolin scales.

The Bangangte Court of First Instance found the accused NYONSE NANDEP Stéphanie, ABAGNO Joséphine, NOUNKEU Romuld and BAKATCHOU FEUTEU guilty as charged

and sentenced them to 22 days imprisonment term each and to pay 38,000 FCFA (about \$76) each as court charges and 1,000,000 FCFA (about \$2,000) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Tonga on the 23/05/2019 for the illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 96,5kg of pangolin scales.

The Djoum Court of First Instance found the accused AKO'O MENDO Gervais guilty and sentenced him to 3 months suspended sentence for 3 years and to pay 25,000 FCFA (about \$ 50) as fines and 490,000 FCFA (about \$980) as damages. He was arrested in Djoum on the 08/09/2017 for illegal possession of a baby chimpanzee.

The Meiganga Court of First Instance found the accused ABOUBAKAR guilty and sentenced him to a 2-month prison term and to pay 379,000 FCFA (about \$760) as fines and 5,200,000 FCFA (about \$10,400) as damages. He was arrested in Meiganga on the 12/04/2019 for illegal possession and circulation of 25kg of ivory tusks and 12kg of pangolin scales.

The Douala – Ndokoti Court of First Instance found the accused ABDOUL NASSIR Sali guilty and sentenced him to a 20-day prison term and to pay 54,000 FCFA (about \$108) as fines and 1,042,000 FCFA (about \$2,084) as damages. He was arrested in Douala on the 20/06/2019 for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 95kg of pangolin scales

The Bonanjo Court of First Instance found the accused NSANGOU NFOYA Oumarou not guilty, MOUNCHIKPOU Aboubakar and NJIKAM Amidou guilty and sentenced them to a one-year prison term and to pay 546,000 FCFA (about \$1,092) as fines and 10,380,000 FCFA (about \$20, 760) as damages. They were arrested in Douala on the 21/11/2017 for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 128kg of pangolin scales.

The Sangmelima Court of First Instance found the accused BERRY NGANE Stéphane and ZANG AFANE Daniel Patrick guilty and sentenced them to one year prison sentence suspended for 3 years and to pay 300,000 FCFA (about \$600) each as fines. BANGA Ruphin was also found guilty and sentenced to 4 months imprisonment and to pay 50,000 FCFA (about \$100) as fines. All of them were also sentenced to jointly pay 4,000,000 FCFA (about \$8,000) as damages. They were arrested in Sangmelima on the 11/04/2019 for illegal possession, circulation and sale of 5 ivory tusks and an elephant tail.

The Douala-Ndokoti Court of First Instance found the accused BANDOUMA Benoit guilty and sentenced him to one month suspended sentence during 3 years and to pay 200,000 FCFA (about \$400) as fines and 1,300,000 FCFA (about \$2,600) as damages. He was arrested in Douala on the 30/07/2019 for the illegal possession, circulation and sale of 16 ivory tusks.

The Yaounde-Ekounou Court of First Instance found the accused ENGUELE Jean Bernard guilty and sentenced him to 4 months' imprisonment term and to pay 5,000,000 FCFA (about \$10,000) as damages and 274, 650 FCFA (about \$550) as court cost. He was arrested in Yaounde on the 18/05/2019 for the illegal possession, circulation and sale of 5 lion skulls, 122 elephant teeth, 1 leopard skin and 1 ivory tusk.

The Douala-Bonanjo Court of First Instance found the accused ADAMU Ibrahim, UPAH Macmillan and AKENJI Ebenezer Ajeko guilty and sentenced them to 6 months suspended

sentences for 3 years and to pay 1,000,000 FCFA (about \$2,000) each as fines and 10,000,000 FCFA (about \$20,000) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Douala on the 10/11/2017 for illegal possession and circulation of 158 elephant tusks, 124 grey parrot heads and 1394 grey parrot feathers.

The Mbanga Court of First Instance found the accused TCHAPDA Dieunedort, TCOUAKWE Hervé and DJOFANG guilty and ordered to pay 100,000 FCFA (about \$200) each as fines and 3,920,000 FCFA (about \$7,840) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Douala on the 24/07/2019 for illegal possession and circulation of 4 leopard skins.

The Batouri Court of First Instance found the accused ALIOUM Abdou and MAHAMAT Abdoulaye guilty and sentenced them to 6 months prison term and to pay 100,000 FCFA (about \$200) each as fines and 4,000,000 FCFA (about \$8,000) as damages. They were arrested in Batouri on the 13/11/2019 for illegal possession and circulation of 2 elephant tusks.

A total of 5 appeals were lodged against court rulings; a very high number because of the very week judgements given by some judges.

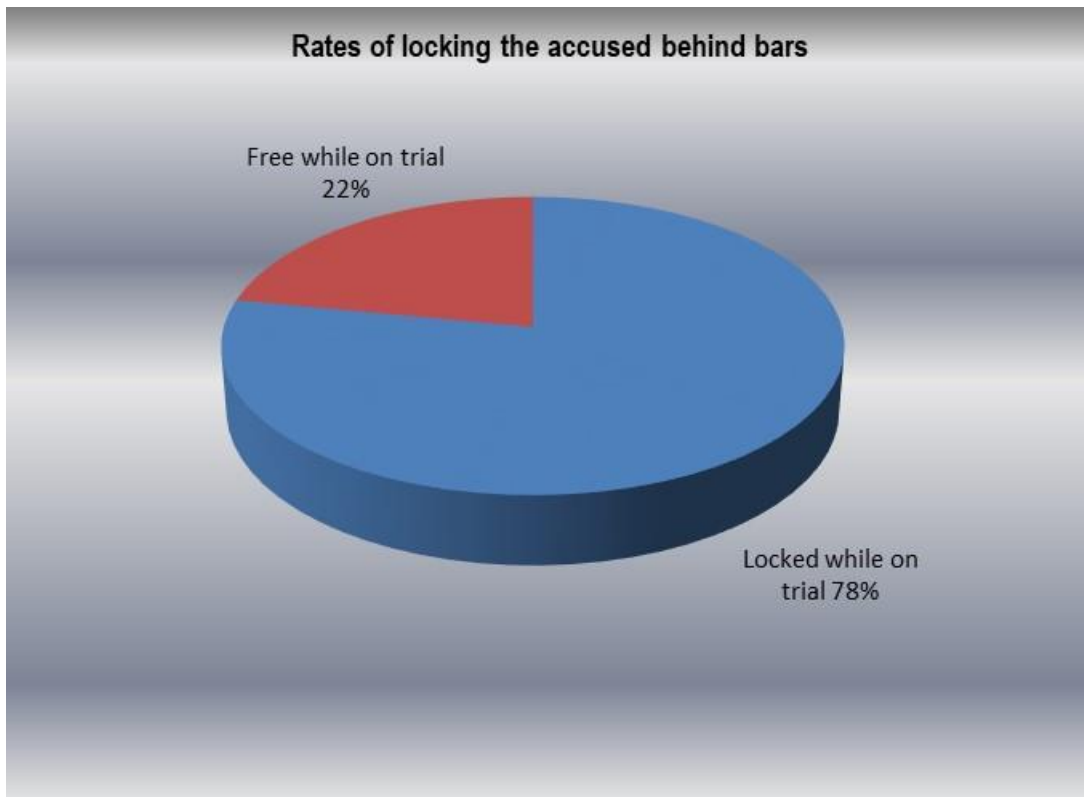


Figure 4: Rate of locking accused behind bars

4. Media

A total of 372 media pieces was produced and pushed into national media including numerous articles in all media – radio, television and written press and the internet a rate of more than one media piece per day. February, May, September and November months saw the highest number of media pieces while January and October recorded the lowest numbers. The low media results could be partly explained by the fact that some weeks of the January month were set aside for annual vacation and while in October the absence of operations around that period could account for such a low output.

