

The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

February 2012 Report



Highlights

- **Dealer in elephant products from the South Region arrested in Yaounde – Center.**
- **LAGA starts replication activities in Guinea - Conakry**
- **Replication in Chad concentrated on the Bouba Ndjida elephant massacre.**
- LAGA Director creates more collaborative contacts during Interpol meeting in Thailand.
- LAGA Director starts a special mission on Bouba Ndjida elephant massacre.
- **LAGA Team meets the new Minister – MINFOF** for acquaintance and collaboration.

General

This month was marked by the start of replication in Guinea – Conakry, focus on Bouba Ndjida and arrest operation in Yaounde.

The mission to Chad by the LAGA Deputy Director focused on the massacre of hundreds of elephants in the Bouba Ndjida National park in Cameroon located near the Chadian border. This mission revealed that the Chadian authorities do not also have a sense of responsibility and it is a pity and quite regrettable because this delay in replication is negatively impacting on regional wildlife law enforcement as seen from the Bouba Ndjida with no action undertaken from Chad.

LAGA Director travelled to Guinea – Conakry to initiate replication activities there. His mission confirmed the fact that Guinea which has been of great concern for several years is a wildlife trafficking hotspot; the high scale of corruption and complicity; the astronomical scale of the illegal trade in ivory with huge quantities openly displayed; more than 250 leopard skins and more than 70 lion skins openly sold; Guinean Government documenting past shipments in chimps etc. He held meetings with high level government officials, CITES Management Authority and NGOs.

LAGA Director also travelled to Thailand and attended an Interpol meeting. His intervention was more on corruption and that enforcement should be measured in terms of prosecutions and not seizures. He created contact with more collaborators and build investigations ties so that LAGA can get a constant flow of information from Asia to make arrests in Africa and vice versa.

For further improvement and more operations in regional enforcement, training sessions continue to be held in Yaounde – Cameroon 2 Jurists arrived from AALF Gabon to be trained under the regional exchange program.

A regular dealer in elephant products was arrested in Yaounde – Center with elephant tails. He travelled all the way from Djoum – South, a hotspot area for trade in ivory and other elephant trophies. He claimed that highly placed officials in Djoum are involved in ivory trade with many accomplices found in the Cameroon army. More investigations are ongoing to penetrate the network, target and arrest the high level dealers.

The court of First Instance of Abong-Mbang sentenced a dealer in gorilla parts and other protected wildlife products to **1 year of prison and \$8.000 as fine and damages** suspended during 3 years. He was arrested in Lomie for illegal detaining of products of totally protected species including gorilla limbs and primates amongst many others.

Investigations

- **33 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **9 Regions** of Cameroon- West, South West, North West, Adamawa, North, South, East, Littoral and Center.
- More focused and high level investigations started this month with regards to the hundreds of elephants killed by international poachers in the Bouba Ndjida National Park in the Northern region of Cameroon.
- LAGA Investigations Department assisted PALF-Congo Investigations Department on Investigations and Operation Procedures resulting in 2 arrest operations.
- 3 new candidates were tested this month with 1 candidate having encouraging results.
- The Department continued with the use of informants, a strategy that yielded 2 good operations last month.

Operations

1 operation was carried out this month against **1 subject** in Cameroon.

- **28/02/12** – a regular dealer in elephant products was arrested in Yaounde – Center with elephant tails. He travelled all the way from Djoum – South, a hotspot area for trade in ivory and other elephant trophies. He was caught on tape saying that highly placed officials in Djoum are involved in ivory trade with many accomplices found in the Cameroon army. More investigations are ongoing to penetrate the network, target and arrest the high level dealers.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **12 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 1 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Bamenda (North West), 1 in Bertoua (East), 3 in Abong-Mbang (East), 1 in Kribi (South), 1 in Bafoussam (West), 1 in Limbe (South West), 1 in Buea (South West), 1 in Muyuka (South West), and 1 in Mamfe (South West).
- There are **14 dealers behind bars during this month**: 3 in the East Region, 2 in the South West Region, 1 in littoral Region, 1 in North West region, 5 in South Region and 2 in West Region.
- **21 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **19 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 1 dealer was sentenced this month.
 - **21/02/2012**: The court of First Instance of Abong-Mbang sentenced GOMBEL Wouaboufe to **1 year of prison and \$8.000 as fine and damages** suspended during 3 years. He was arrested in Lomie for illegal detaining of products of totally protected species including gorilla parts and primates.
- **1 appeal** was registered this month against the ruling gave by this courts

