

# The Last Great Ape Organization - LAGA

## April 2007 Report



### Highlights -

- **Unprecedented relations opening in courts**
- International investigations intensified on lion's skins traffic to **Europe** and ivory trafficking involving **Chad and Nigeria**.
- Initiated **collaboration with Belgium**

### General

The month of April has been successful mainly in the performance of the legal department and investigation department. Legal unit managed unprecedented relations opening with 3 of the Provincial Attorney Generals and 3 State attorneys in the North Province. Investigation unit intensified international efforts with long-term investigations on lion's skins traffic to Europe and ivory trafficking involving Chad and Nigeria, investigation and collaboration with authorities in Belgium, and collaboration with South Africa.

Although this month marks outstanding achievements in international investigations, none has resulted in an operation, and the month was closed with no operations.

The month was rich with political efforts a several important meetings were held with the diplomatic community, fellow NGOs, and the inter-governmental commission of Ministers in the Congo basin – COMIFAC.

### Investigations

- **28 investigations** were carried out in **6 provinces** including-North West, Littoral, South West, West, East, North and Center.
- **International investigations** intensified with long-term investigations on lion's skins traffic to Europe and ivory trafficking involving **Chad and Nigeria**.
- Investigation carried in **Belgium**, procedures were agreed and collaboration with the concerned authorities realized.
- **Internet Investigators** continued with real fieldwork and undercover roles.
- Collaboration with **South Africa** exercised. **Recruitment** of field investigators continued and field test continue where four candidates were tested. The process will continue in May.
- Before the recruitment process is finished, the investigation unit is **in low capacity** and sending candidates to "test missions" results in **low return rate of produced operations**.

### Operations

There were no operations this month despite the high number of field investigations. This is due mainly because of the inexperience of the new investigators who are still tried in the field. Concentrating on important long-term investigations minimized the chances of operations this month. All the same, many wildlife dealers and Internet scammers were identified and a follow-up done so as to end in operations the following month.

### Legal

- There are **11 dealers behind bars during this month**: 6 in the South province; 1 in the Littoral; 1 in the North, 2 in the extreme north, and 1 in the central province.
- There are 3 fugitives, 2 in the south (Djoum area), 1 in the West (Bamenda), 1 in the north.
- 7 cases are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- 7 cases waiting for the process of appeal to reach the court of appeal.

- **Unprecedented relations opening** with 3 of the Provincial Attorney Generals and 3 State attorneys in the North Province.
- Meeting the **Attorney General of Central province** with the representative of the USA ambassador concerning the case of the American dealer. The Attorney General reacts positively.
- Meeting the **Attorney General of Littoral province** with the lawyer me Mbuan on the blockage (case not forwarded to the examining magistrate) happening in the 3.9 tons ivory smuggling case. He instructed the state council of bonanjo court to speed the procedure and send it to the examining magistrate, which he did.
- Meeting both with the **Attorney General of South West province** and state counsel of Buéa. He accepts to collaborate with Laga in the fight against wildlife crime in the province.
- Meeting the three most important state counsels of the North. (Maroua, Garoua, Ngaoundéré) they were very cooperative with LAGA action, and are ready to work with the organization.
- 15 cases on execution process.
- Legal department was sending **8 missions** out of the Central Province during this month.
- **Prosecutions:**  
17/04 – one case sentenced in the central province, in Ekounou court: Njouonkou and Njitué are sentence to pay 100.000CFA fine and 1.000.000frs damages to MINFOF, no imprisonment.
- No appeal was registered this month
- Regarding recruitment, 1 volunteer (Stanley) was rejected, though skilled , not fitting with LAGA spirit. 2 interviews were done and 1 new volunteer (Ide Berline recommended by magistrate Tédjiozem) is accepted to start field test in the beginning of the coming month).

### **Media front**

- **30 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, TV and written press including: 6 written press materials (3 in English, 3 in French), 3 radio talk shows (2 in French, 1 in English), 6 radio news features (4 in English, 2 in French), radio news flashes (8 in English, 5 in French), 2 TV news features (all in English).
- Guest include: Minister of MINFOF, SG MINFOF, West Provincial Delegate MINFOF, Sub Director of Protected Areas, Coordinator of Cameroon Parrot Project and Lecturer in the University of Dschang, CARPE Focal Point
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; leopard skins dealer arrest West Province, leopard skins dealers arrest North West Province, lion conservation and taiping 4, female dealer in protected species arrest North West Province, ivory action plan.
- 19 pieces in English, 11 in French making a percentage of 63.3% in English and 36.7% in French.
- LAGA Director participated in the BBC programme outlook.
- Contact was made with CBS/60 Minutes to assist in the production of their film on ivory trade.
- One volunteer has been accepted for the next phase in the recruitment process and a new volunteer is being tested in the media department.

### **External Relations and Policy**

- Meeting with the **American Ambassador** on wildlife law enforcement who pledged his full support of the process by promising to appoint a focal point in the Embassy for dealing with wildlife cases, holding meetings on a regular basis with LAGA for his intervention on wildlife cases, have a discussion with the Minister of MINFOF on the importance of wildlife law enforcement.