Subjects were on a broad range of wildlife law enforcement issues including all of LAGA-MINFOF operations, prosecutions and efforts aimed at improving the fight against wildlife crime. These included the Abong Mbang arrest of five people with pangolin scales; the arrest of four in Douala with pangolin scales, the arrest of a couple with a baby chimpanzee; the Doume arrest of a trafficker in pangolin scales, the Yaounde arrest of two with over 40kg of pangolin scales; the seizure of close to 2 tons of pangolin scales and 73 ivory tusks and arrest of two traffickers; the Tonga arrest of four traffickers with 100kg of pangolin scales; the arrest by customs of a parrot trafficker with a consignment of African grey parrots; the Sangmelima arrest of three people with ivory; the Doula court hearing of four traffickers arrested with close to 2 tons of pangolin scales and 73 ivory tusks; the arrest of a trafficker in Meiganga with over 24kg of ivory and some 12kg of pangolin scales; the Yaounde arrest of a policeman with an ivory tusk, a leopard skin, 5 fresh lion skulls, and 3 lion jawbones; the Douala arrest of a trafficker with 100kg of pangolin scales; the signing a protocol agreement between LAGA and Customs and spotlight on world pangolin day sensitization, a travel ban against a Gendarmerie colonel; the Loum arrest of three traffickers with four leopard skins; the court case of a policeman arrested with an ivory tusk, lion skulls among others in Yaounde; the Kribi court case against a Ghanaian national arrested with 18 African grey parrots, the Yaounde arrest of 5 ivory traffickers with ivory tusks and the subsequent court hearings; the trial of two arrested in Douala by Judicial Police bags of pangolin scales; the imprisonment of a court registrar in the Congo Republic and the Batouri arrest of two with ivory tusks as well as the court hearings.

Interviews and quotes used in the various media pieces were from; the Kribi customs mobile unit head, Tarla Francis a wildlife specialist and consultant with ZSL, Littoral Regional Delegate of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife and the Deputy Director of the Last Great Ape Organisation – LAGA, the Doume Chief of Forestry and Wildlife Control Post.

The Assistant Head of the Media Department and External Relations Department travelled to the United States where she participated at International Visitors Leadership Programme of the State Department that focused on the fight against corruption.

The distribution of Wildlife Justice Magazine continued. Wildlife Justice is a thematic journal that focuses on wildlife law enforcement and conservation issues.

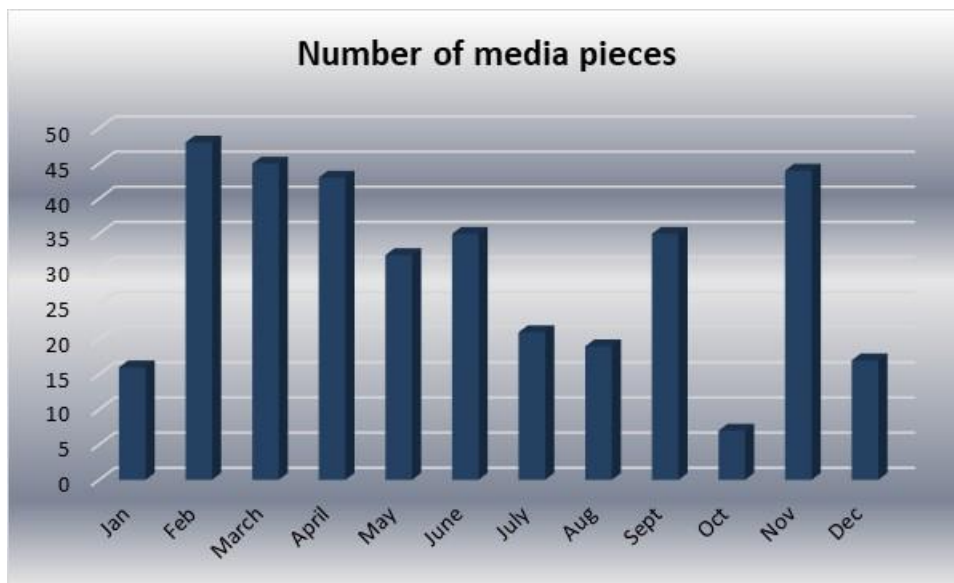


Figure 5: Number of Media Pieces Produced and Published

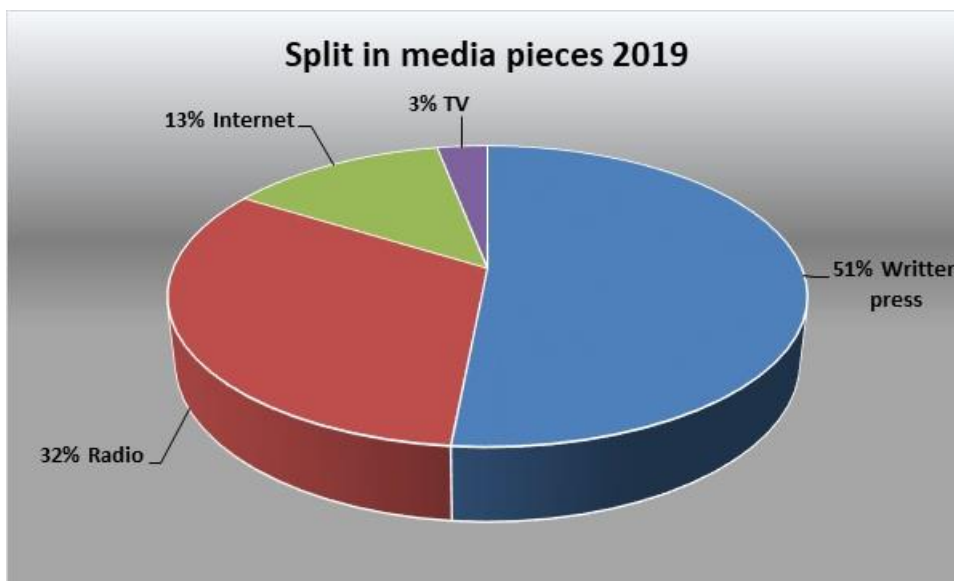


Figure 6: Split of Media Pieces

5. Management

LAGA took a critical step in the fight against wildlife crime with the signing of a protocol agreement with Customs. This was quickly followed by the setting up by the Director of Customs, of a committee comprising customs and LAGA members to follow up the implementation of the protocol agreement and a tour by LAGA members of the committee in 9 of the 10 regions of the country to inform the various customs sectors chiefs and to assist them in understanding modalities for the implementation of the agreement. The visit to the South West Region for discussions with the chief of sector is expected to be done next year.

Emphasis was put on strict respect for financial rules and procedures while an internal audit by a professional firm was carried out. Several recommendations were made by the auditing team and are being scrupulously respected and implemented while changes are continuously being made to meet the high standards of financial probity as stipulated by the EAGLE charter. These efforts were carried out in strict collaboration with the EAGLE CCU financial officer who later visited the country to provide finance management assistance to the team.

Management continued with its coaching roles especially on moral and ethical values among staff. This was roundly encouraged and praised. New directives on handling holiday responsibilities were issued and enforced. Reporting and the respect of procedural lines and commitments were tremendously improved and adhered to.

The team worked with two separate filming crews, one from Italy and the other from South Africa and both focusing on the increasing threats to pangolins. The Italian team shot several scenes with the Head of the Investigations Department and are expected back next year to continue filming. The South African team focused their attention on the Deputy Director who gave several interviews on the law enforcement against pangolin scales trafficking.

The Interim Director participated at a training course titled Advanced Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation and Microsoft Project Training at the Shama Consult Africa in Nairobi, Kenya.

A legal adviser successfully completed a three-month wildlife management course at the Durrell Endangered Species Management 2019 programme offered by the Durrell Conservation Academy in New Jersey, UK and returned to the country

Management organised several courses to upgrade LAGA members and these courses included a first aid course and special self-defence courses.

Recruitment for various positions within the organisation continued with two volunteers recruited for the test period. An accountant, who had been recruited on a part time basis was given a full time employment. An investigator was equally recruited after successfully undergoing a full time training at the investigation department.

A French super volunteer travelled to Yaounde for a five-week training session and he was trained on the various activities of the organisation in the different departments.

LAGA finally moved into a new office with enough space to hold the growing organisation.

