

## *Central and West Africa Wildlife Law Enforcement Network*

### **Monthly Regional Wildlife Law Enforcement Briefing – February 2014**

#### **Summary**

This month was marked by good operations in Cameroon, Congo, Togo and Gabon. In Cameroon, 4 major dealers were arrested; 3 for trying to illegally trade in leopard skins and 1 for trafficking elephant parts; he is also an ivory trafficker and has a network of suppliers some of whom hunt for him after being supplied with arms and ammunition. In Congo, 2 people were arrested for illegally detaining mandrills and another for interfering in an operation in southern Congo. In Togo, another international ivory trafficker of Guinean nationality was arrested for trying to illegally trade in ivory. In Gabon, a poaching and trafficking network was busted in Makokou arresting its members and the Brigade of the Gendarmerie in Mekambo and an agent of Cedoc were denounced for their involvement in trafficking activities.

Good prosecutions were obtained in Cameroon and Gabon. In Cameroon 3 dealers in ivory and other elephant products were sentenced to serve prison terms and to pay damages to the Ministry in charge of wildlife. In Yaounde, one ivory trafficker was sentenced to 1 year imprisonment and to pay 1.000.000 FCFA (about \$2,000); his accomplice sentenced to 6 months imprisonment and to pay 300.000 FCFA (about \$600) as fine. They were also convicted to pay jointly 25.000.000 FCFA (about \$50,000) as damages. In Abong-Mbang – East, a dealer sentenced to 4 months imprisonment and to pay 2.560.000 FCFA (about \$5,100).

In Gabon, 2 dealers in Franceville were sentenced to serve prison terms and to pay fines.

LAGA Director and Coordinator of the EAGLE Network continues to receive treatment in Israel after surviving a crocodile attack in Ethiopia's Omo River in December 2013.

This month saw the arrival of ivory-sniffing dogs in Brazzaville to assist in locating ivory being trafficked

#### **CAMEROON – LAGA**

- In 2 different operations in the West, 3 dealers arrested with 3 leopard skins within 6 days. In the first operation, 2 dealers arrested with 2 skins in Baham and in the second operation, another dealer arrested with a large and fresh skin Bandja.
- In Yaounde – Center, a well-known poacher and dealer in elephant products arrested with 19 full elephant jaws while arriving from Abong Mbang - East. He is known to traffic in elephant tusks and owns a bike he uses to facilitate the trade; he also has a network of suppliers some of whom hunt for him after being supplied with arms and ammunition.
- 3 dealers in ivory and other elephant products sentenced to serve prison terms. In the first case, the Court of First Instance of Yaounde – Administrative Centre convicted one ivory trafficker to 1 year imprisonment and to pay 1.000.000 FCFA (about \$2,000) as fine; and another to 6 months imprisonment and to pay 300.000 FCFA (about \$600) as fine. They were also convicted to pay jointly 25.000.000 FCFA (about \$50,000) as damages. They were arrested in Yaounde for the illegal detention of 24 elephant tusks.
- In another case, the Court of First Instance of Abong-Mbang - East convicted a dealer to 4 months imprisonment and to pay 2.560.000 FCFA (about \$5,100) as fine. He was arrested in Lomie for illegal detention of elephant products.

#### **Action needed:**

- Letter of Congratulations to the Minister of Justice for good court prosecutions and to continue to ensure corrupt free court procedures against arrested illegal wildlife dealers.

### **CONGO – PALF**

- 2 operations conducted leading to the arrest of 2 people illegally detaining mandrills.
- 1 man arrested for interfering in an operation in southern Congo.
- Presentation at the ZSL-hosted London Symposium, preceding the London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade.
- Arrival of ivory-sniffing dogs in Brazzaville to assist in locating ivory being trafficked.

#### Action needed:

- Encouraging other African nations beyond Gabon, Tanzania, Botswana and Chad to destroy their ivory stockpiles
- Encouraging Congo to fulfil its engagements in the London Declaration to fight corruption
- Letter to the Ministry of Justice to pursue a well-known trafficker by name François IKAMA and bring him to court to answer for his criminal acts.

### **GABON – AALF**

- An operation was carried out in Makokou arresting and dismantling a network of poachers and traffickers who later denounced the Chief of Brigade of the Gendarmerie in Mekambo and an agent of Cedoc for their involvement in trafficking activities.
- In the Franceville antenne, 2 traffickers were sentenced to 10 days imprisonment and to pay 500,000 CFCA (about \$1000) each as fines.
- Several meetings were held with administrative and judicial authorities on wildlife law enforcement issues especially in court procedure ; these included the Governor of the Haut-Ogooué province, the Attorney Generals at the Courts of Appeal of Libreville and Franceville, the Magistrates of the Courts of Franceville, Makokou and Oyem, the State Counsels and Chiefs of antennes of PJ, DGR of Oyem, Franceville, Makokou and Tchibanga ; the Directors of Forests, Wildlife and protected areas and the technical Director of the National Agency of National Parcs.

#### Action needed:

- Letter to the Minister of Justice for very light sentences meted out on arrested dealers in Franceville; and the release of about 7 persons in Oyem including the sub-prefect who were involved in wildlife trafficking activities.

### **GUINEA – CONAKRY-GALF**

- More hearings done at the Court of Appeal in the case against Ousmane Diallo in his absence. Investigations are ongoing to track and arrest him following the issuance of an arrest warrant for him. He is a major trafficker who was arrested and confessed to have illegally sold more than 500 chimpanzees and was unprocedurally released by a substitute of the State Prosecutor of the Appeal Court.
- Investigations are ongoing to get more information and traffickers pertaining to a network that involved in the illegal international trafficking of bonobos and chimpanzees between Guinea - Conakry, Democratic Republic of Congo and Armenia.
- The unprocedural release of Ousmane Diallo widely broadcasted over national and international media as well as print and online articles to denounce this act.

#### Action Needed

- Letter to the Minister of Justice on the unprocedural release of arrested wildlife traffickers.

### **TOGO – TALFF**

- This month continued with operations targeting major ivory dealers. Another international dealer of Guinean nationality was arrested for illegally trying to traffic ivory.
- A series of meetings were held with different authorities including the State Counsel in Lome, the Director of « l’Office Central de Répression du Trafic Illicite des Drogues et du Blanchissement (OCRTIDB) »; The Director of Forest Inspectorate in MERF, the National Director of Wildlife and Hunting, Legal Adviser of MERF, TALFF Lawyer etc. on legal follow-up of court cases and wildlife law enforcement procedure.
- Cases continued to be followed up and jail visits done to ensure that arrested dealers are all behind bars.

#### Action needed:

- Letter of Congratulation to the Ministry of Security and “Office” for their collaboration and role in assisting in the arrest of major wildlife dealers.
- Letter of Congratulations to the Ministry of Justice for the good court sentences.

### **C.A.R – RALF**

- Because of security problems in that country, no veritable activity was undertaken. This situation may continue for the next couple of months.

### **CHAD**

- A LAGA Legal Adviser who travelled to Chad in order to meet the authorities pertaining to the replication of LAGA activities in that country and to follow up cases initiated last year that are pending at the level of courts continues to follow-p these activities from Cameroon.

#### Action needed

- Letter of Recommendation to the Minister in charge of wildlife in Chad on immediate start of the replication of LAGA activities in that country.

### **The Central Africa Wildlife Law Enforcement Network**

The Central Africa Wildlife Law Enforcement Network is a collaboration created by the first wildlife law enforcement NGO in Africa and its replications in the region, fighting corruption to get the wildlife law applied.

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