

The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

June 2010 Report



Highlights

- **5 arrest operations against 6 dealers; 4 of the operations within 1 week.**
- **A highly placed government official implicated in illegal wildlife trade and corruption sent to early retirement.**
- **A dealer sentenced to 1 month prison term in Nkambe – North West Region.**
- **LAGA received high recognition in the fight against corruption this month.**

General

This month was marked by good operations – 5 operations against 6 dealers and 4 of the operations were carried out within 1 week.

A senior public official (SDO) that admitted to the possession of elephant meat last year in one of our cases and avoided prosecution so far **was sent to early retirement.** We have fought for justice to take place, so far, as involvement of local authorities in illegal activities makes much of the corruption in the forest sector. Bear in mind that till not so far ago the prefect boasted of awaiting a promotion to a governor position, and while threatening our legal adviser, his wife shouted – “it is not for this that my husband will lose his job”. So this “early retirement” was definitely unexpected. What made this case more interesting for us is the fact that **conservation NGOs regularly paid the SDO to participate in meetings, using public funds to fill his pockets as he makes speeches about the great work of these NGOs.** We will continue to push for his prosecution as well as use this case to fight against the per diem system that at time can amount to a bribing scheme fuelling corruption.

A major dealer was **arrested with 10 hippo teeth initially presenting them as ivory** in Yaounde – Center Region. He has suppliers of products of protected animal species especially ivory in Douala. During his arrest, **he tried to bribe the arresting officials, offering them 200.000 Frs. (about \$400) for his release.** Irregularities were observed during and after the writing of the complaint report - the officials from the MINFOF Central Regional Delegation and the National Anti-Poaching Unit refused to sign the complaint report thereby highlighting suspicion of corruption. The official from the National Anti-Poaching unit later signed the complaint report after much pressure from LAGA.

In other operations, 2 well known poachers/dealers were arrested for killing a chimp and trading in its meat in Yabassi – Littoral Region after being denounced by the villagers themselves because of the high level of poaching that was being carried out by the dealers; this operation was carried out with MINFOF Delegation - Yabassi. **An ivory dealer with connections to other main dealers in Douala - Littoral Region was arrested in Fouban – West Region with 4 worked tusks and 1 civet skin.** A **repeated offender was arrested with a freshly killed gorilla in Lomie – East Region.** The gorilla was killed in the Dja reserve where he mostly does poaching.

A principal Internet wildlife dealer engaged in fraud and illegal wildlife trade over the Internet was arrested in Bamenda – North West Region. He was arrested for falsifying government documents and CITES Permits that he used to lure a **victim in Canada to pay for a chimp** which he did not have. His connection to other forms of fraud including illegal immigration and adoption scams is still being investigated. He had already received \$150 from another victim in USA and had started with other victims in Ukraine and Spain.

LAGA received high recognition in the fight against corruption this month, LAGA Director was invited to present LAGA's work in the US organized African anti-corruption seminar in Douala that included judiciary and anti corruption commissions from several countries. **As the only NGO in the seminar LAGA's experience has been examined in fighting corruption in the judiciary** and calling upon national anti-corruption bodies in Africa to develop partnerships with civil society and mechanisms to maintain their institutions free of corruption. LAGA's work has been lauded.

Investigations

- **21 investigation missions** of varying lengths were carried out in **5 Regions** of Cameroon- North West, South, West, Littoral and Center.
- Investigations led to arrest operations in Yaounde, Foumban and Bamenda.
- Investigations are still ongoing pertaining to a target who is illegally keeping a chimp in the Western Region of Cameroon.
- Internet Investigations are still ongoing concerning an accomplice of an Internet Wildlife trafficker who was arrested in Bamenda – North West Region. He is engaged in the falsification of government documents and CITES Permit.
- Field tests continued with more candidates as the department is experiencing a shortage in effective investigators. The results are quite encouraging.

Operations

5 operations were carried out this month against **6 subjects**.