The annual report of 2018 and the second semester Report of 2019 were uploaded online. The electronic versions are available on line on the LAGA website www.laga-enforcement.org. This is a result of teamwork involving all the departments in LAGA – Investigations, Legal, Media, Operations and Management.

Team building activities were carried out during the period and these were common lunch, sporting sessions at the gym, self defence training and an excursion to the seaside resort town of Kribi and another to the touristic site of Nkolandom.

Management carried out preparations and organisation of the trip of the Assistant Head of the Media Department to the US where she spent three weeks participating at the International Visitors Leadership Programme of the States Department that focused on the fight against corruption.

All financial reports were duly drawn and made available while an independent auditing of the organisation finances was carried out by an international auditing consortium.

A series of thought-provoking sessions of presentations and debates for the LAGA team were organised to foster activism and leadership skills. A wide range of topics including activism were presented and debated. This initiative also aims at strengthening the capacity, unity and values of the LAGA family.

6. External Relations and Policy

The Customs Director and the Deputy Director signed a protocol agreement to collaborate in the fight against wildlife crime and later on installed committee members of the Customs-LAGA joint committee put in place to oversee the implementation of the protocol agreement

The Deputy Director with the Director of ZSL and AWF accompanied four visiting Representatives and the US Ambassador to the Mefou Park where he took an opportunity to brief the distinguish guests from the US Congress on LAGA's activities and some pressing conservation needs of the country.

He held a meeting with a team of USAID officials who were visiting the country and had a discussion on the wildlife law enforcement process and governance issues. He held another meeting with the Ghana-based US Regional Environment team for West and Central Africa and later held a second meeting with the same team and several other NGOs. Discussions focused on challenges to effective wildlife conservation initiatives.

The Deputy Director travelled to Ndjamená where he participated at the CBFP organized ministerial conference to tackle threats posed by armed groups moving between the Sahel, Sudan and north of Equatorial Africa in protected areas and within local communities. During the meeting he met with several high authorities including the Secretary of State for Defence in charge of the Gendarmerie, a GIZ official, who is about to run a project on elephant and rhino poaching on the continent, the TRAFFIC Director, South Sudan Undersecretary at the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, the Regional Coordinator for Central Africa for the Global Programme for Combatting Wildlife and Forest Crime of the UNODC. He later in the year, participated at a follow up meeting held in Douala. The meeting focused on rendering the resolutions taken at the Ndjamená meeting operational.

During this period the Deputy Director held several meetings with some government and diplomatic officials including, European Union officials, the Director of Penal Affairs at MINJUSTICE, several wildlife officials, to discuss strategies for effective wildlife law enforcement.

The Deputy Director and the Head of Investigations Department visited and held meetings with customs officials of the three Northern regions, that is the Extreme Nord, North and Adamawa regions on the implementation of the protocol agreement signed. During the visits they equally held meetings with state counsels and wildlife officials of the various regions. He equally held a meeting in Bamenda with the North West Chief of Customs Sector on the implementation of the protocol agreement and later granted a talk on the subject to the staff of the sector. He was accompanied by the Assistant Head of the Legal Department.

The Head of the Legal Department and the Assistant Head of Investigations equally held similar meetings with customs officials in the East and Littoral Regions, with state counsels in the various regions and with wildlife officials.

The Deputy Director held a meeting with a pangolin conservationist from the Tikki Hywood Cameroon office on ways of improving pangolin conservation through sensitization. He held another meeting with an official from the Fondation la Tri-National de la Sangha (FTNS) to discuss the state of wildlife law enforcement in the area that covers three parks among three countries including Cameroon, Gabon and the Central African Republic.

He was one of several invitees who joined the French to celebrate their National Day at the Residence of the French Ambassador. He also participated at a reception at the residence of the Belgian Ambassador on the occasion of the country's National Day

The Deputy Director participated at an international workshop in Yaounde organised by the Bushmeat working group called CABAG and he did a presentation on the challenges to effective wildlife law enforcement. He met with some officials during the workshop among whom was Nancy Gelman, of the US Fish and Wildlife He also participated and partly facilitated another workshop organised by TRAFFIC where he did a presentation on the state of the illegal pangolin scales trade in the county.

The Deputy Director participated at the opening ceremony for the Pangolin Rescue and Rehabilitation Center where he actively participated in discussions that focused on finding solutions to the pangolin problem in Cameroon. He held a meeting with the UNODC Regional Coordinator for Central Africa Global Programme for Combatting Wildlife and Forest Crime and two World Parrot Trust officials to discuss projects on wildlife law enforcement, parrot trafficking, some wildlife parks issues, among other matters.

The Deputy Director alongside the heads of the investigation and legal departments held a meeting with Interpol officials on building collaboration for effective wildlife law enforcement. Present during the meeting was an Interpol intelligence analyst from the Singapore office.

The Deputy Director participated at an international workshop on conservation conflicts organized by the Congo Basin Institute that brought together conservation biologists from around Africa. He did a presentation on conservation conflicts as related to wildlife law enforcement and among other issues he cited a few conflicts including deterrent punishments and strict respect of the law vs respect for human rights, soft vs hard conservation measures,

sensitization vs enforcement. He equally participated at another workshop that validated the updated list of protected species.

The Assistant Head of the Media and External Relations Department travelled for a short visit to the US where she participated at the International Visitor Leadership Programme that focused on the theme Combatting Corruption: Promoting Transparency and Accountability in Business.

The Head of the Legal Department actively participated at a national workshop to build the capacity of magistrates and other judicial officials on effective wildlife law enforcement and to encourage collaboration between the different stakeholders involved in the fight against wildlife crimes. During the workshop, he did a presentation on how to calculate the general and specific damages accruing from court rulings. He also participated at an international seminar in Yaounde on the collection of court decisions and analysis in wildlife crime within Central Africa. During this seminar, he did a presentation on the gaps in the wildlife law, the strengths and weaknesses of the monitoring and enforcement mechanism.

A legal adviser participated at a training workshop for wildlife law enforcement officials of the Northern part of the country. During the training, she did presentations on the drafting of good wildlife offence statements, calculation of general and specific damages and corruption in the law enforcement process

The heads of the legal and investigations departments held meetings with security and customs officials at the Nsimalen and Douala international airport to foster closer collaboration within the framework of the convention signed with the Customs Department. The Head of Legal Department held a meeting with the Kadey Divisional Delegate of Forestry and Wildlife.

7. LAGA and the EAGLE Network

LAGA's new model for NGO – Government collaboration establishing wildlife law enforcement, bringing about results with an innovative approach geared at changing the existing system and triggering a paradigm shift in the way NGOs tackle wildlife crime is being realised within the EAGLE network. The model is focusing on the prosecution of major traffickers, not the small-time poacher who is motivated by the city dwelling traffickers. This involves fighting head on the major obstacle to the application of the wildlife law in Africa – Corruption. LAGA's experience and model is currently operating within the EAGLE network that group 9 countries.

The replication of the LAGA model is also geared at taking cross section lessons outside of wildlife conservation; these include the fight against corruption, fostering activism, fight against child trafficking etc.

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

Exchange visits continued among the countries specifically with a legal adviser from Senegal visiting the country for a month-long training and experience sharing mission.

8. Fostering Activism

During this period, LAGA continued to foster activism internally and externally. Creating independent activists is one aspect that LAGA uses to foster activism. The NGO members are encouraged to develop their own projects on the various development issues of their country and are given NGO time and management time to develop the project in the vision of turning it in to an independent NGO. The function of leadership is not producing more followers but to produce more leaders.

<http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Activism/tabid/77/Default.aspx>

Activism was focused on documentaries and presentations listed below.

Retrospections of the International Women's Day in Cameroon: As a prelude to the celebration of the 2019 International Women's (something that is always celebrated in LAGA with a time for reflection every year) one of the ladies picks up the challenge and takes us through this very popular event. She describes the day as a day set aside to bring women issues to the public and it aims at empowering women through advocating for equal opportunities. This, she continued, may be translated as access to quality childhood development for young girls, elimination of harmful practices such as forced and or early marriages, discrimination against women and elimination of all forms of violence. She normatively condemns some wayward practices and celebrations done on that day by the Cameroonian woman and highlights the huge importance of the day in emphasizing the problems faced by women. The discussions were interestingly hot with some accusing women to be part of the problem and the necessity for equal opportunities and need to stop discrimination.

