

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

January 2021 Report



Highlights

- **A wildlife trafficker sentenced to serve 2 years in prison and ordered by the court to jointly pay, with an accomplice, damages of 5,000,000 FCFA to the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife.**
- **The Deputy Director participated at a meeting organised by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife that focused on collaboration between the ministry and its technical partners.**
- **The Second Semester and Annual reports 2020 were published on LAGA's website.**
- **The LAGA team participated at activities to mourn the passing away of one of its founding fathers, Vincent Gudmia Mfonfu who died on December 26, 2020.**
- **The team returned from annual vacation.**

General

There were no arrests carried out this month.

The Deputy Director participated at a meeting organised by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife that focused on collaboration between the ministry and technical partners.

He equally held a meeting with the Deputy Chief of Political Section and the Environment Specialist at the US Embassy to discuss the organisation plan and activities for the year and the main conservation problems in the country.

An ivory trafficker arrested in Yokadouma in the East Region sentenced to 2 years in prison and ordered to pay, with an accomplice who was sentenced to a 5-months jail term, damages of 5,000,000 FCFA to the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife

An Italian documentary crew arrived the country to complete the last segment of the shooting of a documentary on pangolin trafficking with the LAGA team.

The Head of the Legal Department participated at a meeting organised by the Cameroon Pangolin Working Group with discussions focusing on the organisation of the forthcoming World Pangolin Day.

The LAGA team participated in activities carried out to mourn and bury one of its founding fathers Vincent Gudmia Mfonfu who died on December 26, 2020 following a protracted illness. He was the Head of the Media Department from the birth of LAGA until 2010 when he went on retirement. He worked tirelessly to building the image of the organisation, the profile of wildlife crimes and the government/NGO model in fighting wildlife crime in the country and beyond.

LAGA's second semester and annual report of 2020 were published online at the organisation's website

Investigations

- **8 investigation missions** out in **4 Regions** out of 10 of Cameroon including: Littoral, West, South, Centre and Regions.
- The low number of investigations could be accounted for by the annual vacation period that ran from the 14th December 2020 to the 17th January 2020.

Investigations Table

Investigation Missions	Regions	No. of Operations	No of traffickers arrested
8	4	0	0

Operation

No operations were carried out during the month because only a couple of investigation missions were carried out shortly after resumption of work by the LAGA team following an end of year vacation.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **11 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 2 in Foubot (West), 1 in Bertoua (East), 2 in Kribi (South), 2 in Ambam (South), 3 in Ebolowa (South) and 1 in Douala (Littoral).
- There are **19 traffickers behind bars this month**: 9 in East region, 2 in Centre Region, 1 in the Littoral Region, 1 in South Region and 6 in West Region.
- **30 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **28 cases** were scheduled in court this month.
- **5 traffickers** were convicted this month.
- **Prosecutions**: There was 4 court rulings this month.

- **05/01/2021**: The Ebolowa Court of First Instance found the accused **ANGO'O ASSAKO Samson guilty and sentenced him to a 3-month suspended sentence during 3 years and to pay 110,000 FCFA as fines. He was also ordered to pay 2,200,00 FCFA as damages.**

He was arrested in Ebolowa on the 26/08/2020 for illegal possession of 23 kg of pangolin scales.

- **06/01/2021**: The Bertoua Court of First Instance found the accused **POMELA ABELA Aimé, NGOUALONG Kuete, MOHAMADOU Nabi and TCHENE Maxime not guilty and MBOKI MPORI Clément and JOVAH Yahwé Christian guilty. MBOKI MPORI Clément was sentenced to serve 5 months imprisonment and to pay 400,000 FCFA as fines. JOVAH Yahwé Christian was sentenced to serve 2 years imprisonment and to**

pay 1,000,000 FCFA as fines. They were also ordered to pay 5,000,000 FCFA jointly as damages.

They were arrested in Bertoua on the 02/12/2020 for illegal possession of 4 ivory tusks.

- **21/01/2021:** The Ambam Court of First Instance found the accused **MOHAMADOU Ibrahim guilty and sentenced him to a 4-months imprisonment term and to pay 1,000,000 FCFA as fine. He was also ordered to pay 60,00,00 FCFA as damages.**

He was arrested in Ambam on the 21/10/2020 for illegal possession of 626 kg of ivory tusks.

- **25/01/2021:** The Kribi Court of First Instance found the accused **BEMEHHE Clara Rosalie guilty and sentenced her to a one-month imprisonment term and to pay 500.000 FCFA as damages.**

She was arrested in Kribi on the 10/12/2020 for illegal possession of 1 mandrill.

- **Appeal:** An appeal was filed this month in the case of **MOHAMADOU Ibrahim** in the South Court of Appeal.

Legal Table

No of Missions (Out of Centre Region)	No of Court Judgements	No of Traffickers Given Prison Sentence	Prison term (in months)	No of Traffickers Sanctioned (No prison sentence)	No of Appeals lodged	No of Cases Tried in Courts
11	4	4	34	4	1	28

Media

- **22 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, internet and the radio, including: 7 written press materials (4 in French language and 3 in English Language), 4 internet publications (3 in French and 1 in English language) and 11 radio news flashes (6 in English and 5 in French)
- Interviewee: The Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas of the Ministry of forestry and Wildlife
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: The court Judgment of six traffickers arrested in Bertoua with four ivory tusks, and the Publication of the 9th edition of the “*Wildlife Justice*” journal.
- 12 media pieces in French language and 10 in English language making a percentage of 54.5% in French and 45.4% in English.

Media table

<i>No of media pieces</i>	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet
22	0	11	7	4

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director participated at a meeting held at the Mvogbetsi Zoo and chaired by the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, that focused on areas of collaboration and intervention by CSOs in the forestry and wildlife subsector.
- The Deputy Director held a meeting at the US Embassy with the Deputy Chief of the Political Section and the Environment Specialist to discuss the organisation's yearly plan and activities while also focusing on problems affecting effective wildlife conservation in the country. Some solutions were discussed and how these could be implemented.
- The Head of the Legal Department participated at a meeting organised by the Cameroon Pangolin Working Group with discussions focusing on the organisation of the forthcoming World Pangolin Day.
- A legal adviser held a meeting with the state counsel in Ambam to discuss strategies on a matter pending before the court while holding a similar meeting with the state counsel in Bertoua for a similar objective.
- The head of department accompanied by another legal adviser held a meeting with the attorney general in Ebolowa to equally discuss a matter pending before the court and a third legal adviser held a meeting with the Kribi state counsel for the similar purpose.

Management

- The entire team resumed work after an annual 3-week vacation.
- LAGA's second semester and annual reports 2020 were published online at www.laga-enforcement.org.
- The LAGA team participated in the mourning and remembrance of Vincent Gudmia Mfonfu who was one of the founding fathers of the organisation and management supervised and organised members to take part in the removal of corpses, church ceremonies and other activities at his Etougebe residences.

Activism Front

All the activism fostering activities carried out by the LAGA family are online; this could be gotten at the LAGA website – <http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Activism/tabid/77/Default.aspx>.

Finance

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

Link of the month

The online news site Alwihda.info focused this month on the publication of the 9th edition of the "Wildlife Justice" Journal entitled "*Pangolin Trafficking*".

https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-Wildlife-Justice-Journal-se-penche-sur-le-traffic-de-pangolins_a99909.html

This Month in Pictures



The team gathered at the mortuary during the corpse removal of one of our founding fathers who we fondly called Papi.