

# The Last Great Ape Organization - LAGA

## June 2007 Report



### Highlights -

- LAGA on **delegation of Cameroon to CITES** in the rare status of a formal member and not an NGO observer.
- **The Bavin award** for extraordinary achievements in wildlife law enforcement given to LAGA.
- **The Interpol Ecomessage award**, given once a year, was given **to the Government of Cameroon** for its work with LAGA.
- **First cyber crime court case**, a fruit of good **collaboration with the authorities of South Africa**.
- **3 operations** were carried out **against 4 subjects**

### General

The month of June highlighted LAGA's role in the international arena while maintaining very good results without the presence of the LAGA director. LAGA played an active role in the CITES meeting, it was a hectic but important time, reminding us of our international responsibility beyond the grassroots work.

LAGA joined the **delegation of Cameroon to CITES** in the rare status of a formal member and not an NGO observer. It was very active in the CITES meetings and negotiations and instrumental in the negotiated **ban on ivory trade**. LAGA was honoured with two awards concerning its work:

1. **The Bavin award** for extraordinary achievements in wildlife law enforcement was given to LAGA by the Secretary General of the convention. It is given once in three years; LAGA is the first NGO to win this award.
2. **The Interpol Ecomessage award**, given once a year, was given **to the Government of Cameroon** for its work with LAGA on the investigation of the large scale ivory trafficking in May 2006, as the most significant work done through the Interpol on wildlife this year.

This month has been another test to the **LAGA family running LAGA** without the LAGA director. The **excellent results in all fronts** proved the growing capacity and independence of its departments.

Besides a good rate of operations, this month saw **the first cyber crime court case**, a fruit of good **collaboration with the authorities of South Africa**. Studying the worrying growth of Internet wildlife fraud in Cameroon in the last two years we noticed the link between wildlife and other forms of fraud including illegal immigration and adoption scams. This was even discussed with the Prime Minister this year. Interestingly one of the subjects of this first case has been recently deported from Japan in an attempt for illegal immigration and suspected to organize larger scam. As far as we know, this is the first cyber crime court case in Cameroon.

### Investigations

- **11 investigations** were carried out in **5 provinces** including-North West, South West, West, East and Center.
- The investment in international investigations and the collaboration with the authorities in South Africa yielded its first fruit. In the fight against Internet wildlife fraud, the first case against cyber crime in Cameroon was opened.

## Operations

3 operations were carried out **against 4** subjects:

- The first and second in South West and North West provinces involved **two internet scammers engaged in fraud and wildlife trade on the net**. This was the first fruit of good collaboration with the authorities in South Africa. Studying the worrying growth of Internet wildlife fraud in Cameroon in the last two years we noticed the link between wildlife and other forms of fraud including illegal immigration and adoption scams. This was even discussed with the Prime Minister this year. Interestingly one of the subjects of this first case has been recently deported from Japan in an attempt for illegal immigration and suspected to organize larger scam. As far as we know, this is the first cyber crime court case in Cameroon.
- **The third one** concerns 2 leopard skin dealers that were caught red handed in illegal trade of two leopard skins in Dschang West Province.

## Legal

- There are **11 dealers behind bars during this month**: 6 in the South Province; 1 in the Littoral Province; 2 in the Extreme North; 1 in the Central Province and 1 in the West Province.
- **22 cases were followed up** by the legal department this month.
- 16 cases are scheduled and being tried in the court this month.
- 4 cases waiting for the process of appeal to reach the Court of Appeal. 2 in the West, 1 in the Littoral and 1 in the North Province. The court of first instance has not completed the file needed for the transmission to the Attorney General.
- The legal department has sent 4 missions out of the central province this month. 1 in Bafia (Center), 1 in Bafang (West), and 2 in Buea (South West).
- The **first case against cyber crime in Cameroon** was opened in the Court of First Instance Buea, South West province.
- 2 problematic cases: Catherine Fouda and Eyong James already presented to the Secretary General of MINFOF a few month ago are still not resolved despite proposed solutions for the problems pertaining to these specific cases.
- 15 cases on execution process.
- **Prosecutions:**
  - 12/6-The High Court of Bangem convicts Ndoh Abraham at 25 years imprisonment and to pay 350 000 FCFA as court fine.
  - 12/6 -The Court of First Instance of Bafia convicts Bitseki Bruno to three (3) months suspended sentence for three years and to pay 45 000 FCFA as court fine.
  - 19/6- The Court of First Instance of Djoum, declared itself incompetent to know about the complicity of the driver of the truck and therefore released him for lack of facts.
- 1 appeal was registered this month, in the case of Fondzemban dealing with ivory in Djoum area.

## Media front

- **26 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, TV and written press including: 3 written press materials (all in English), 2 radio talk shows (all in French), 5 radio news features (all in English), 15 radio news flashes (11 in English, 4 in French), 1 TV feature in English.
- Guests include: Minister MINFOF, Sub-Director of Wildlife MINFOF, West Provincial Delegate MINFOF, Manager of Forest Stewardship Council, Coordinator of CBCS, CARPE Focal Point, LAGA Director, LAGA Legal Head.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; leopard skin arrest Baham, prosecution of drug and ape dealer Bafia, PASA cards distribution, prosecution of lion skin

dealers Maroua, Murderers of Ecoguard face justice Bangem, DRC and Congo Duplication of wildlife law enforcement, Taiping four, Publication of names and prosecuted dealers in wildlife by MINFOF in Cameroon Tribune, Ivory Action Plan implementation, prosecution military personnel Sangmelima, Yaounde baby chimp dealer arrest, Cameroon sets the pace for wildlife law, prosecution of murderer of Ecoguard Bangem

- 20 pieces in English, 6 in French making a percentage of 76.9% in English and 23.0% in French.
- One volunteer has been confirmed as a LAGA member, while the other is still in the recruitment process.