Female Genital Mutilations: As a continuation of the celebration of the 2019 International Women's and the earlier presentation on the retrospections of the celebration in Cameroon, another lady picks up the challenge and talks about the plight of victims of Female Genital Mutilations. She explores the cultural and historical dimensions of FGM and gives us a rare insight into how the phenomenon is spread in Africa. While some countries could have as low as 1.4 % of the female population that has suffered FGM, another African country – Guinea, has an alarming 96% rate. The causes and consequences were presented, analysed and later debated during discussions that looked at some more problems connected to trying to change an ugly tradition that is simply just denying to go away.

The Telegram (a messaging app): We are introduced to a new messaging app, which according to the presenter says is safer and more secure than what we use today for our job; WhatsApp. He indicates that this is a great tool for activists who need to communicate all the time and needs to know their backyard is being covered appropriately by a trusting software. The presenter identifies basic but important features that Telegram has different and that could indeed improve on security. Departs were on the technicalities of the software, on its merits and what may be some of its loopholes. Questions were asked on the reason behind a need to change.

Illegal Immigrations: We have witnessed over the last two decades or so, an incessant growth in illegal immigration from the continent to Europe and the presenter takes the opportunity to help us understand what is happening. He gives a historical background of the phenomenon while explaining some of the terms (immigration and emigration) associated to it. There is a lot of high risk involved in migrating and the reasons young people would take such risks must be very strong and he explains the causes that push Africans to take the perilous journey across desert and sea to Europe. He demonstrates with the aid of maps and statistics what are the routes and who are those involved. He finally tells us what are some of the possible solutions to mitigating the problem and these are socio-politico-economic solutions with the reduction of poverty at the helm. Discussion focused on what solutions and the role of African governments in ensuring for the welfare of their citizens and elaborating policies that may mitigate the phenomenon.

The Franc CFA, a tool to control African states within the franc zone: The presentation that was done by the head of the legal department goes down memory lane, explaining how the colonial history of a currency that was forced upon African French colonies and designed singularly for the benefit of the metropole – France. It describes the changes that took place after independence and the split into the West and Central Africa franc zones. The presenter argues that it is a system that blocks economic growth for these countries and hampers their economic independence with France holding exchange reserves worth 12 billion euros for these countries. The fixed exchange rate to the euro has disadvantaged the competitiveness of these economies and France’s participation in the management of the two central banks is an absurdity considering these banks are for independent states. Criticisms of CFA F was unanimous and bitter because of the inability or the unwillingness of African leaders to strip off this currency for independent national currencies. The currency is a reminder of the hated colonial past and the master perpetuating the legacy. This is just one of the reasons France is not roundly loved by the people of Francophone Africa.

The Rwandan War and Genocide: Cameroon is going through an unprecedented crisis that has seen the country succumb to violence in the Anglophone section while political upheavals following the 2018 presidential elections have resulted in a rise in violent and tribal rhetoric which are similar to what happened in Rwanda. The presentation takes us down memory lane to look at the history of the damaging civil war and genocide that took place in the early nineties in Rwanda. The presenter tells the history of the war and explains how it gradually slipped into a genocide while looking at the lessons that could be learnt from the tragedy. These lessons, the presenter says, are very important to pre-empt and forestall the same fate for Cameroon. Questions focused on the post genocide era and how Rwanda is faring today and an analysis of the lesson.

Movie: The Last King of Scotland: Idi Amin ranks amongst one of the most brutal and violent dictators the world has seen and the movie reminds us of how just bad things were during his reign. The movie gives us a picture of the man, how he ruled Uganda and some of the most melodramatic moments of a dictator’s life. He could be seen in glittering fun and amidst the violence and bloodshed. It reminds us of how far we have come from the period when coup d’états and military dictatorships were the norm. A comparative analysis of dictatorships in Africa then and now was carried out after the screening.

Operation Sparrow Hawk: The purpose of this presentation was to take stock of the arrests of suspects, judgments and recovery of public funds during Operation Sparrow Hawk launched by the president in order to determine the main goal of the operation. The presentation predicates its conclusions on the sheer number of arrest - more than 300 persons convicted by the courts - that this is indeed a fight against the embezzlement of public funds and corruption, even as it proves to be ineffective. Subsequently, the discussions focused on the shortcomings of the law creating the Special Criminal Court; on the political will of the Head of State to really fight against this scourge and finally on the solutions to stem the scourge.

Rural Exodus: The presenter walks us through the phenomenon of rural exodus and defines some related concepts such as migration, immigration, emigration to clarify rural exodus. The presentation deals in the causes and consequences of rural exodus, splitting the causes into endogenous and exogenous causes but say there are invariably socio-economic in nature. These include poverty, conflicts, climate changes etc. The consequences are dire on both the rural milieu where youths who are abled body to sustain these communities leave for urban areas to congest the cities and add to the woes of managing big cities with its problems of population explosions, unemployment and housing among the many. It also takes on the Anglophone crisis to exemplify how conflicts can force movement of people. The discussions cantered around the question whether the movement due from the Anglophone crisis could be considered rural exodus and what are the developmental policies to address rural poverty, how far and how successful, among other issues, where raised.

Administrative Tolerance; a Door to Anarchy: A presentation on Administrative Tolerance exposes some of the underlying facets of this notorious conundrum in public life. It is fairly normal to see schools, radio stations, road pharmacies which are all illegal, running in the country and the presentation tells us the consequences are worrying; the health of the citizen is at stake, children get poor education and fake news from the illegal structures and all these undermine efforts to build a vibrant, educated and healthy citizenry. The reasons for this state of affairs is administrative tolerance which is caused by the failure in the implementation of public policies, incompetence, corruption and lack of political will. This results in more corruption and precariousness. The discussions focused on distinguishing administrative tolerance which is a voluntary decision from an incapacity to make a decision. Administrative tolerance, it was discussed, is used as a political weapon in the country to keep some institutions, especially the private media, on their toes and toe official line.

Salary is out, what next? : The presenter engages us in an unusual topic, personal finances and takes us down some of the problems connected with living on a salary or living on a single source of income. He starts by defining some important terms and these include income, wage, and salary. He then tells us how salaries are used and how insufficient it may become and what is generally said about part time jobs or a second source of income. He gives us tips on these and ends up encouraging the audience to try some of his methods. Discussions focused on the issues that were not said or the underlining issues such as personal preferences for not seeking further income and or challenges in trying to do so.

The Situation of Internally Displaced Persons: The crisis facing the country is on everybody's mind and several presentations have treated this topic and this continues with a legal adviser painting the picture of how those who were displaced by the various conflicts in the country are faring. He geographically locates where these IDPs are coming from and where they have mostly settled with three regions, North West, South West and Far North regions mostly affected. While the causes by now are pretty well known to everybody, the living conditions are still a matter of great conjecture and he tells the story of some of the hardships they are going through including psycho-social trauma while enumerating some of the relief efforts carried out by government. The discussions focused on what solutions are available both politically and socially to resolve the various conflicts in the country.

9. Strategic Overview of Wildlife Crime in Cameroon and Operations' Impact

Beyond the number of operations and their effectiveness, there is an even more important factor in evaluating LAGA's work – the strategic value of the operations in reducing the level of illegal wildlife trade. In this regard, LAGA is choosing diversified operations, which carry an added value to expose and map the different angles of wildlife crime in Cameroon. Consequently, the LAGA-MINFOF work sheds light on the nature of illegal wildlife trade in the sub-region. The strategic focus over this period was on pangolin scales, primates (chimps and a mandrill), ivory and leopard skins.