- **05/06/10** – A major dealer was **arrested with 10 hippo teeth initially presenting them as ivory** in Yaounde – Center Region. He has suppliers of products of protected animal species especially ivory in Douala. During his arrest, **he tried to bribe the arresting officials, offering them 200.000 Frs. (about \$400) for his release**. Irregularities were observed during and after the writing of the complaint report - the MINFOF officials from the MINFOF Central Regional Delegation and the National Anti-Poaching Unit refused to sign the complaint report thereby highlighting suspicion of corruption. The official from the National Anti-Poaching unit later signed the complaint report after much pressure from LAGA.
- **06/06/10 - 2 well known poachers/dealers were arrested for killing a chimp and trading in its meat** in Yabassi – Littoral Region after being denounced by the villagers themselves because of the high level of poaching that was being carried out by the dealers. The chimp was killed in the Ebo Reserve. They have a ready market in the main cities of Edea and Douala in the Littoral Region. This operation was carried out with MINFOF Delegation - Yabassi.
- **07/06/10 - An ivory dealer with connections to other main dealers in Douala – Littoral Region was arrested in Foumban** – West Region. He has been in the trade for a long time and claims to have suppliers from the Northern part of Cameroon and sells in Douala where he has accomplices. **He was arrested with 4 worked tusks and 1 civet skin**.
- **11/06/10 - A principal Internet wildlife dealer engaged in fraud and illegal wildlife trade over the Internet was arrested in Bamenda – North West Region**. He was arrested for falsifying government documents and CITES Permits that he used to lure a **victim in Canada to pay for a chimp** which he did not have. His connection to other forms of fraud including illegal immigration and adoption scams is still being investigated. He had already received \$150 from another victim in USA and had started with other victims in Ukraine and Spain.
- **24/06/10 - A repeated offender was arrested with a freshly killed gorilla in Lomie** – East Region. The gorilla was killed in the Dja reserve where he mostly does poaching. He then sells the meat to main dealers in Lomie and Abong Mbang who in turn sell in the main city of Yaounde - Center.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **10 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 3 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Kribi (South), 2 in Abong-Mbang (East), 1 in Bafoussam (West), 1 in Dschang (West) and 2 in Bamenda (North West).
- There are **10 dealers behind bars during this month**: 2 in the East Region, 4 in the South West Region, 2 in the littoral Region, 1 in West region and 2 in the North West Region.
- **23 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **16 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 1 dealer was sentenced this month.
 - **28/6/10**- The Court of First Instance of Nkambe – North West sentenced Sulle Taku to **1 month** imprisonment and to pay **\$240** as fines and damages. He will be retained in jail for 9 months in default of payment. He was arrested in Nkambe for illegal detention and trade of 50 python skins.

Media front

- **43 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to the TV, radio and written press including: 1 TV news feature in English, 8 written press materials (6 in English and 2 in French), 30 radio news flashes (19 in English, 11 in French), 1 radio news feature and 3 radio talk shows all in English.
- Guests include: MINFOF Minister, Director of LAGA, Fon of Bali and Head of Legal Department – LAGA.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; court hearing of dealer arrested for killing a chimp in Yabassi, court hearing of internet wildlife dealer in Bamenda, role traditional rulers in wildlife law enforcement, hippo teeth dealer arrest in Yaounde, and Fouban elephant tusk dealer arrest.
- 30 media pieces in English, 13 in French making a percentage of 53.8% in English and 46.2% in French.

External Relations and Policy

- Director of LAGA carried out anti-corruption training for a project intending to study corruption in the transport sector. The training included – corruption and the Cameroonian legislation, principles of investigation, classification of data.
- LAGA received high recognition in the fight against corruption this month, LAGA Director was invited to present LAGA's work in the US organized African anti-corruption seminar in Douala that included judiciary and anti corruption commissions from several countries. As the only NGO in the seminar LAGA's experience has been examined in fighting corruption in the judiciary and calling upon national anti-corruption bodies in Africa to develop partnerships with civil society and mechanisms to maintain their institutions free of corruption. LAGA's work has been lauded.
- CARPE held a meeting with LAGA Director and discussed on governance and corruption in the forest sector, replication of LAGA model in the sub region and risk of corruption in Carbon Credit projects.
- LAGA Director met with the World Bank, discussions centered on the issue of the SDO of Boumba and Ngoko, APT-AID Principles for increasing accountability and transparency in projects and fighting corruption in the judiciary.
- LAGA Director and Arcus Foundation held a meeting and discussed on the following: investment in wildlife projects in Cameroon, monitoring and the evaluation of projects and the APT-AID principles.

- Meeting held between US Embassy and LAGA Director to talk on the case of the SDO of Boumba and Ngoko, APT –AID Principles for increasing accountability and transparency in projects, complicity of officials in the airport of Douala and to organise a regional seminar against corruption.
- Meeting held between LAGA Director and British High Commission top on the agenda: the case of the SDO of Boumba and Ngoko, APT –AID Principles for increasing accountability and transparency in projects, complicity of officials in the airport of Douala and to organise a regional seminar against corruption.
- Meeting between the Charge d’Etude No 1 at the General Delegation of National Security and LAGA Head of Media and External Relations on the MoU of LAGA and the General Delegation of National Security.

Management

- LAGA still experienced severe cash flow problems this month that slowed down the work and results of the LAGA’s departments. Despite this problem, successful operations were carried out against 6 main dealers, thereby showing the commitment of LAGA staff to function with limited financial resources

Activism Front

Education activities were carried out on the following: the electoral process in Cameroon - problems and irregularities; is there an Anglophone problem in Cameroon?

