

The Last Great Ape Organization - LAGA May 2007 Report



Highlights -

- **Missions in DRC and Congo Brazzaville.**
- Participation in the **CITES African Elephant Dialogue** meeting.
- **3 good operations on apes and leopard skins**
- **Court case initiated against Gendarme - town commandant.**

General

The month of May signalled the beginning of LAGA's replication phase and highlighted LAGA's importance in the international arena.

LAGA carried a **mission in the two Congos** in order to assess the potential in developing Wildlife Law Enforcement beyond Cameroon. LAGA used recommendations of replication of the model to the countries by different bodies including COMIFAC and CARPE.

The missions were very successful and included high level meetings with a wide range of stakeholders including Ministry in charge of wildlife, judiciary, police, lawyers, NGOs, media, investigators ect. Two detailed reports describing the meetings are available.

This new phase of LAGA's work will involve two aspects:

1. Igniting law enforcement through precedence
2. Creating a structure to sustain effective law enforcement

LAGA second international mission of this month was the beginning of the CITES meeting. LAGA took an active role as a member of the delegation of Cameroon in the **CITES African Elephant Dialogue** meeting. The dialogue was a key meeting in the negotiation over the future of the protection of elephants. The CITES meetings will continue next month.

The month achievements also include **good results in operations** as 3 good operations concerning apes and leopard skins were achieved. An important **victory in the fight against corruption** has been achieved by good work of all of LAGA's departments. Where a commandant of a town, collaborating with a dealer in the trade of protected species, facilitated illegal deals under immunity. The senior officer tried to obstruct justice and ended up being charged in a court case.

May month represented a management challenge as the director was away in missions for most of the time. It gave an opportunity for the LAGA family to prove their initiative and lack of dependency. The fact that the months ended with good results prove that the **LAGA family is able to run LAGA successfully** when the director is away.

Investigations

- **17 investigations** were carried out in **5 provinces** including-North West, Littoral, South West, West, and Center.
- Investigations carried in **DRC and Congo**. Contacts are left behind to continue locating important targets.
- **Bonobo investigation** advancing after meeting with Interpol NCB in Kinshasa.

Operations

3 Operations were carried out **against 5** subjects:

- In Baham in the west province, a known dealer in protected species has been enjoying immunity collaborating with the **brigade commander of the Baham town**. When the

dealer was arrested trying to sell a leopard skin, the commandant arrived confident he can stop the process. The commandant of Baham, a senior officer of judiciary police called his superiors to put pressure on the delegate to release him and the accomplice. These attempts of obstructing justice were affecting the state attorney to decide to relax the accused. LAGA's intervention helped the Attorney General to overrule the first decision and instruct the court case to be opened.

- Another operation in Douala involved a **hotel owner trying to sell a baby drill**, this operation was not resulting in a successful arrest as the provincial delegate released the subject. LAGA needs to continue following the case after the problem was raised in front of the Minister.
- A third operation was carried against an **ape trafficker with a baby chimpanzee**. Nanga Eboko has been an area of concern for trade in great apes for a while now. Official figures were holding apes in their houses as if they are above the law while trade through the town intensified. IDA –Africa was leading an effort last year of pressure and diplomacy to try to change things there. Recent missions showed that little has changed. This operation was against one of the regular dealers observed to trade apes between Nanga Eboko and Yaounde.
- Meeting with the special police unit - GDRE on collaborating in LAGA operations and possible signing of a Memorandum of Understanding.

Legal

- There are **10 dealers behind** bars during this month: 6 in the South province; 1 in the Littoral; 2 in the extreme north, and 1 in the central province.
- 17 cases were followed by LAGA
- 13 cases are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- 4 cases waiting for the process of appeal to reach the court of appeal. 1 in the west, 1 in the littoral and 2 in the north province. The court of first instance has not complete the file needed for the transmission to the attorney general
- LAGA legal department was sending **9 missions** out of the Central Province during this month.
- An important **victory in the fight against corruption** in the case of Baham. . The commandant of brigade, a senior officer of judiciary police called his superiors to put pressure on the delegate to release him and the accomplice. These attempts of obstructing justice were affecting the state attorney to decide to relax the accused. LAGA's intervention helped the Attorney General to over-rule the first decision and instruct the court case to be opened against the commandant and the accomplice.