9.1 Pangolin Scales

The intensity of the pangolin scales trade was once more witnessed during period. The illicit trade attracts every sort of trafficker because of the high margin of illicit profit. One of the main differences with ivory trafficking is the easy access to pangolin scales as compared to ivory although both trafficking is similar on many fronts. The driver is fast changing, as the value of meat is not far less than the value of scales. So meat becomes almost a side product for the main trade that is pangolin scales. Ivory traffickers are taking advantage of their vast experience in ivory trafficking to equally involve in pangolin scales trafficking. This was the case in Douala when four international traffickers were arrested with 1.7 tons of pangolin scales and 73 ivory tusks. The traffickers would move scales from the South East of the country right to Nigeria. The skills used in collecting, storing and moving huge bulk of scales learned probably from ivory trafficking was very handy here and a house search that followed the operation revealed that the house where the scales were stored was strategically placed and had very little occupancy at the time of the operation. Their knowledge of using corruption was evident and the trial that ensued resulted in an extremely lenient sentence and an outright acquittal of the suspects.

Another pangolin scales trafficker was arrested in Douala and he belonged to another group of traffickers, this time from the East border. The Douala – Bangui axes of trafficking was finally confirmed this year with the arrest of the trafficker with close to 100kg of pangolin scales in Douala. He facilitated the movement and sale of pangolin scales coming from Bangui in the Central African Republic through Kenzou in the East Region to Douala, which can now be considered the pangolin scales trafficking hub in the sub region.

As earlier indicated, the high margin of illicit revenue in pangolin scales is attracting several kinds of traffickers. Four people were arrested with close to 100kg of pangolin scales in the West and it turned out that they were organised in a group that sourced pangolin scales from local bushmeat sellers and poachers while supplying even bigger traffickers from the major cities. These were ordinary people turned pangolin scales traffickers, attracted by the huge profits to be made and the easy access to collecting the scales which were available in the locality and beyond.

9.2 Ivory

It is well known that organized ivory trade relies heavily on complicity and corruption. This was once again exemplified when four people were arrested with 73 ivory tusks weighing 153kg and 1.7 tons of pangolin scales and the trial that ensued actually liberated three of them in the awe and shock of several people who were involved in the operation. These were experienced and hardened wildlife traffickers who plied the Cameroon – Nigeria route and had been doing business for quite a long time. With the increasing emphasis on effective law enforcement in the country, many traffickers have been using the Nigeria route, either through the Southwest or the North regions, to smuggle ivory and other wildlife products to Nigeria where it is relatively easily exported.

In another ivory trafficking case, five little ivory tusks were seized from traffickers and all the ivory put together could weigh only 1kg, demonstrating the extent to which ivory trafficking has gone. These were baby elephants shot dead and the tusks were still very fresh. The damage done has been devastating and traffickers are stopping at nothing getting any kind of ivory. This also means the scarcity of tusks is becoming severe and the illegal appetite to source it is still very strong.

A former finance minister's son was arrested for ivory trafficking, he transported the tusks in his black Toyota Prado car, accompanied by his accomplices to a Yaounde neighbourhood and attempted to sell the ivory tusks when they were arrested. The arrest was the result of another investigation into a big network of ivory traffickers and the leads obtained from the investigations that was carried out in Douala pointed to the network in Yaounde. The importance of this trafficker could be felt when family members would immediately attempt freeing him at the gendarmerie station where he was held in custody. Once again this points to the calibre of people running the illegal ivory trade in the country. The two ivory tusks seized during the operation were unusually big and weighed over 50kg indicating they were cut from a big elephant, something which is not very common today because the elephants are hardly left to grow that big.

In another ivory trafficking case that took place in November, two traffickers were arrested in Batouri in the East Region. During the operation, the two traffickers violently tried to escape but were restrained by the arresting team. The arrest opened up a new window into the illegal ivory trade taking place at the frontier with the Central African Republic. The traffickers ply the border areas between Cameroon and the Central African Republic with impunity. The two are part of an international network of ivory traffickers based in Kenzou and the areas has just recently been discovered to be hotspots for ivory trafficking. Ivory that leaves parts of the East Region and the Central African Republic is first held there before being moved to bigger cities in the country.

9.3 Chimp

A chimp was rescued in January from a couple specialized in chimp trafficking and had exported chimp to Europe with the assistance of a relative there.

9.4 Leopard Skins

An operation was carried out in the West of the country and leopard skins were seized from four traffickers who arrived on a motorbike under torrential rainfalls. There is always some leopard skin networks maneuvering in this region to illicitly sell fresh leopard skins which have been sourced from the south and east of the country that still have populations of leopards. They are equally adept in using the bikes in moving the skins around, taking advantage of the flexibility bikes offer and its ability to access difficult areas which are not accessible to cars. This mode of transport has become that of choice for ferrying wildlife contraband that may not be too bulky or heavy to carry.

10. Corruption and Wildlife Crime

Bribing attempts are documented in 85% of our field arrest operations, and more than 80% of all court cases within the legal system. But LAGA is not an observer of corruption; it was created to fight corruption, redirecting the positive pressures existing within the system, usually wasted in large conference, to specific corruption attempts and the field realities that form corruption. Corruption is also observed and combated in the regional enforcement activities.

This ongoing fight is directed towards issues that touch on corruption and bad governance. As in previous years, this year produced several corruption attempts, negatively impacting the handling of several of legal processes and judgements against wildlife traffickers. Corruption attempts were made at stopping the prosecutorial process at early stages by offering bribes, peddling of influence and bringing pressure to bear on judicial officers.

Several of the pangolin scales trafficking cases suffered from these attempts. This ongoing fight is directed towards issues that touch on corruption and bad governance. Following arrests made in January involving pangolin scales traffickers, a family member of one of the arrested, made several visits to some judicial officials handling the matter, raising grave suspicions as to the motives of such visits considering the case was enrolled and being tried already.

A second corruption attempt was observed in Doume in the East Region, still within the same month, when a pangolin scale trafficker was arrested and as law wildlife enforcement officials were establishing the offence report, they received pressure from Njoya's family members. They proposed money to the judicial police officer and the wildlife officials handling the matter who stood their ground. After witnessing the steadfast attitude of law enforcement officials, another approach consisting basically of negotiating for their release was initiated by approaching a substitute of the prosecutor.

In March, a major trafficking network was dismantled and four traffickers arrested. Their main trafficking was pangolin scales to Nigeria and while the wildlife law enforcement officials were establishing the offence report, they received pressure from one the traffickers'

relation working at the Regional MINFOF Delegation. She tried to influence her colleagues to free the suspects at their level but the wildlife officials and police handling the matter stood their ground. Seeing that her colleagues could not help, she approached the LAGA team but unfortunately for her this too failed to produce any effect. The trial was strange and curious as only one of them was found guilty and given a very lenient sentence that was appealed anyway by dissatisfied wildlife officials and the prosecutor. Three of them were simply declared not guilty. This was received with shock and disappointment by many who worked on the case.

In April, as law wildlife enforcement officials were establishing the offence report at the police station, when two were arrested with 5 elephant tusks, they received pressure from the main trafficker's family. They suggested to the gendarmes to find a way to stop the matter at their level but wildlife officials and the gendarmes refused. After witnessing the steadfast attitude of law enforcement officials, they approached the LAGA team but equally failed.

