

The Last Great Ape Organization - LAGA

October 2007 Report



Highlights

- **5 lions skins traffickers** prosecuted with imprisonment terms of **20 and 10 months**
- **Leopard skin dealer connected to other criminal activities** arrested
- **LAGA director received the Shining World leadership award** for showing leadership in the outstanding efforts to protect wildlife
- **Several violent attempts combated**

General

October month served us as a reminder to the **danger accompanying our work, and the importance of strict measures and procedures to deal with it in a professional manner.**

While in the field, one of our investigators had an encounter with an offender that served jail time due to his past work. The offender, probably tipped off by complicity of law enforcement officials attacked our investigator. The investigator exercised strict procedures prepared for this exact scenario, he used his tear gas the way he was trained to and escaped. Not long after in an arrest operation, the dealer, connected to other crimes, has fiercely fought with the arresting force breaking parts of the vehicle with his fists. Experience and strict procedures prevented escalation and a disaster in the field. These **two events were dealt with in a professional calculated manner.** They also stand to show the **criminal nature of wildlife offenders.** An entire past issue of Wildlife Justice Magazine was dedicated to this subject.

This month also gave good results at the political level. The month was very active in meetings in MINFOF pertaining to structural reforms on wildlife law enforcement, the return of 4 gorillas (Taiping four), ivory trafficking control by government, and fight against corruption.

Only one operation was carried out this month involving one **dealer also known to be a gang leader, and a corrupt government official.** The dealer is involved in illegal leopard skin trade. Excellent prosecution was delivered for **5 lions skins traffickers.** They were imprisoned for terms of **20 and 10 months.**

LAGA director received the Shining World leadership award for showing leadership in the outstanding efforts to protect wildlife.

Investigations

- **26 investigations** were carried out in **7 provinces** including - North West, West, Center, North, Littoral, East and South West.
- Field collaboration initiated in Douala with regards to a hippopotamus sent to Pakistan, and wildlife trade in Mindaourou in the East.
- New investigator tried in the field.

Operations

1 operation was carried out **against 1 dealer after a lot of resistance and problems from the gendarmerie.**

- 30/10 -leopard skin dealer arrested in Melong in the Littoral Province. Dealer involved in leopard skin trade and connected to other crimes. During the operation, the dealer violently resisted arrest, the dealer, connected to other crimes, has fiercely fought with the arresting force breaking parts of the vehicle with his fists. Experience and strict procedures prevented escalation and a disaster in the field. The offender owns a bar and is known to be a gang chief in Melong. His criminal activities are covered by the complicity of the chief

commander of the Gendarmerie in Melong, who tried to sabotage the case and collect bribes of 300,000 CFA.

Legal

- There are 8 **dealers behind bars during this month**: 2 in the Littoral, 2 in the Extreme North, 1 in the Center Province, 2 in the West Province, 1 in the South West Province.
- **34 cases were followed-up** by the legal department this month (active cases in courts).
- 20 cases are scheduled and being tried in court this month.
- LAGA Legal Department had **10 missions out of the Central Province**: 1 in Sangmélima, 2 in Bamenda, 2 in Kumba and Mamfe, 1 in Douala, 1 in Maroua, 1 in Garoua, , and 1 in Melong to follow up operations and cases before the courts.
- **Prosecutions**: 7 prosecutions this month:
- **31/10**: 5 lions skins traffickers prosecuted - The Court of First Instance Maroua **convicts 2 offenders** (Nassourou Hamadou and Oumarou Mana) **to 10 months of imprisonment** and 3 offenders (Moustapha Oumarou, Adama Abdoulaye and Bashirou Sheou) **to 20 months imprisonment**.
- **26/10**: The Court of First Instance of Yaounde – Administrative center convicts Tjade Ngwem Luc and Ngwem Dieudonné to pay an amount 50,000 each as fine and 100,000 each as damages within 6 month after which a sum of 143,000 would be added to each them.
- 1 case is scheduled and being tried in the Appeal Court of Garoua this month (Hassana)
- 4 cases waiting for the process of appeal to reach the court. 2 in the West, 1 in the Littoral and 1 in the South Province (Djoum). The court of First Instance has not completed the file needed for the transmission to the Attorney General.
- Head of Legal Department meets the assistant of the Director of Penal Cases to pass the files of 32 ivory tusks and the case involving Fopa Guy the commandant of brigade to him.

Media front

- **28 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, television and written press including: 5 written press materials (3 in English, 2 in French), 2 radio news feature in English, 20 radio news flashes (10 in English, 10 in French), 1tv news features in English.
- Guests include: MINFOF Minister, West provincial Delegate of MINFOF, Director of LAGA,.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; Court judgement on the leopard skin dealer in Mbouda, dealer in wildlife species sentence-west province, Taiping four, three dealers in the court of First Instance Mamfe, implementation of circular letter on effective wildlife enforcement, Leopard skin dealer in court in Fouban
- 16 media pieces in English, 12 in French making a percentage of 57.1%in English and 42.9 %in French.
- Anna Egbe was confirmed as a full LAGA member, helping to increase professionalism in the department.

External Relations and Policy

- LAGA meeting the **Minister of Forestry and Wildlife**. The meeting centred on issues related to structural reforms on wildlife law enforcement, the return of 4 gorillas, ivory trafficking control by government and fight against corruption.
- Dinner at the British High Commission residents to met with Mr. Euan Wallace – **Head of the Sustainable Development Team of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office** in London. Discussions were held on British High commission projects, LAGA and the fight against corruption
- LAGA participated in the, The **Access Initiative** meeting where access to justice, information and decision making on the basis of the Rio declaration was discussed. After

participation, an advisory panel meeting was held on how LAGA can take a central role in the second phase of the meeting which is the application of its assessment having a big gap between laws and regulations to their applications. .

- LAGA met with **Better World Cameroon** on the use of non-conventional media (mobilization of youths) in sensitisation involving the return of the Taiping four gorillas to Cameroon. There were also discussions on problems of the **weak civil society organizations** and the fight against corruption.
- Meeting with the Director of Wildlife on the collection of samples for DNA testing from 32 tusks recently seized in Yaounde and the Inspector No. 2 of MINFOF on updates on the return of the Taiping four.
- **LAGA director received the Shining World leadership award** for showing leadership in the outstanding efforts to protect wildlife.

Management

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Finance

LAGA Expenditure by budget line for October 07

Amount CFA	Budget line	Details	Amount USD
2,798,700	Investigations	26 inv,7 provinces	\$6,084
375,700	Operations	1 Operation, against 3 dealers	\$817
2,554,650	legal	follow up 34cases 8 locked subjects	\$5,554
1,174,975	Media	28 media pieces	\$2,554
99,500	Policy & External Relations	UK/Nigeria/France	\$216
1,020,300	Management	Coordination	\$2,218
1,328,466	Office		\$2,888
9,352,291	TOTAL EXPENDITURE OCTOBER		\$20,331

LAGA Expenditure by donor for October 07

Amount CFA	Donor	Amount USD
46,500	Born Free	\$101.1
1,174,975	BHC	\$2,554.3
2,512,823	FWS	\$5,462.7
239,700	Arcus	\$521.1
277,200	Body Shop	\$602.6
46,400	ProWildlife	\$100.9
0	UNEP-Congo	\$0.0
2,044,700	UNEP-General	\$4,445.0
1,871,519	Rufford Foundation	\$4,068.5
1,138,474	Shinning World	\$2,474.9
9,352,291	TOTAL	\$20,331

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



**Leopard skin arrest
Melong-Littoral province**