Media front

- **37 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, TV and written press including: 23 written press materials (12 in English and 11 in French), 2 talk shows in English, 2 TV news feature (1 in English and 1 in French) and 10 news flash (5 in English and 5 in French).
- Guests include: Manyu Divisional Delegate - MINFOF and LAGA Director.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; Tinto ape skulls dealer arrest and arrest of crocodile, pangolin dealer in Douala Interpol meeting in Thailand, arrest of dealer in elephant parts and Bouba Njida story of 200 elephants killed.
- 20 media pieces in English, 17 in French making a percentage of 54% in English and 45% in French.

External Relations and Policy

- LAGA Director and his Deputy met with the new Minister of Forestry and Wildlife for acquaintance and continuation of work between MINFOF and LAGA.
- LAGA Deputy Director travelled to Chad and his mission was focused on the massacre of hundreds of elephants in the Bouba Ndjida National park in Cameroon located near the Chadian border. This mission revealed that the Chadian authorities do not also have a sense of responsibility and it is a pity and quite regrettable because this delay in replication is not only negatively impacting on regional wildlife law enforcement, but it could be seen from the Bouba Ndjida issue whereby concrete action could have been undertaken from the Chadian side.
- LAGA Director travelled this month to Thailand and attended an Interpol meeting. His intervention was more on corruption and the fact enforcement should be measured in terms of prosecutions and not seizures. Many participants knew already about LAGA from previous meetings and Alain's work; many showed a lot of interest in LAGA's work especially the Thai Police and Thai Judges. Everyone was very supportive saying LAGA is the only one that actually manages to get things done. In addition to the meeting, he sought out and created contact with more collaborators and build investigations ties so that LAGA can get a constant flow of information from Asia to make arrests in Africa and vice versa.
- The LAGA Director also travelled to Guinea – Conakry to initiate replication activities there. His mission confirmed the fact that Guinea Conakry which has been of great concern for several years is a wildlife trafficking hotspot; the high scale of corruption and complicity; the astronomical scale of the illegal trade in ivory with huge quantities openly displayed; more than 250 leopard skins and more than 70 lion skins openly sold; Guinean Government documenting past shipments in chimps etc. He also held several meetings with high level government officials, CITES Management Authority (MA), and NGOs.
- Meeting with GCI to discuss on the fight against corruption and access to information.
- The Director participated in the regional consultation of the World Bank on civil society participation.
- LAGA Director gave presentation on activism to students of America school.
- Meeting held with the Secretary General at the presidency to discuss on the fight against wildlife crime in the country and the Bouba Ndjida situation.
- LAGA Director gave presentation on activism to international university students.
- LAGA Deputy Director gave a presentation on NGOs-Governments collaboration on regional wildlife law enforcement in the Central Africa sub region and also worked on the drafting of 2012-2016 action plan by including law enforcement activities during the Cross River Gorilla Action Planning Workshop in Limbe – South West Region.

Management

- For further improvement and more operations in regional enforcement, training sessions continue to be held in Yaounde – Cameroon 2 Jurists arrived from AALF Gabon to be trained under the regional exchange program. Training and exchange of project personnel in regional enforcement will continue with the other projects in the forthcoming months. Others that had been trained before include the Coordinator of RALF – CAR, Jurist – PALF Congo, Investigator – PALF Congo, Jurists - AALF Gabon and Investigator AALF - Gabon.
- 3 new Investigators were tried this month and 2 not retained because they could not meet up with the standards required in LAGA.