- Meeting with the Deputy Chief of Section of the Political and Economic Section of the American Embassy as a follow-up to the meeting with the American Ambassador.
- Meeting with the First Secretary of the **British High Commission** on intervention a regular basis on wildlife cases with specific attention to the case of Djoum, the Hong Kong ivory affair and the wealthy personality of Mbalmayo in Yaounde.
- Meeting with Living Earth on integrating wildlife law enforcement into their work with communities in the sensitive South Province of Cameroon. Following LAGA's anti-corruption work in the past, Living Earth agreed to try to mobilize local communities to denounce wildlife trafficking and corrupt government officials.
- Meeting with the Executive Secretary of **COMIFAC** who acknowledged LAGA's unique achievements in assisting the Government of Cameroon in the application of the wildlife law. Using LAGA as a rare case study for the application of the AFLEG declaration on wildlife aspect he decided to send a letter to all the Central African Environment Ministers to assist in the replication of LAGA and the lesson learnt from its work. He also suggested signing a letter of funding endorsement for LAGA.
- Meeting with the Attorney General for the Centre Province, US Embassy Representative and LAGA with discussions centring on the efforts of the Cameroon government in wildlife law enforcement being appreciated in the international for a, the giving of the same penalties on Cameroonian dealers to foreign dealers of wildlife crime. Greater collaboration was achieved with respect to the follow up of cases in court.
- Meeting with CED on the dissemination of the LAGA experience through the issues of capitalization and a broader context, LAGA activities in international legal circles and familiarization with the two Congo (Brazzaville and DRC) through information exchange.
- LAGA has been working towards the capitalization of its experiences, a manual for others to use as an example and also putting LAGA in the larger context.

## Management

- Preparations started to May month activities that with two main missions – the Congos and CITES, represents a major management challenge.

## Finance

### LAGA Expenditure by budget line for April 07

Amount CFA	Budget line	Details	Amount USD
2,600,760	<b>Investigations</b>	28 inv,7 provinces + Belgium	\$5,418
432,200	<b>Operations</b>	Ivory Action Plan	\$900
1,120,675	<b>legal</b>	follow up 33 cases11 locked subjects	\$2,335
1,204,290	<b>Media</b>	30 media pieces	\$2,509
265,150	<b>Policy / External</b>	T4/LATF/CITES/France/USA	\$552
1,455,700	<b>Management</b>	Coordination	\$3,033
820,043	<b>Office</b>		\$1,708
7,898,818	TOTAL	EXPENDITURE APRIL	\$16,456

### LAGA Expenditure by donor for April 07

Amount CFA	Donor	Amount USD
1,038,968	Born Free	\$2,164.5
1,692,290	BHC	\$3,525.6
2,112,500	FWS	\$4,401.0
732,200	Arcus	\$1,525.4
1,132,300	Body Shop	\$2,359.0
1,190,560	ProWildlife	\$2,480.3
7,898,818	TOTAL	\$16,455.9

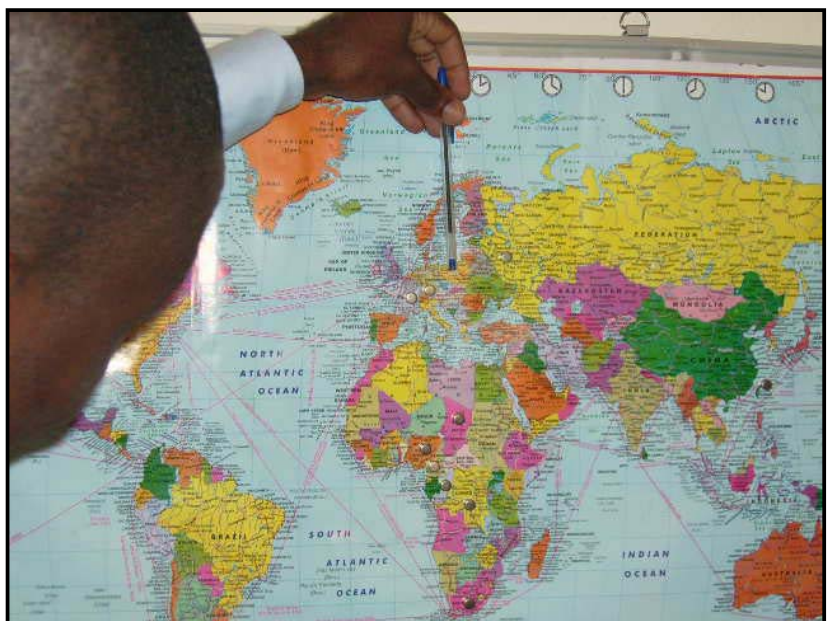
Ofir Drori  
Director  
LAGA - The Last Great Ape Organization

### THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



**Legal Department achieved unprecedented relations opening in courts**

**Investigation unit intensified international efforts on lion's skins traffic to Europe and ivory trafficking involving Chad and Nigeria, investigation and collaboration with authorities in Belgium, and collaboration with South Africa.**





**Long-term investigation on African Grey Parrots**

**Links of this month**

- Leopard Skins Dealer Arrest West Province Cameroon: Successful LAGA operation on a dealer caught red handed trying to sell three leopard skins. Two others were caught the next day. Trade in live or part of protected animal species like leopards, elephants and apes, is illegal according to Cameroon wildlife law with a prison term of up to 3 years.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OL62qWg\\_zlY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OL62qWg_zlY)

