

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

July 2017 Report



Highlights

- **A trafficker arrested with ivory contraband during an operation carried out in Yoko, Centre Region.**

General

This month was marked by the arrest of **a trafficker during an ivory operation.**

A trafficker arrested on with two ivory tusks. The operation was done by a team that travelled from the regional delegation in Yaounde to the area where officials are known for corruption and complicity with wildlife traffickers. The trafficker narrowly escaped arrest last year following leaks. The area is known for widespread trafficking of wildlife contraband especially ivory and traffickers have been enjoying complicity and impunity in the area.

The Interim Director returned to the country from Ivory Coast where he had continued with the training and recruitment of new staff for the EAGLE's latest replication of the LAGA model.

Investigations

- **15 investigation missions** of varying lengths were carried out in **7 Regions** of Cameroon-Littoral, Adamawa, Centre, South, East, South West and Northwest Regions.
- Good investigations in **Yoko** led to arrest of **a trafficker with 18kg of raw ivory tusks**.
- The Head of the Investigation Department had a meeting with the customs commander in Kyosi ANGONIE to establish good working relations at the border town and exchanged ideas on wildlife trafficking.
- The Assistant Head of Investigations travelled to Douala, Tiko and Buea where he held meetings for the creation of collaborative platforms on investigations.

Investigations Table

Investigation Missions	Regions	No. of Operations	No of traffickers arrested
15	7	1	1

Operation

One operation carried out this month with MINFOF **arresting a trafficker**.

- **5/7/2017 – One trafficker arrested in Yoko, Centre Region with 18kg of raw ivory tusks.** The ivory tusks were cut into four pieces to enable him to efficiently conceal and carry the contraband that was hidden inside a rice sack. The team travelled over 300 km to the town to carry out the operation in the area that is noted for corruption and complicity between wildlife criminals and local authorities. The trafficker, last year, narrowly escaped arrest in the same town following an information leak on his pending arrest and it is believed the leak was orchestrated by local officials involved in the operation. The area that is infested with numerous traffickers is notoriously challenging for wildlife law enforcement operations and the operation team had to come all the way from the regional office to avoid any leaks. An attempt was even made by some local gendarmes to stop the car ferrying the team and the trafficker out of the town.

Operations Table

No of Operations	Regions	No of Traffickers Arrested	Contraband
1	1	1	18kg of raw ivory tusks

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried **11 missions** out of Yaounde-Centre Region: 2 in Ntui (Centre); 1 in Yoko (Centre), 3 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Mbanga (Littoral), 1 in Sangmelima (South), 1 in Ebolowa (South), 1 in Meiganga (Adamaoua) and 1 in Dakar (Senegal).
- There are **23 traffickers behind bars this month**: 4 in East region, 3 in Adamaoua region, 3 in Northwest region, 3 in Centre region, 4 in Southwest region, 3 in West region and 3 in South region.
- **28 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **24 cases** were scheduled and being tried in court this month.
- **1 dealer** was convicted this month.
- **Prosecutions**: We had one judgment this month.
 - **19/07/2017**: The Mbanga Court of First Instance, found the accused **ENGA ANANSE Felix** guilty of illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species. He was sentenced to pay **150.000 FCFA as fine, 36.000 FCFA as court fees and 400.000 FCFA as damages**. He was arrested in Njombe Penja for illegal possession and commercialization of 8 tortoise shells.
- **Appeal**: An appeal has been filed this month in the case of **ENGA ANANSE Felix** in the Littoral Court of Appeal.

Legal Table

No of Missions (Out of Centre Region)	No of Court Judgements	No of Traffickers Given Prison Sentence	Prison term (in months)	No of Traffickers Sanctioned (No prison sentence)	No of Appeals lodged	No of Cases Tried in Courts
11	1	0	0	1	1	28

Media

- **41 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, radio, and internet including; 20 written press material (10 in English and 10 in French), 15 radio news flashes (8 in French and 7 in English), and 6 internet production (4 in French and 2 in English).
- Excerpts and quotes were from the Littoral Regional Delegate of Forestry and Wildlife, and the Regional Delegation Controller No 3
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: The arrest of two in Douala for chimp trafficking, the Yoko arrest of an ivory trafficker and court trial of priest for ivory trafficking..
- 22 media pieces in French and 19 in English making a percentage of 53.7% in French and 46.3% in English.

Media Table

No of Media Pieces	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet
41	0	15	20	6

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director participated as one of the moderators during the closing ceremony of the Mentor PoP fellowship programme that was sponsored by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. LAGA was one of the mentors of the programme that lasted two and a half years.
- The Interim Director returned to Cameroon after a two-week coordination assistance mission to the young Ivory Coast replication project.
- The Deputy Director held a meeting with Juul Jensen Timm, a Phd research student on the illegal trade in pangolins and reptiles
- The Head of the Legal Department and legal advisers of the department held meetings, variously with state counsels of Ntui, Ebolowa, Meiganga and Yaounde – Ekonou to discuss some wildlife cases in courts.

Management

- The process to recruit new legal advisers and investigators continued with interviews and adverts.
- The Head of Legal Department travelled to Senegal to train and test newly recruited legal advisers of the SALF Project.
- Following the visit of the Director last month, a legal adviser was appointed Assistant Head of Investigations in an attempt to address low number of arrests in a boost of the investigations department.

Activism Front:

Documentary Film: Sarafina

Sarafina, a young South African female student is the lead actress in the film that sees Whoopi Goldberg; her teacher inspires a group of freedom seeking and equality hungry students who go on rampage to see these ideals happen. With the Soweto riots in full swing, the heroin Sarafina, questions the logic of stability, as her mother prefers working as a domestic servant for a white man and praises her father's heroics, he died fighting for freedom and equality. The very emotional and teary film is full with violence and this leads us to our discussion of day that focused on the role and differences between violent and non violent action to achieve social and political goals – a view of history. History has examples of violent protests succeeding as well as non violent ones.

All the activism fostering 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>.

Finance

In preparation and would be made available soon as possible on LAGA website.

Link of the month

Ahwihda info, a popular internet site, takes on the story of the arrest of a big time ivory trafficker in Yoko, highlighting the challenges faced with law enforcement in the area and the magnitude of the illegal trade.

http://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-un-trafiquant-d-ivoire-arrete-a-Yoko_a56028.html

This Month in Pictures



Ivory trafficker awaiting commencement of prosecution procedure at wildlife office (left and above). Ivory was cut into pieces and concealed in bag for easy transportation