Activism Front

All the education 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>. Activism this month was on:

- **Post election violence in Africa as a result of Colonization:** This presentation is a hypothesis that post election violence in today Africa originates from colonization through which chiefs who were not the people's choice had to use their authority and power to impose themselves. In fact if most researchers agreed that there existed a form of democracy during pre-colonial era, History shows that during this period violence found among people were scarcely orchestrated by the people. There were rather conquest wars between two tribes or two kingdoms and many massacres during this colonial period and those that follow were organized by leaders of the people themselves.

Replication

During this month, LAGA helped other replication projects in carrying out arrest operations and following up court cases.

In the Replication of LAGA activities and Regional Law Enforcement, February month was marked by the start of replication in Guinea- Conakry and the focus from the Chadian side on the case of elephant massacre in the Bouba Ndjida national park. LAGA Director travelled to Guinea- Conakry to kick start activities there, and LAGA Deputy Director travelled to Chad to push for more action on wildlife law enforcement with special attention on Bouba Ndjida considering the lack of engagement from the Chadian authorities.

LAGA Director travelled to Guinea – Conakry to initiate replication activities there. His mission confirmed the fact that Guinea which has been of great concern for several years is a wildlife trafficking hotspot; the high scale of corruption and complicity; the astronomical scale of the illegal trade in ivory with huge quantities openly displayed; more than 250 leopard skins and more than 70 lion skins openly sold; Guinean Government documenting past shipments in chimps etc. He held meetings with high level government officials, CITES Management Authority and NGOs.

LAGA assisted PALF in planning missions, coordinating and participating in 2 operations arresting 5 dealers in hippo teeth and chimp skin. LAGA also helped PALF and RALF in the legal follow-up of the cases as a result of the arrest operations.

2 Jurists arrived from AALF Gabon to be trained in Yaounde – Cameroon under the regional exchange program. Others that had been trained before include the Coordinator of RALF – CAR, Jurist – PALF Congo, Investigator – PALF Congo, Jurists - AALF Gabon and Investigator AALF - Gabon.

Finance

LAGA Expenditure by budget line for February 2012

Amount CFA	Budget Line		Amount USD
2,756,833	Investigations	34 inv, 9 Regions	\$5,569
607,447	Operations	1 Operation against 1 subjects	\$1,227
2,673,040	Legal	follow up 21 cases 14 locked subjects	\$5,400
1,417,038	Media	37 Media pieces	\$2,863
3,587,439	Policy & External Relations	Congo/Gabon/CAR/Kenya/France/USA/Thailand	\$7,247
936,400	Management	Coordination	\$1,892
1,868,907	Office		\$3,776
175,000	LAGA Family	Women's day	
14,022,104	TOTAL EXPENDITURE FEBRUARY		\$28,327

LAGA Expenditure by Donor for February 2012

AmountCFA	Donor	Amount USD
4,054,070	FWS	\$8,190.0
518,000	FWS-Replication	\$1,046.5
201,237	BornFree UK	\$406.5
402,753	Rufford	\$813.6
582,400	IFAW	\$1,176.6
2,820,321	Darwin	\$5,697.6
	BornFree USA	\$0.0
1,116,020	Future for Nature	\$2,254.6
4,327,303	ARCUS Foundation	\$8,742.0
14,022,104	TOTAL	\$28,327.5

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



Dealer in elephant products arrested in Yaounde – Center with elephant tails. He travelled all the way from Djoum – South, a hotspot area for trade in ivory and other elephant trophies. He was caught on tape saying that highly placed officials in Djoum are involved in ivory trade with many accomplices found in the Cameroon army.

Links of this month

Dealer in primate skulls arrested in Manyu Division – “Hello Cameroon” a Cameroon National Television Broadcast Program: The wildlife officials of the MINFOF Delegation of Manyu Division arrested the suspected ape dealer in ape skulls in Tinto. He was arrested bargaining a sale of mandrill, drill and chimpanzee skulls. His possession of these skulls is an illegal act and punishable under Cameroon 1994 wildlife law.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3xT84mWMA4>