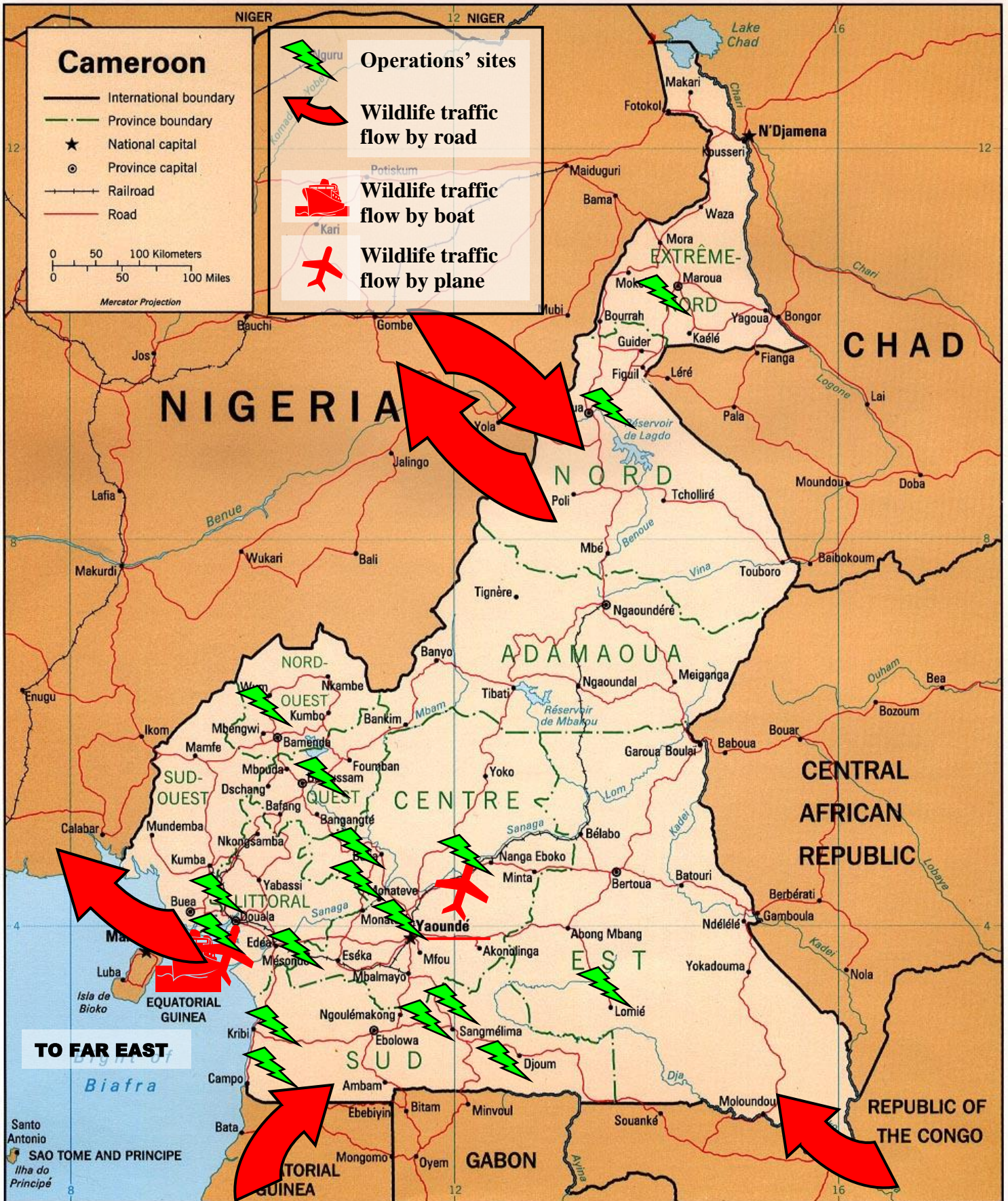
Following the arrest of a policeman in Yaounde in May and as wildlife law enforcement officials were establishing the offence report, some police officials came to Odza Gendarmerie Brigade to pressure the gendarmes to forward the file and procedure to them but the brigade commander was firm and refused to comply to their request and decided to rather collaborate with the competent authority, that is MINFOF officials.

The case in Tonga where four were arrested for trafficking in close to 100kg of pangolin scales is a typical example of what happens in the country almost always when traffickers are arrested. Huge pressure was put by family members on law wildlife enforcement officials writing the offence report at the delegation (there was a gendarmerie brigade commander among the family members). They suggested that the MINFOF divisional delegate should find a way to stop the matter at his level but the wildlife officials handling the matter refused. Failing to secure any release, they tried another classical and routine approach consisting basically of approaching the senior state counsel and his team handling the matter, but this too failed to produce any effect. Cameroonians generally do not give up when trying to influence decisions in favour of their family members. The trial that followed was bizarre and at the end of the procedure the punishment for the traffickers was less than a month – 22 days only.

In September, when wildlife officials arrested the son of a former minister in September, the wife of the former finance minister, mother to the arrested trafficker initiated several moves to foil the process. First by meeting the Centre Regional Delegate of Forestry and Wildlife to try and stop the prosecution but seeing stiff resistance, she then approached LAGA members for the same result and then the state counsel.

In November when wildlife officials arrested two ivory traffickers in Batouri and went on with their duty of establishing a complaint report, they received pressure from the two who used several tactics to influence the officials to stop doing their job. The wildlife officials were clearly given a bribe that was rebuffed.

Overview of International Wildlife Traffic in Cameroon and Operations' Sites 2019



ANNEX I- LIST OF CASES INITIATED IN 2019

Case num.	Operation date	Location	Case name	Offence	Profile	Remarks	Int. Connection	Actual Status
603	23/01/2019	Douala, Littoral	NGO Pagbe Charlotte	illegal possession of 1 chimpanzee	tradipractioner/trafficker	A couple involved in the trafic Apes	None	Released
604	23/01/2019	Douala, Littoral	POUGA Hans	illegal possession of 1 chimpanzee	Unemployed	He clames to have sold gorillas and chimps in the past	None	Released
605	24/01/2019	Douala, Littoral	NDOKO Chacard Claude	illegal possession and commercialization of 54 Kg of pangolin scales and 5 hippopotamus teeth	Commercial bike rider	He is the one responsible for seeking customers for the purchase of products. He is a regular trafiker in w ildlife	Chad	locked w hile on trial
606	24/01/2019	Douala, Littoral	KOUNGOUE Simon Pierre	illegal possession and commercialization of 54 Kg of pangolin scales and 5 hippopotamus teeth	Commercial bike rider	A member of a big netw ork involved in pangolins scales. He is in charge to collect pangolin scales in South region especialy in Lele, Minton.	Chad	locked w hile on trial
607	24/01/2019	Douala, Littoral	OUINWE Sariga	illegal possession and commercialization of 54 Kg of pangolin scales and 5 hippopotamus teeth	Trader / trafficker	A Member of a big netw ork dealing betw een Chad Cameroun involved in pangolins scales and hippopotamus teeth	Chad	locked w hile on trial
608	24/01/2019	Douala, Littoral	NYAMSSI Dipelec Antoine	illegal possession and commercialization of 54 Kg of pangolin scales and 5 hippopotamus teeth	Buschmeat seller	A member of a big netw ork involved in pangolins scales. He is in charge to collect pangolin scales in Littoral region especialy in Douala, Edéa, Yabassi and Nkondjock.	Chad	locked w hile on trial
609	31/01/2019	Doume, East	NJOYA Nsangou Mohamed	illegal possession and commercialization of 24 Kg of pangolin scales	Trader/trafficker	Used cover as a shopkeeper to carry out illegal trade in w ildlife.	None	locked w hile on trial
610	20/02/2019	Yaoundé, Centre	MBA Thimothé	illegal possession and commercialization of 42 Kg of pangolin scales	Trader/trafficker	A big netw ork of trafikers dealing betw een Centre region, south region and East region	None	locked w hile on trial
611	20/02/2019	Yaoundé, Centre	MESSI MEDOU Jean Pierre	illegal possession and commercialization of 42 Kg of pangolin scales	Trader/trafficker	Accomplice of Messi also involved in a large netw ork of trafikers dealing w ith pangolin scales	None	locked w hile on trial
612	14/03/2019	Douala, Littoral	AKANZE AKONLO Bertrand	illegal possession and commercialization of morethan 1500 Kg of pangolin scales and 151 kg de pointes d'ivoire (74 ivory tusks)	Trader /traffcker	Head of a big netw ork that exports ivory tusks and pangolin scales from Cameroon to Nigeria. Belonging to the international black market	Nigeria	locked w hile on trial
613	14/03/2019	Douala, Littoral	TEGOU M Alphonse Raoul	illegal possession and commercialization of morethan 1500 Kg of pangolin scales and 151 kg de pointes d'ivoire (74 ivory tusks)	Driver	Another member of the international illegal traffick of pangolin scales and ivory tusks . He was a midleman w ho help to transportation of scales	Nigeria	locked w hile on trial
614	14/03/2019	Douala, Littoral	BOUGNIA KAMTA Basile	illegal possession and commercialization of morethan 1500 Kg of pangolin scales and 151 kg de pointes d'ivoire (74 ivory tusks)	Assistant driver	Another member of the international illegal traffick of pangolin scales and ivory tusks . He was a midleman w ho help to transportation of scales	Nigeria	locked w hile on trial
615	14/03/2019	Douala, Littoral	TCHAMTICHEU Francis Romuald alis Bafana	illegal possession and commercialization of morethan 1500 Kg of pangolin scales and 151 kg de pointes d'ivoire (74 ivory tusks)	Phone seller/trafficker	Accomplice of AKANZE AKONLO Bertrand, Used cover as a phone trader to carry out illegal trade in w ildlife. He traveled many time to china	Nigeria	locked w hile on trial

