

# The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

## December 2012 Report



### Highlights

- **4 dealers arrested in 4 different operations**
- **Corruption observed in 2 cases after arrest operations**
- **7 dealers were sentenced this month including 3 Ghanaians**
- **The year ended on target in all Departments**

### General

This month was marked by 4 operations arresting 4 dealers including 1 woman and the sentencing of 7 major dealers including 3 Ghanaians.

**A female dealer arrested with 4 gorilla limbs** - 2 feet and 2 hands in Yaounde while illegally trying to trade in them. Much traffic of influence was observed while she was being kept at the police station with a military man and a relative purported to be a lawyer trying to negotiate a bribe for her release. Certainly as a result of this, the female dealer was not taken to the State Counsel because the **MINFOF officials refused to sign the remand warrant and to convey the case to court.**

**In other operations, a major dealer, also a well-known business man with good connections with the authorities in Djoum arrested with 5 elephant tails.** The tails were hidden in an inner room in his shop which he uses as cover for his trade in protected wildlife products. He initially resisted arrest, was violent and attacked one of the arresting officers. **A civil servant based in Meyomessala arrested with 2 elephant tusks that he hid in his car.** He also resisted arrest and tried to use his contacts with the Gendarmerie Brigade of Meyomessala to stop the normal legal procedure. This was immediately combated by the LAGA team in the field and he was later conveyed to Sangmelima to be locked up. Another major dealer arrested with a gorilla skin while trying to trade in it. **Blatant corruption is observed in this case because the dealer was allowed to leave the police station in Bafut and was reported that he escaped.** An arrest warrant has been issued for his arrest again and investigations are on-going to locate him.

The Court of First Instance of Douala - Bonanjo sentenced 3 Ghanaians to **1 year of prison term each** and to pay a sum of **4.190.000 FCFA as damages.** They were arrested in Douala for illegal exportation of 300 grey parrots.

The Court of First Instance of Abong-Mbang sentenced 2 chimp dealers **4 months of prison each** and to pay a sum of **450.000 FCFA as damages.** Still in Abong Mbang 2 ivory dealers were sentenced, 1 receiving 1 year imprisonment and the other sentenced to 8 months imprisonment suspended for 3 years, and to pay jointly a sum of **2.350.000 FCFA damages.**

**The year ended with very good results - all the departments meeting up with the set targets.**

### Investigations

- **25 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **7 Regions** of Cameroon- South West, West, South, East, Littoral, North West and Center.
- Good investigations identified 4 major dealers in live primates leading to 4 arrest operations. This came as a result of more operations focused investigations towards the end of the year.
- The distribution of flyers in both English and French continued. Strategies have been put in place to track distribution and for it to be more effective. This is part of a new strategy to get credible information and to make the Investigation missions more performant.

- LAGA Investigations Department assisted PALF-Congo and RALF-CAR on Investigations and Operation Procedures.

## Operations

**4 operations** were carried out this month against **4 subjects**.

- **02/12/12 – A female dealer arrested with 4 gorilla limbs** - 2 feet and 2 hands in Yaounde while illegally trying to trade in them. The gorilla parts were brought from the Eastern Region of Cameroon. Much traffic of influence was observed while she was being kept at the police station with a military man and a relative purported to be a lawyer trying to negotiate for her release. Certainly because of this, the female dealer was not taken to the State Counsel because the **MINFOF officials refused to sign the remand warrant and to convey the case to court.**
- **07/12/12 - A major dealer, also a well-known business man with good connections with the authorities in Djoum arrested with 5 elephant tails.** The tails were hidden in an inner room in his shop which he uses as cover for his trade in protected wildlife products. He initially resisted arrest, was violent and attacked one of the arresting officers.
- **15/12/12 - A civil servant based in Meyomessala arrested with 2 elephant tusks that he hid in his car.** He is known to have been doing illegal ivory trade for a long time and used his good connections with high government authorities to continue in the trade with impunity. He also resisted arrest and tried to use his friendship with the Gendarmerie Brigade of Meyomessala to stop the normal legal procedure. This was immediately combated by the LAGA team in the field and he was later conveyed to Sangmelima to be locked up.
- **31/12/12 - Another major dealer arrested with a gorilla skin** while trying to trade in it. **Blatant corruption is observed in this case because the dealer was allowed to leave the police station in Bafut and was reported that he escaped.** Investigations are underway to arrest him again.

## Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **13 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 1 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Bertoua (East), 1 in Abong-Mbang (East), 2 in Djoum (South), 1 in Ebolowa (South), 2 in Meyomessala (South), 1 in Mamfe (South West), 1 in Limbe (South West), 1 in Dschang (West) and 2 in Bangangte (West).
- There are **37 dealers behind bars during this month:** 15 in the East Region, 1 in the South West Region, 1 in Centre region, 1 in North West region, 13 in South Region and 6 in West Region.
- **27 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **23 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions:** 7 dealers were sentenced this month.
  - 03/12/2012: The Court of First Instance of Douala - Bonanjo sentenced AMIAH Awudu, ONENE Gynah Charles and SACKY Eugene **1 year of prison** and to pay a sum of **4.190.000 FCFA as damages.** They were arrested in Douala for illegal exportation of 300 grey parrots.
  - 18/12/2012: The Court of First Instance of Abong-Mbang sentenced SANANG Sanang Achille and ENDOUMZOU François to **4 months of prison each** and to pay a sum of **450.000 FCFA as damages.** They were arrested in Mindourou for illegal killing of 1 chimpanzee.
  - 18/12/2012: The Court of First Instance of Abong-Mbang sentenced ALI Ahmed **1 year imprisonment** and DAIROU **8 months imprisonment suspended sentence**

**during 3 years.** They were also sentenced to pay jointly a sum of **2.350.000 FCFA damages.** They were arrested in Lomie for illegal detention of 8 ivory tusks.

### **Media front**

- **7 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, and written press including: 1 written press material in English, 3 radio talk shows (2 in English and 1 in French), and 3 news flashes (1 in English and 2 in French).
- Guests include: MINFOF North West regional delegate, veterinary doctor at the Limbe wildlife centre, Maitre Njimi – Minfof lawyer and former US communication officer.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; Tonga ape arrest of a retired gendarme and Djoum arrest of 5 tail elephant dealer.
- 4 media pieces in English, 3 in French making a percentage of 57.1% in English and 42.9% in French.

### **External Relations and Policy**

- Meeting with two officials in the Department of Wildlife - MINFOF concerning regional arrest operations.
- Meeting with GIZ environment adviser on the fight against corruption, donors' policies, wildlife crime and combating poachers in the north of Cameroon and across the border.

### **Management**

- LAGA family members went for a 3 weeks holiday that started on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2012 with a special lunch and Christmas bonuses for good produced results.

### **Activism Front**

All the education 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>. This month's activism front was on:

### **Replication**

During this month, LAGA worked with other replication projects in planning investigations, operation procedures; advice on following up court cases and the production of media pieces.

LAGA Deputy Director traveled to Chad to continue to push for the implementation of a wildlife law enforcement replication project in that country. In this framework, some meetings were held with officials of the US embassy in Chad as well as with local conservation NGOs (APROCOFF and APN), and some top governmental officials including the Technical Adviser of the Prime Minister in charge of environmental issues and the Deputy Director of wildlife.

### **Finance**

**In preparation, will be made available shortly.**

## THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



**4 gorilla limbs that a female dealer was illegally trying to trade in. She was arrested in Yaounde – Center and because of much traffic of influence and suspicion of corruption she was not taken to the State Counsel because the MINFOF officials refused to sign the remand warrant and to convey the case to court.**



**2 elephant tusks caught with a dealer who is also a civil servant based in Meyomessala - South that he hid in his car. He resisted arrest and tried to use his friendship with the Gendarmerie Brigade of Meyomessala to stop the normal legal procedure. This was immediately combated by the LAGA team in the field and he was later conveyed to Sangmelima to be locked up.**

## Links of this month

- **LAGA Director receives the Condé Nast Traveller Environmental Award** – This award was received in November 2012 and is given each year to one environmental activist from anywhere around the world. Conde Nast Traveller has been honouring environmental visionaries around the world who found innovative solutions to seemingly intractable problems. This prestigious award comes with a \$20,000 prize and exposure in the Conde Nast Traveller Magazine. It is the seventh in connection to LAGA's work.

<http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Commendations/CondeNastTravelerEnvironmentAward/tabid/227/Default.aspx>