

Central Africa Wildlife Law Enforcement Network

Monthly Regional Wildlife Law Enforcement Briefing – November 2012

Summary

This month was marked by a push for replication in Togo. The LAGA Director and Coordinator of Conservation Justice – Gabon travelled to Togo to start the ground work for a replication project in that country named TALFF (Togo Application des Lois sur la Faune et la Flore). The replication assessment mission in Togo is mainly due to leads on major ivory trafficking with more than a hundred kg of ivory on display, but also other several of our investigations pointing to Togo on shark fins trade, and apes. In September a Togolese was arrested in Hanoi with rhino horn and ivory tusks. Togo has the only deep sea port in West Africa and one of the busiest airports around. It also has the biggest black magic market of Africa.

Arrest operations were carried out in Cameroon with 4 dealers arrested in 3 different operations rescuing 4 primates including a chimp, drill and mangabey; 2 operations arresting 4 ivory traffickers with about 60kg of elephant tusks;

LAGA won another award; the Condé Nast Traveler Environmental Award is to be received by the Director of LAGA. It is the seventh in connection to LAGA's work and it continues to give credence to LAGA's mission of wildlife law enforcement and the fight against corruption.

CAMEROON – LAGA

- 4 dealers arrested in 3 different operations rescuing 4 primates including a chimp, drill and mangabey. 2 of the operations were carried out one after another on the same day in Tonga – West arresting 2 dealers in live primates. One is a retired sub-officer of the Cameroon Gendarmerie arrested with a live drill. The other was arrested with a chimp and a mangabey; he has a network of suppliers in the West and Center Regions.
- LAGA Director makes a presentation during GRASP conference in Paris. Many NGOs and Governments were present and they all showed great appreciation to LAGA especially about enforcement being the number one solution to combat wildlife crime. More NGOs expressed their wish to replicate LAGA model.
- As a result of LAGA's achievements, the LAGA Director receives the Condé Nast Traveller Environmental Award given to one recipient every year. He is the 23rd recipient. The award is given to those who go to extraordinary lengths to protect the environment and better the lives of their communities.

CONGO – PALF

- A military person - a Sergeant in the Congolese army was arrested in Dolisie for organizing the killing of elephant and trafficking the ivory. He is a major dealer with a network of hunters who kill the animals for him, supplying him with ivory.

Action needed:

- Letter of congratulations to the sous-préfet of Moundougou-Sud for his interest in bringing this Sergeant and his gendarme accomplice to Justice.

GABON – AALF

- 2 arrest operations carried out – in Lambarené an ivory dealer and his accomplice were arrested with 5 tusks (19 kg). In Libreville, 2 ivory traffickers were arrested with 4 tusks (40 kg). One of the 2 traffickers is very active in Gabon and in touch with lots of poachers and

buyers (included Chinese, 15 Chinese contacts were in his phone and Investigations are ongoing to locate the Chinese).

- The first audience about Mitzic (Okano) Prefect was done in Oyem. He is already in jail for 6 months for his involvement in poaching and corruption. He also gave a slap against the forestry agent who stopped his car full of bushmeat. This case was diffused in the Gabonese newspapers as an example, which constitutes a great improvement for Governance and fight against corruption.
- Trainings have been organized on the 29th in the Makokou tribunal for forces of law and order (Police, Gendarmerie, and B2), forestry agents and ANPN agents. Courses have been given by AALF jurists, Public Prosecutor and President of the Tribunal on the forestry Code and wildlife, corruption issues, deontology, penal procedures Code.

Action needed:

- Letter of Congratulations to MEF and Judicial authorities for their strong and positive involvement in the different legal procedures, especially against the Mitzic Prefect. It is indeed the first time a high authority is put in jail and judged for this kind of infraction. The Public prosecutor of Oyem made a great work and was very determined to get the prefect prosecuted despite inevitable pressures.

C.A.R – RALF

- Working sessions held with administrative and judicial authorities to improve the working relationship with RALF for more effective wildlife law enforcement activities.

Action Needed

- The Project encouraged to continue to focus on arrests and prosecutions instead of meetings.

CHAD

- LAGA continues to work with administrative and wildlife authorities, other NGOs and individuals to push for information on wildlife dealers and a general strategy to combat poaching and other wildlife crimes in Chad. Another special mission was carried out in Chad by a Jurist sent by LAGA. He met the lawyer hired by LAGA on the follow-up of some cases in Amtiman, met the Director of wildlife and the NGO APROCOFF on the elaboration of strategies aimed at pushing for the start of replication; and some investigation work that confirmed the high level trans-border wildlife trafficking between Chad and other countries notably Nigeria, Sudan, CAR and 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 so as to directly tackle problems there.

GUINEA - CONAKRY

- This month we have realized that the slowdown of activities in Guinea was actually due to underestimated health problems of the GALF Coordinator, Charlotte Houpline. LAGA assisted in a health evacuation of Charlotte as she is on wheel chair, half her body paralyzed. She is in hospital with multiple serious problems that will take months to start showing improvement. A new action plan was revised to rebuild the GALF program started with recruitment of a new interim coordinator planned for December, training of GALF staff in Gabon and Cameroon planned for January, and restart of arrests in February.
- LAGA met with Interpol Conakry in Yaounde on the new action plan.

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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