Case num.	Operation date	Location	Case name	Offence	Profile	Remarks	Int. Connection	Actual Status
616	11/04/2019	Sangmelima, South	BERRY NGANE	Illegal killing of baby elephant and illegal possession of 5 ivory tusks and 1 elephant tail	Poacher / hairdresser	Accomplice of ZANG Afane and Banga Ruphin. He kills elephants and gives the products to Zang for looking for client.	None	locked w hile on trial
617	11/04/2019	Sangmelima, South	ZANG AFANE	Illegal killing of baby elephant and illegal possession of 5 ivory tusks and 1 elephant tail	civil servant / Ivory trafficker	It is a civil servant and his role is looking for clients.	None	locked w hile on trial
618	11/04/2019	Sangmelima, South	BANGA RUPHIN	Illegal killing of baby elephant and illegal possession of 5 ivory tusks and 1 elephant tail	Poacher	He is specialised for killing of elephants and other wildlife species.	None	locked w hile on trial
619	12/04/2019	Meiganga Adamawa	Aboubakar	illegal possession 25 Kg of pangolin scales and 5 ivory tusks	Trader	A member of a big network involved in pangolins scales and elephant tuks. He is in charge to collect wildlife products and send in Douala and Yaounde	None	locked w hile on trial
620	18/05/2019	Yaounde, Centre	ENGUELE Jean Bernard	Illegal killing of an elephant, 5 lions and 1 leopard. Arrested with 1 elephant tusks, 1 leopard skin and 5 lion skulls	Policeman / Poacher	he is a policeman who has been affected to the Bouba Djida park for the protection of wildlife animals. he is at the center of a vast network of traffickers. He is the one who gives the munitions to the poachers and he usually uses his weapon to slaughter the animals in the park. When poachers kill animals, he is the one who have responsibility for selling them	None	locked w hile on trial
621	20/06/2019	Kribi, South	Dramani Osman	illegal possession of 95 kg of pangolins scales	Trader	A member of a big network of grey parrot trafikers. It is the third time that he is arrested. He is accomplice of Komba Joh and Sakkey Eugene also involved at the high level in the Grey parrot traffick	Centrafric	locked w hile on trial
622	23/05/2019	Tonga, West	NYONSE Nandep Stéphane	illegal possession of 96,5 kg of pangolins scales	Bushmeat seller	A member of a big network involved in pangolins scales. He is in charge to collect pangolin scales	None	locked w hile on trial
623	23/05/2019	Tonga, West	ABAGNO Joséphine	illegal possession of 96,5 kg of pangolins scales	Bushmeat seller	A member of a big network involved in pangolins scales. He is in charge to collect pangolin scales. Used corver as farmer to sell pangolin scales	None	locked w hile on trial
624	23/05/2019	Tonga, West	NOUKEU Romuald	illegal possession of 96,5 kg of pangolins scales	Student and Poacher	Stepbrother of NYONSE Nandep also involved in the collect of pangolin scales	None	locked w hile on trial
625	23/05/2019	Tonga, West	BAKATCHOU Feuteu	illegal possession of 96,5 kg of pangolins scales	Motor taxi/ Farmer	Husband of ABAGNO Elodyalso involved in pangolin scales trafic. He is in charge of transportation of the products	None	locked w hile on trial
626	20/06/2019	Douala, Littoral	ABDOUL Nassir Sali	illegal possession of 95 kg of pangolins scales	Trader	A member of a big network of Ashim and AHMADOU Tizani. involved in pangolins scales and elephant tuks. He is in charge to receive wildlife products coming from Centrafric	Cantral Africa	locked w hile on trial

Case num.	Operation date	Location	Case name	Offence	Profile	Remarks	Int. Connection	Actual Status
627	25/07/2019	Loum, Littoral	TCHOUAKWE Hervé	illegal possession of 3 leopard skins	Hairdresser	He is a member of the network involved in the trafficking of leopard skins, he serves as the one who look for markets and propose to those with products for transactions to be	None	locked while on trial
628	25/07/2019	Loum, Littoral	DJIOFANG NZENGANG Simplicie	illegal possession of 3 leopard skins	Farmer	He is a relation of TCHAPDA who is the owner of the skins seized, he called to provide additional protection on the day the transaction was to take place and return will get his own gain in the deal	None	locked while on trial
629	25/07/2019	Loum, Littoral	TCHAPDA Dieunnedort	illegal possession of 3 leopard skins	Farmer	He belong and head a network of leopard skin trafficking, he moves to the eastern border of Cameroon where he gets the skin before travelling to his base where he intends to meet his potential buyers	None	Bail
630	30/09/2019	Douala, Littoral	BANDOUMA Benoit	illegal possession of 16 ivory tusks	Mechanic engineer	He happens to belong to a great international network of ivory trafficking where they transport ivory all the way from RCA through Cameroon; he is in charge of transporting their products in order to go through all check points to meet their buyers	CAR	Bail
631	05/09/2019	Yaoundé, Centre	LOKO Bassilekin	illegal possession of 02 ivory tusks	Computer	A son of a former minister, is the member of the group trafficking elephant tusk, he happens to have been the proprietor of the two giant tusk. He contacted his friend Nkouga to help search for someone who can buy the tusk since he had financial	None	Bail
632	05/09/2019	Yaoundé, Centre	FOGANG Fokoua Bruno	illegal possession of 02 ivory tusks	Metal Carpenter	He is a neighbor and member of the network and the first person to be contacted by Bassilekin to get a buyer. He snaps with the products and hide the face before posting.	None	Bail
633	05/09/2019	Yaoundé, Centre	NKOUGA Valère	illegal possession of 02 ivory tusks	Businessman	He belongs to the same network and personal friend to Bassilekin, he is in charge of negotiating potential buyers. He shares the images of the tusk through WhatsApp and get the best price and expects his own share in return.	None	Bail
634	05/09/2019	Yaoundé, Centre	OUSMANOU Baba	illegal possession of 02 ivory tusks	Trader	He is a middleman and does many activities and gets his commission. He was contacted by Nkouga to also search for a buyer to get his commission as usual.	None	Bail

<u>Case num.</u>	<u>Operation date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Case name</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>Profile</u>	<u>Remarks</u>	<u>Int. Connection</u>	<u>Actual Status</u>
635	05/09/2019	Yaoundé, Centre	KENNE Emmanuel	illegal possession of 02 ivory tusks	Trader	He is also one of the members and close to his friend who is the son of former minister. He played a role of assisting the team to load and hide them in the vehicle and accompany the team to the market.	CRA	Bail
636	13/11/2019	Batouri, East	MAHAMAT Abdoulaye	illegal possession of 02 ivory tusks	Trader	He belongs to a network of ivory trafficking based in the border locality and crosses the CAR; he is in charge of negotiating the market and gets his commission upon selling;	CRA	locked w hile on trial
637	13/11/2019	Batouri, East	ALIOUM Abdou	illegal possession of 02 ivory tusks	Farmer	He is the main mechanism in a group of ivory traffickers, he is said to have been arrested but paid huge sums of money to be freed. He is very prudent and always put others ahead	CRA	locked w hile on trial
638	23/12/2019	Douala, Littoral	TEGWI TKU Cliford	illegal possession of 274 grey parrots, 3 elephant tusks and about 600 kg of pangolin scales	Student / Trader	He is a trader who initially was into pepper but later embraced parrots business which according to him was more profitable, He is in a network who traffic parrots to Nigeria via the sea,	Nigeria	locked w hile on trial
639	23/12/2019	Douala, Littoral	NDONGO Jean	illegal possession of 274 grey parrots, 3 elephant tusks and about 600 kg of pangolin scales	Storekeeper	He belongs to the same network who traffic in parrots, ivory and other contrabands like spirits, he is the stock keeper and masters the routes to Nigeria	Nigeria	locked w hile on trial