Media front

- **36 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, TV and written press including: 6 written press materials (3 in English, 3 in French), 3 radio talk shows (2 in French, 1 in English), 6 radio news features (4 in English, 2 in French), radio news flashes (8 in English, 5 in French), 2 TV news features (all in English).
- Guest include: Minister MINFOF, SG MINFOF, North West Provincial Delegate MINFOF, Sub Director of Protected Areas, West Provincial Delegate MINFOF, Coordinator of Cameroon Mangrove Conservation Society, CARPE Focal Point, Banyang-Mbo Ecoguards.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; arrest of a dealer in baby chimp, leopard skins dealers arrest North West Province, Taiping 4, Nigerian dealer in parrots, murderer of eco-guard in prison, igniting wildlife law enforcement in DRC Congo and Congo Brazzaville, Female dealer in protected species arrested in North West, arrest of Maroua dealers in lions, Bafia drug and ape dealer, ivory dealer prosecution in Djoum, dealers in ivory, chimp, leopard and lion skins prosecuted and fined in Cameroon,

distribution of PASA cards on apes to customs in Ambam, Djoum ivory seizure, prosecution of ivory dealer douala, prosecution of military personnel, Wildlife dealer faces justice in Mezam.

- 19 pieces in English, 17 in French making a percentage of 52.8% in English and 47.2% in French.
- Two volunteers have been accepted for the next phase in the recruitment process.

External Relations and Policy

- Meeting with Minister MINFOF on wildlife law enforcement in the different provinces and the need for more collaboration of the provincial delegates.
- Meeting between LAGA and Living Earth field staff to develop new tactics and strategy for fighting ivory trafficking through Djoum near the Dja Wildlife Reserve.
- Meeting between LAGA Director Ofir and European Union Environment department on fighting corruption in the sector.

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This new phase of LAGA's work will involve two aspects:

1. Igniting law enforcement through precedence
2. Creating a structure to sustain effective law enforcement

LAGA does not wish to open branches in each country but rather collaborate with existing structures, strengthen and support them to play a similar role that LAGA is undertaking in Cameroon.

Management

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Finance

LAGA Expenditure for May 07

Amount CFA	Budget line	Details	Amount USD
1,707,125	Investigations	18 inv,5 provinces +DRC+Congo	\$3,520
636,500	Operations	3 Operations	\$1,312
1,633,075	legal	follow up 21cases10 locked subjects	\$3,367
1,526,575	Media	34 media pieces	\$3,148
2,749,231	Policy/External	CITES/ 2 CONGOs/T4/KENYA	\$5,669
1,592,700	Management	Coordination	\$3,284
747,916	Office		\$1,542
10,593,122	TOTAL EXPENDITURE MAY		\$21,841

LAGA Expenditure by donor for May 07

Amount CFA	Donor	Amount USD
1,080,150	Born Free	\$2,227.1
2,016,575	BHC	\$4,157.9
2,741,741	FWS	\$5,653.1
946,500	Arcus	\$1,951.5
513,350	Body Shop	\$1,058.5
696,375	ProWildlife	\$1,435.8
1,124,025	IFAW	\$2,317.6
1,474,406	UNEP	\$3,040.0
10,593,122	TOTAL	\$21,841

Ofir Drori
Director
The Last Great Ape Organization

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



Court case initiated against Gendarme - town commandant in a victory to the fight against corruption



Court case initiated against Gendarme

When the dealer was arrested trying to sell a leopard skin, the commandant arrived confident he can stop the process. The commandant of Baham, a senior officer of judiciary police called his superiors to put pressure on the delegate to release him and the accomplice. These attempts of obstructing justice were affecting the state attorney to decide to relax the accused. LAGA's intervention helped the Attorney General to overrule the first decision and instruct the court case to be opened.



Operation was carried against an ape trafficker with a baby chimpanzee.