

# The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

## September 2012 Report



### Highlights

- **A network of 5 traffickers in human parts and elephant meat busted in Djoum South by Wildlife officials.**
- **2 other dealers arrested in 2 different operations.**
- **5 dealers sentenced** this month in the South and West Regions.
- LAGA Director gives a presentation on corruption during GAPIN conference in Uganda.

### General

This month was marked by the uncovering of an alarming black market trade in human body parts and elephant meat in an operation that saw the arrest of 5 people in Djoum - a small town in the South Region of the country.

**A network of traffickers in human parts and elephant meat was busted in Djoum – South. 5 suspects, mostly young men** 2 of whom are University of Yaounde 2 students were **arrested in 2 different operations** in Djoum with **elephant meat and human parts; most notable among this discovery was the head of a human being that still had some hairs on it.** Reports coming in from Djoum say the products – the human body parts and the elephant meat were being ferried to Yaounde by the traffickers to serve as constitutive elements for some occultist practice by an important personality in the capital city. As in many of such practices, **human body parts, baby parts etc are frequently used by unsuspecting people for black magic and witchcraft.** It should be noted that this operation was the initiative of wildlife officials who are in a renewed alert mode to track wildlife criminals with LAGA assisting in the writing of the complaint report and participating in the second operation that led to 2 more arrests following 3 initially arrested by MINFOF officials in Djoum. Investigations are still ongoing to get those at the top of the chain who are the actual pushers of this trade in human parts and protected wildlife. This opens up a vast and new domain of crime in the country. It equally shows to what extent the trafficking of wildlife species can go with human parts becoming a trade item on the same level as wildlife species parts.

In 2 other operations, **2 female dealers were arrested** with gorilla parts and meat of protected wildlife in 2 different operations. **One of them was arrested in Yaounde - Center while trying to trade in gorilla parts** including a fresh gorilla skull as well as gorilla meat. She has a network of suppliers in Messamena - East from where she bought a full dead gorilla. **The other was arrested with 4 bags of bush meat including protected wildlife species.** She was transporting the meat through one travelling agency from Lomie - East to Yaounde - Center to supply a ready market. She attempted to bribe the arresting team for her release.

5 dealers were sentenced this month in 2 different Regions. The Court of First Instance of Sangmelima sentenced 2 ivory traffickers to **2 months of prison each and** to pay jointly a sum of 13.850.000 FCFA (about \$28,000) as damages to MINFOF. They were arrested in Zoetele - South for illegally trying to traffic 23 elephant tusks. The Court of First Instance of Djoum - South sentenced another ivory dealer to **3 months of prison** and to pay a sum of 3.000.000 FCFA (about \$6000) as damages. He was arrested in Djoum for illegally killing elephants and trying to trade in 6 elephant tusks. The Court of First Instance of Bangangte - West sentenced 2 dealers to 3 months of prison each and to pay a sum of 150.000 FCFA (about \$300) as damages. They were arrested in Bazou for illegal detention and trying to traffic a life chimp.

## Investigations

- **26 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **7 Regions** of Cameroon- South West, North West, West, South, East, Littoral and Center.
- Good investigations identified 2 major dealers leading to 2 arrest operations. One of the operations was as a result of investigations carried out by a new Investigator on trial.
- The distribution of flyers in both English and French continued. Strategies have been put in place to track distribution and for it to be more effective. This is part of a new strategy to get credible information and to make the Investigation missions more performant.
- LAGA Investigations Department assisted PALF-Congo on Investigations and Operation Procedures.