Annex II – the Semester in Pictures



In March, four were arrested with ivory and pangolin scales await being moved to wildlife office



Close to 2 tons of seized pangolin scales seized and transported to wildlife office (above and below)



Dozens of ivory tusks stored at wildlife office after seizure (above and below)





An ivory tusk, a leopard skin, lion skulls seized from a senior police constable



Lion skulls seized from police officer assigned to a national park to protect the animals



Couple arrested for illegal trafficking in chimp. They had shipped chimps to Europe in the past, using a son who is based there



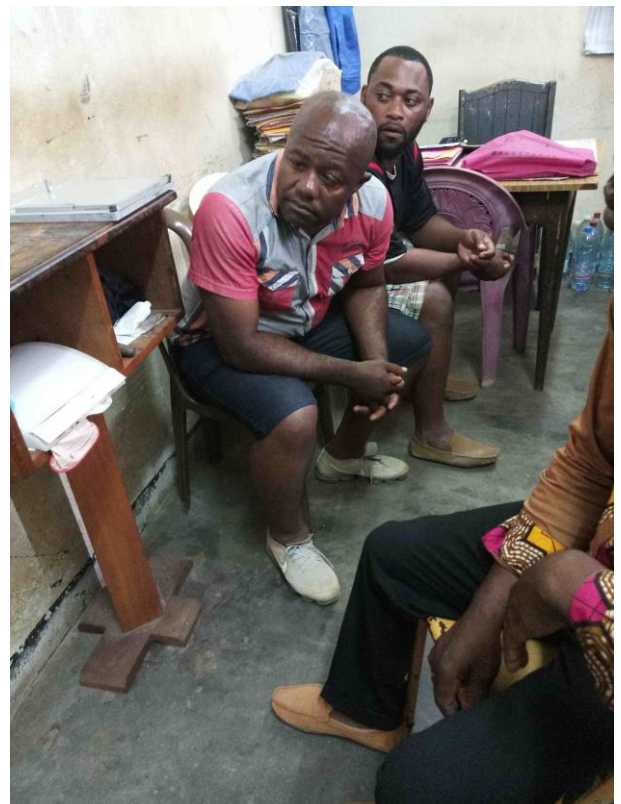
Chimp was just about to be trafficked and was rescued.



Four in arrested with pangolins scales arrive the gendarmerie brigade after their arrest



Two men who were part of the group that specialized in trafficking pangolin scales



Traffickers at police station shortly after arrest, during the arrest one of them attempted to escape, he ran and hid in a nearby hotel but was searched and arrested



They shot and killed baby elephants, were arrested and waiting for prosecution proceedings to commence



Two arrested in Batouri with two ivory tusks; the ply the Cameroon – Central African boundary area trafficking in ivory



Five elephant tusks and a tail seized from traffickers who shot and killed baby elephants



Two tusks seized from traffickers in Batouri



Two huge ivory tusks weighing 53kg and measuring over 1.7m in length seized in Yaounde from son of former finance minister



Trafficker at the wildlife office in Douala shortly after arrest, he belongs to an international network of pangolin scales traffickers, bags of pangolins scales weighing 95kg were seized



Wildlife officials measure ivory tusks that weighed over 53kg

2019 Media Links

In January, Camer.be, an online news site publishes the story of the arrest of four individuals in connection with the trafficking of pangolin scales in the Douala and tells the story also of the arrest of a couple with a baby chimpanzee.

<https://www.camer.be/72824/11:1/cameroon-alertela-faune-de-plus-en-plus-menacee-au-cameroun.html>

In February, Journal du Cameroun, an online news site publishes the story of the arrest of two traffickers in Yaounde with pangolin scales, narrating the story of the attempted escape staged by the two traffickers.

<https://www.journalducameroun.com/cameroun-yaounde-des-especes-protegees-a-ciel-ouvert-au-quartier-nkolndongo/>

In March, 4 persons were arrested in Douala with close to 2 tons of pangolin scales and 73 ivory tusks by wildlife officials of the Littoral Regional Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife in collaboration with Judicial police officials: It was reported by several national and international online news site including:

<https://www.camer.be/73289/11:1/cameroon-cameroun-mobilization-to-fight-the-destruction-of-wildlife.html>

<https://information.tv5monde.com/info/cameroun-saisie-de-2-tonnes-d-ecailles-de-pangolins-et-200-pointes-d-ivoire-290126>

<https://www.geo.fr/environnement/cameroun-saisie-de-2-tonnes-decailles-de-pangolins-et-200-pointes-divoire-194910>

<https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-busts-ivory-pangolin-traffickers/4839359.html>

<http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20190315-saisie-record-deux-tonnes-ecailles-pangolin-cameroun>

In April, 3 persons were arrested in Sangmelima with 5 ivory tusks weighing less than 1kg. These traffickers shot and killed baby elephants and the news was taken up by a news site; alwihda info.

https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-des-bebes-elephants-tues-Sangmelima_a72221.html

In May, a website reporting on news in Cameroon takes up the story of the arrest of persons with 100kg of pangolin scales and highlights how organized they were as a group.

<https://www.camer.be/75105/11:1/cameroun-quatre-trafiquants-de-la-faune-sauvage-arretes-dans-la-localite-de-tonga-cameroon.html>

In June, the news website, Alwihda info, published the arrest of three traffickers in Doume in East region of Cameroon with 35kg of pangolin scales. One of the traffickers who escaped

the initial arrest could not stand losing his bike and decided to come back and corrupt the gendarmes who could not have dreamt better, he was immediately arrested.

https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-des-trafiquants-fauniques-arretes-a-Doume_a64294.html

In July, a website reporting on news in Cameroon takes up the story of the travel ban imposed on a gendarmerie colonel by the US State Department. The colonel is expected to appear in court in connection with an ivory trafficking case.

https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-Un-colonel-au-tribunal-pour-criminalite-faunique_a75030.html

In August, arrested for trafficking in lion skulls and a leopard skin, a police officer is facing trial for illegal possession of parts of protected wildlife species and as the date of the hearing of the case approached Alwidha info carried the story to remind readers that the suspect shall soon stand trial.

https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-Yaounde-Un-policier-au-tribunal-pour-traffic-d-especes-sauvages_a76272.html

In September, five persons were arrested in Yaounde with two large ivory tusks weighing over 50kg and one of the arrested is the son of a former finance minister. The arrest that was carried out by wildlife officials of the Centre Regional Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife was significantly important as the son of a former minister was involved. The press ran the story with the news site Alwihda info picking up the story.

https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-Trafic-d-ivoire-le-fils-d-un-ancien-ministre-des-Finances-arrete_a76935.html

In November, when a court in Brazzaville sentenced a court registrar to one-year imprisonment for stealing ivory from the court premises, Alwhida info among several other news outlets including print takes up the story and shows how different is the strong and deterrent punishment to a very weak court ruling by the Bonanjo court of first instance in Douala to traffickers who were arrested with thousands of wildlife species in 2017.

https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Congo-Brazzaville-un-greffier-condamne-pour-vol-d-ivoire_a78718.html

In December, Alwihda info, announces that it is very possible that they shall be prison sentences for two ivory traffickers arrested in Batouri.

https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-Abong-Mbang-Cinq-personnes-arretees-pour-traffic-d-ecailles-de-pangolin_a69072.html