## **External Relations and Policy**

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- LAGA was honoured with two awards concerning its work:
  1. **The Bavin award** for extraordinary achievements in wildlife law enforcement was given to LAGA by the Secretary General of the convention. It is given once in three years; LAGA is the first NGO to win this award.
  2. **The Interpol Ecomessage award**, given once a year, was given to the **Government of Cameroon** for its work with LAGA on the investigation on the large-scale ivory trafficking in May 2006. As the most significant work done through the Interpol on wildlife this year.
- Meeting with the CARPE Focal Point to elaborate training modules on environmental reporting for media practitioners in Cameroon
- Meeting between LAGA and COMIFAC as follow-up on collaboration and duplication of LAGA in the Congo Basin
- LAGA assisted in the coordination of a workshop on environmental protection and law enforcement between the Forest Governance and the Caucus of Parliamentarians

## **Management**

- This month has been another test to the LAGA family running LAGA without the LAGA director. The excellent results in all fronts proved the growing capacity and independence of its departments.

## **Finance**

### **LAGA Expenditure by budget line for June 07**

<b>Amount CFA</b>	<b>Budget line</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Amount USD</b>
971,740	<b>Investigations</b>	11 inv,5 provinces, South Africa	\$1,983
724,000	<b>Operations</b>	2 Operations, first internet operation	\$1,478
1,026,450	<b>legal</b>	follow up 22cases11locked subjects	\$2,095
1,076,625	<b>Media</b>	26 media pieces	\$2,197
1,250,353	<b>Policy &amp; External Relations</b>	CITES/South Africa/KENYA	\$2,552
1,236,300	<b>Management</b>	Coordination	\$2,523
666,512	<b>Office</b>		\$1,360
6,951,980		TOTAL EXPENDITURE JUNE	\$14,188

### LAGA Expenditure by donor for June 07

AmountCFA	Donor	Amount USD
715,029	Born Free	\$1,459.2
1,646,625	BHC	\$3,360.5
1,734,162	FWS	\$3,539.1
1,024,000	Arcus	\$2,089.8
292,900	Body Shop	\$597.8
387,600	ProWildlife	\$791.0
1,151,664	IFAW	\$2,350.3
0	UNEP	\$0.0
6,951,980	TOTAL	\$14,188

Ofir Drori  
Director  
LAGA - The Last Great Ape Organization

### THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



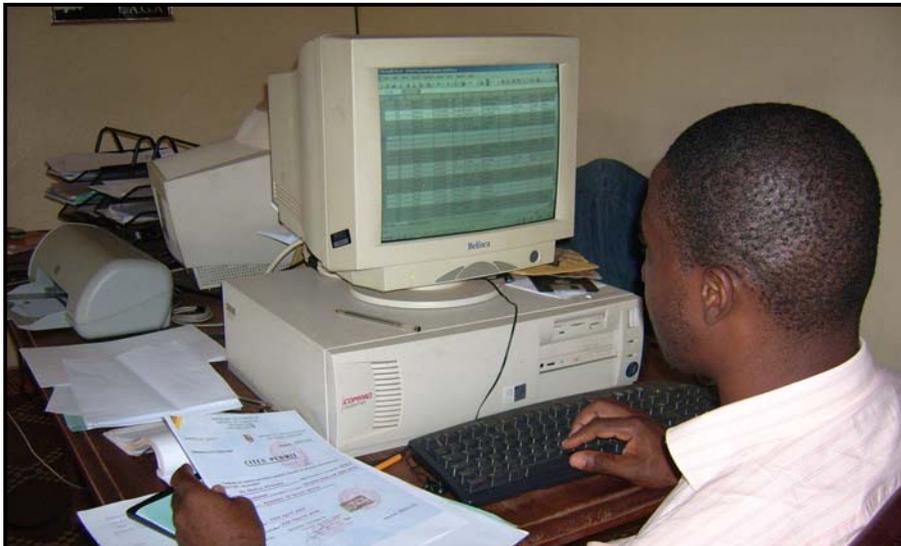
**LAGA Director on behalf of the LAGA Family receiving the Bavin award** for outstanding achievements in wildlife law enforcement in CITES CoP 14 by the Secretary General of the UN Convention



**Leopard skins  
dealers  
arrested in  
Dschang with  
two leopard  
skins**



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arrested in Dschang with  
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**Internet investigation  
carried out shows several  
links which help in  
forming a database for  
follow up**

**Links of this month**

- Leopard skins dealer arrest West Province, Cameroon: Successful LAGA leopard skins operation on a dealer caught with two leopard skins. The two leopard skins were from recently killed animals and the dealer works with another dealer from a judicial body. Trade in live or part of protected animal species like leopards, elephants and apes is illegal according to Cameroon wildlife law with a prison term of up to 3 years.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ts\\_bUwtDvXs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ts_bUwtDvXs)