## Operations

**3 operations** were carried out this month against **7 subjects**.

- **08/09/12 – A female dealer arrested with 4 bags of bush meat including protected wildlife** species. She was transporting the meat through one travelling agency from Lomie - East to Yaounde - Center to supply a ready market. She attempted to bribe the arresting team for her release.
- **11/09/12 – Another female dealer arrested in Yaounde while trying to trade in gorilla parts including a fresh skull as well as gorilla meat.** She has a network of suppliers in Messamena - East from where she bought a full dead gorilla. She has been in the business for a long time and also has a ready market in Yaounde.
- **22/09/12 – A network of traffickers in human parts and elephant meat busted in Djoum – South.** A total of **5 suspects**, mostly young men 2 of whom are University of Yaounde 2 students were arrested in 2 different operations in Djoum with elephant meat and human parts; **most notable among this discovery was the head of a human being that still had some hairs on it. Reports coming in from Djoum say the products – the human body parts and the elephant meat were being ferried to Yaounde by the traffickers to serve as constitutive elements for some occultist practice by an important personality in the capital city.** As in many of such practices, human body parts, baby parts etc are frequently used by unsuspecting people for black magic and witchcraft. It should be noted that this operation was the initiative of wildlife officials who are in a renewed alert mode to track wildlife criminals with LAGA assisting in the writing of the complaint report and participating in the second operation that led to 2 more arrests following 3 initially arrested by MINFOF officials in Djoum. Investigations are still ongoing to get those at the top of the chain who are the actual pushers of this trade in human parts and protected wildlife.

## Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **12 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 2 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Bertoua (East), 1 in Lomie (East), 3 in Abong-Mbang (East), 3 in Djoum (South), 1 in Sangmelima (South), 1 in Mamfe (South West).
- There are **42 dealers behind bars during this month**: 17 in the East Region, 2 in centre region, 1 in the South West Region, 1 in North West region, 17 in South Region and 4 in West Region.
- **21 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **15 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 5 dealers were sentenced this month.
  - **11/09/2012**: The Court of First Instance of Sangmelima sentenced BELINGA Parfait to **2 months of prison** and to pay **2.900.000 CFA Francs as fine**; NYATTE Minlo Constant to **2 months of prison** and to pay **1.100.000 CFA Francs as fine**. They were

also sentenced to pay jointly a sum of **13.850.000 CFA Francs** as damages to MINFOF. They were arrested in Zoetele - South for illegally trying to traffic 23 elephant tusks.

- **11/09/2012:** The Court of First Instance of Djoum - South sentenced MBIA Obounou David to **3 months of prison** and to pay **a sum of 3.000.000 CFA Francs as damages and 39.500 CFA Francs as court fees**. He was arrested in Djoum for illegally killing elephants and trying to trade in 6 elephant tusks.
- **25/09/2012:** The Court of First Instance of Bangangte - West sentenced NYNGUI Beka Octave and BANDOOU Tangmi Bernard to **3 months of prison each** and to pay **a sum of 150.000 CFA Francs as damages**. They were arrested in Bazou for illegal detention and trying to traffic a life chimp.

## **Media front**

- **28 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, and written press including: 20 written press materials (11 in English and 9 in French), 3 radio talk shows in English, and 5 news flashes (2 in English and 3 in French).
- Guests include: Manager of Interpol's environment crime programme, climate change & prosperity officer of the British High Commission-Cameroon and National coordinator of the national syndicate for rural workers.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; judgement on two elephants killer in Messok , Abong Mbang court appearance of gorilla trafficker, Yaounde and Abong Mbang arrest of 2 women with gorilla skull and other gorilla parts, 3 ivory traffickers sentenced in South and 5 wildlife traffickers arrested with human parts and elephant meat in Djoum.
- 16 media pieces in English, 12 in French making a percentage of 57.1% in English and 42.9% in French.
- The distribution of the Wildlife Justice Magazine published continued this month.
- The first edition of the LAGA Newsletter was produced and distributed electronically to over 1000 people. It also seeks to expand the scope of readers on issues of wildlife law enforcement in the country and beyond.

## **External Relations and Policy**

- LAGA Director gave a presentation in Uganda on corruption during a GAPIN conference. GAPIN is the World Customs Organization's initiative for fighting wildlife crime, a "green Customs" initiative with an officer working full time for this. More than a dozen African countries were represented. The person in the entire WCO (World Custom Organization) in charge of Ethics is interested in integrating LAGA further into WCO and talked about the ethics sub-committee of WCO. More meetings will follow.

## **Management**

- LAGA Director ended a 1 month visit to Israel for medical reasons. During his absence, the LAGA family was running the activities without the director and the excellent results in all fronts proved the growing capacity and independence of its departments.

## **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>.

## Replication

During this month, LAGA worked with other replication projects in planning investigations, operation procedures; advice on following up court cases and the production of media pieces.

LAGA also continued to work with RALF and PALF on planning investigations, strategies on operations and legal follow-up of court cases. More specifically, LAGA prepared ETIS for PALF on ivory trade in Congo that was sent to CITES.

## Finance

### LAGA Expenditure by budget line for September 2012

Amount CFA			Amount USD
2,212,400	<b>Investigations</b>	27 inv, 7 Regions	\$4,255
989,000	<b>Operations</b>	3 Operation against 7 subjects	\$1,902
2,724,280	<b>Legal</b>	follow up 21 cases 42 locked subjects	\$5,239
1,330,035	<b>Media</b>	28 Media pieces	\$2,558
630,197	<b>Policy &amp; External Relations</b>	Congo/Gabon/CAR/Kenya/Uganda/Israel	\$1,212
896,200	<b>Management</b>	Coordination	\$1,723
1,520,083	<b>Office</b>		\$2,923
235,500	<b>LAGA Family</b>		\$453
10,537,695	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE SEPTEMBER</b>		\$20,265

### LAGA Expenditure by Donor for September 2012

Amount CFA	Donor	Amount USD
3,014,290	FWS	\$5,796.7
271,002	FWS-Replication	\$521.2
0	BornFree UK	\$0.0
596,050	Rufford	\$1,146.3
	IFAW	\$0.0
	IPPL	\$0.0
	ProWildlife	\$0.0
252,500	Marsh Christian Trust	\$485.6
2,714,408	BornFree USA	\$5,220.0
2,952,945	ARCUS Foundation	\$5,678.7
736,500	Joe Franklin	\$1,416.3
10,537,695	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,264.8</b>

## THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



One of the suspects (left) arrested in Djoum with elephant meat and human parts (above). He is carrying the traveling bag in which they were transporting the human parts including the head of a human being that still had some hairs on it. Reports coming in from Djoum say the products – the human body parts and the elephant meat were being ferried to Yaounde by the traffickers to serve as constitutive elements for some occultist practice by an important personality in the capital city.



A female dealer (left – at police station during the writing of the complaint report by a wildlife officer) arrested in Yaounde – Center while trying to trade in gorilla parts including a fresh skull as well as gorilla meat (in the yellow bag – right). She has a network of suppliers in Messamena - East from where she bought a full dead gorilla. She has been in the business for a long time and also has a ready market in Yaounde.



The uncovering of an alarming black market trade in human body parts and elephant meat in an operation that saw the arrest of 5 people in Djoum - South Region by wildlife authorities received wide media coverage both nationally and internationally. The "Popoli" Newspaper, a satirical that is one of the most read newspaper in Cameroon made it its front page cover like many other newspaper. Most notable among this discovery was the head of a human being that still had some hairs on it. Reports coming in from Djoum say the products – the human body parts and the elephant meat were being ferried to Yaounde by the traffickers to serve as constitutive elements for some occultist practice by an important personality in the capital city. As in many of such practices, human body parts, baby parts etc are frequently used by unsuspecting people for black magic and witchcraft.

## Links of this month

A series of arrests of dealers in wildlife products carried out – Cameroon National Television Broadcast – Hello Program. An ivory dealer was arrested in the Briqueterie neighbourhood in Yaounde; 2 dealers in leopard skin arrested in the Emana neighbourhood in Yaounde; and another female dealer arrested in Yaounde trying to illegally trade in gorilla parts including a gorilla skull and meat.

[http://www.youtube.com/my\\_videos\\_edit?video\\_id=-QF9EQvqQJI](http://www.youtube.com/my_videos_edit?video_id=-QF9EQvqQJI)