- The electoral process in Cameroon: Problems and Irregularities by Tah Eric of the Media and External Relation Department. This presentation describes the electoral process in Cameroon from the moment of the registration of voters in electoral registers to the proclamation and contestation of results. Rather being a direct descriptive presentation, it takes the audience through a problem approach, highlighting the problems and irregularities at each stage of the process. It moves from the late start of the registration process to irregular positioning of polling stations and ballot padding to suspicious late proclamation of results.
- Is there an Anglophone problem in Cameroon? By Anna Egbe of the Department of Media and External Relation. This presentation through historical events and facts holds there is an Anglophone problem in Cameroon which is based on gaps between the constitution and the government. This problem begins from when the constitution of 1961 was revised leading to the constitution of 1972 creating Cameroon a Unitary State and later the Republic of Cameroon when President Biya took over late President Ahidjo to present date (constitution 2008).

Finance

LAGA Expenditure by budget line for June 2010

| Amount CFA | Budget line | Details | Amount USD |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1,411,715 | investigations | 21 inv, 5 Regions | \$2,614 |
| 664,300 | Operations | 5 Operation against 6 subjects | \$1,230 |
| 3,010,420 | legal | follow up 23 cases 10 locked subjects | \$5,575 |
| 1,469,810 | Media | 43 media pieces | \$2,722 |
| 151,500 | Policy & External Relations | Congo/CAR/UK/Holland | \$281 |
| 987,200 | Management | Coordination | \$1,828 |
| 1,131,680 | Office | | \$2,096 |
| 8,826,625 | TOTAL EXPENDITURE JUNE | | \$16,346 |

LAGA Expenditure by donor for June 2010

| AmountCFA | Donor | Amount USD |
|-----------|---------------------|------------|
| 4,109,080 | FWS | \$7,609.4 |
| 1,527,046 | ProWildlife | \$2,827.9 |
| 1,356,810 | BornFree Foundation | \$2,512.6 |
| 117,300 | EIA | \$217.2 |
| 78,500 | World Parrot Trust | \$145.4 |
| 1,496,230 | Rufford Foundation | \$9.3 |
| 141,750 | Safari Zoo | \$5.6 |
| 8,826,716 | TOTAL | \$16,345.8 |

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



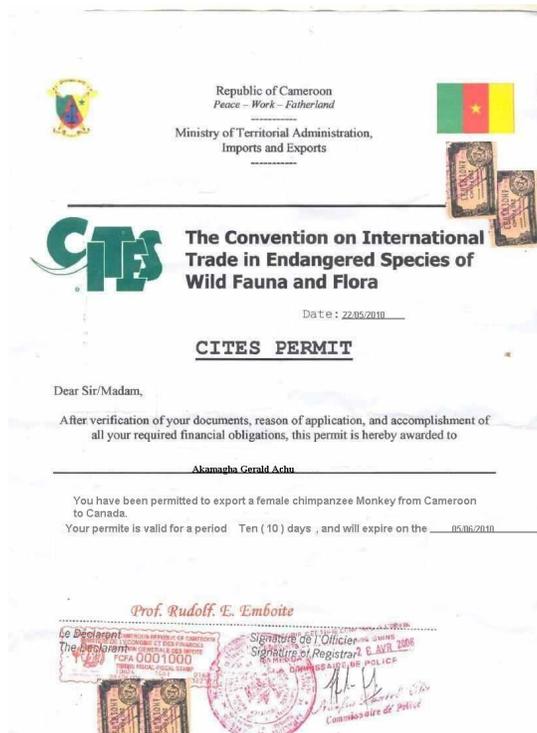
An ivory dealer with connections to other main dealers in Douala - Littoral Region arrested in Fouban – West Region with 4 worked tusks and 1 civet skin.



A major dealer was arrested with 10 hippo teeth initially presenting them as ivory in Yaounde – Center Region. During his arrest, he tried to bribe the arresting officials, offering them 200.000 Frs. (about \$400) for his release.



Chimp parts seized during the operation in Yabassi – Littoral Region where 2 main dealer/poachers were arrested after being denounced by the villages for the killing of chimps in the Ebo Forest Reserve.



A falsified CITES Permit used by an Internet wildlife dealer engaged in fraud and illegal wildlife trade over the Internet arrested in Bamenda – North West. He used the permit to lure a victim in Canada to pay for a chimp which he did not have. He belongs to a network and has other victims in USA, Ukraine and Spain following his statement.



A repeated and notorious offender arrested with a freshly killed gorilla in Lomie – East Region with other protected wildlife species such as the crocodile. The gorilla was killed in the Dja reserve where he mostly does poaching. He then supplies the meat to major dealers the main city of Yaounde – Center. Below are - the full gorilla parts, a crocodile and a smoked monkey he was caught with.



Links of this month

LAGA's 3 successful operations in one week - Cameroon Radio Television (CRTV) Broadcast - Hello talk show Program. The 1994 wildlife law in Cameroon punishes anyone found with a live or dead protected species. As a result, 3 operations in the West, Center and Littoral Regions of Cameroon leading to the arrest of 4 main dealers. A dealer was arrested with 4 worked elephant tusks in Fouban –West; another arrested with 10 hippo teeth in Yaounde – Center; and 2 others arrested in Yabassi – Littoral for killing and trading in chimp parts.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLOpuWBZmYM>