

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

April 2017 Report



Highlights

- **5 traffickers arrested during 3 operations.**
- **A Reverend Father arrested in Sangmelima, South Region with ivory tusks, leopard skins and teeth from the freshly killed animal.**
- **3 major traffickers arrested in Meiganga in the Adamoua Region with lion, leopard and crocodile skins.**
- **A pangolin scales trafficker arrested with 94 kg of pangolin scales in Messamena in the East Region.**

General

This month was marked by the arrest of **5 traffickers, 3 for trafficking in lion, leopard and crocodile skins, one for ivory trafficking and one for pangolin scales trafficking during 3 operations.**

A Christian priest was arrested for ivory trafficking in Sangmelima in the South Region. Also found in his possession were leopard skin and teeth. The trafficker has been in the business for a long time and had built a network of poachers who he supplied hunting accessories including bullets and was in return supplied with ivory which he sold in some major towns in the country. He used his car to personally transport the wildlife contraband, taking advantage of his religious status while sailing through control points unchecked.

3 traffickers were arrested during an operations carried out in Meiganga with lion and leopard skins. One of the traffickers transported the wildlife contraband hidden inside a bag containing grains of maize, all the way from Garoua in the North Region to Meiganga in the Adamoua Region. This is a network specialised in skins trafficking with each one playing different roles which include a supply man and a sales man in the chain.

A trafficker arrested in Messamena with 94 kg of pangolin scales. He used a front business of a store keeper but would transport pangolin scales to the big towns and after conducting business, he would buy provisions for his store.

Investigations

- **22 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **8 Regions** of Cameroon - Littoral, East, West, Centre, Northwest, Southwest, Adamawa and South Regions.
- Good investigations in Meiganga led to the arrest of 3 traffickers with a lion skin, 2 leopard skins and 2 crocodile skins.
- Good investigations in Messamena led to the arrest of one trafficker in possession of 94 kg pangolin scales.
- Excellent investigations in Sangmelima led to the arrest of a trafficker in possession of 2 elephant tusks, 1 leopard skin and 4 teeth.

Investigations Table

Investigation Missions	Regions	No. of Operations	No of traffickers arrested
22	8	3	5

Operation

3 operations carried out this month with MINFOF **arresting 5 traffickers**.

- **13/04/2017 – 3 traffickers arrested in Meiganga, Adamoua Region with a lion skin, 2 leopard skins and 2 crocodile skins.** Using a car, one of the traffickers transported the contraband hidden inside bags containing maize, for hundreds of kilometres and joined an accomplice shortly before their arrest. He equally had supporting documents showing he was travelling with maize. The traffickers equally supply wildlife contraband to clients based in Yaounde and Douala. One of them is equally suspected of gold trafficking. The lion is facing serious threats with just a few hundred remaining in the wild in the Northern part of the country.
- **14/04/2017 - A trafficker arrested Massamenn in the East Region with 94 kg of pangolin scales.** The trafficker who owns a store is suspected to have been regularly supplying pangolin scales to clients in Yaounde and Douala. He would transport and sell bags of scales and on returning to his base he would buy provisions and supplies for his store.
- **20/04/2017 - A Catholic priest arrested in Sangmelima in the South Region with 2 ivory tusks, a skin and 4 teeth from a recently killed leopard.** The clergyman has been trafficking ivory for over 5 years, working with a network of poachers which he ran, providing money and supplies of essentials for poaching such as bullets and clothing while equally giving food to the families of the poachers. He supplied the towns of Yaounde, Douala and Sangmelima with raw ivory, transporting the ivory without raising suspicion at checkpoints. hiding behind the impression of high morality and was never bothered or his

car searched. The arrest Highlights that religious positions just as any other influential position can be used as a cover for the illegal wildlife trade.

Operations Table

No of Operations	Regions	No of Traffickers Arrested	Contraband
3	3	5	2 leopard skins 2 crocodile skins 1 lion skin 94 kg pangolin scales 2 elephant tusks 1 leopard skin 4 leopard teeth

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried **10 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 2 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Mbanga (Littoral), 1 in Ebolowa (South), 1 in Sangmelima (South), 1 in Dschang (West), 1 in Bertoua (East) and 1 in Batouri (East), 2 in Meiganga (Adamaoua).
- There are **24 traffickers behind bars this month**: 5 in East Region, 3 in Adamaoua Region, 3 in Northwest Region, 4 in Southwest Region, 3 in West Region, 3 in South Region and 3 in Littoral Region.
- **31 cases** were followed up by the legal department this month.
- **29 cases** were scheduled and being tried in court this month.
- **1 trafficker** was convicted this month.
- **Prosecutions**: We had 2 judgments this month.
- **11/04/2017**: The East Appeal Court found the accused **NGONGHO Francis** guilty of illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species. He was sentenced to **1 year imprisonment suspended for 3 years; 80,300 FCFA as court cost, 100,000 F CFA as fines and 40,762,500 F CFA as civil damages**. He was arrested in Batouri for the illegal possession and commercialization of over 100 kg of pangolin scales, 7 chimp skulls, 5 gorilla skulls 3 zebra skins, 1 leopard skin and carved ivory pieces.

- **13/04/2017:** The Batouri Court of First Instance – East, declared the accused **NJEUDJI Jule, TIKAYA Franc and TOUE Moussa Liboire not guilty for all the charges and were discharged and acquitted.** They were arrested in Batouri on the 21th of November 2016 for illegal possession, and circulation of 1 chimpanzee.
- **Appeal:** An appeal has been filed this month in the case of **NJEUDJI Jule, TIKAYA Franc and TOUE Moussa Liboire** at the East 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
10	2	0	0	1	1	29

Media

- **56 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, TV, radio, and internet including; 23 written press material (17 in English and 6 in French), 2 TV news features (1 each in French and English), 17 radio news flashes (9 in French and 8 in English), and 14 internet production (10 in French and 4 in English).
- Interviewee and quotes: Ofir Drori, the Director of LAGA, Jonathan Stark, Conservationist.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: the Nkoabang arrest of 2 for African grey parrots trafficking, the unprecedented arrest of 64 wildlife traffickers across Africa in one month, the Meiganga arrest of 3 with lion, crocodile and leopard skins, the arrest of a trafficker in Messamena with over 100 kg of pangolin scales and the arrest of a Reverend Father with ivory, leopard skin and teeth in Sangmelima.
- 30 media pieces in English and 26 in French making a percentage of 53.6% in English and 46.4% in French.

Media Table

No of Media Pieces	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet
56	2	17	23	14

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director and the Head of the Legal Department held a meeting with some US diplomats to discuss the wildlife law enforcement process and challenges.
- The Head of the Legal Department held a meeting with the State Counsel in Meiganga and Sangmelima on cases that came up this month and two legal advisers held a meeting with

the State Counsel in Abong Mbang while one of the jurists on testing period held a meeting with the Advocate General of the East Court of Appeal on a case pending in the court.

- The Heads of the Legal and Investigations Department attended a meeting organised by the National Control Brigade to conscientize staff of the Ministry on the respect of legal procedures.

Management

- A legal adviser from Guinea was received in the country for a month-long organisational training.
- Two candidates for recruitment continue their testing period within the legal department.

Activism Front:

Film Screening: Suffragette:

The moving struggle, determination and sacrifice put up by women to change the working life of wives and mothers. Maud a working wife sacrificed her home to join and fight for the political, social and economic rights of women. The film depicts the length at which a woman can go to obtain what she wants as the sacrificial death of one of them finally gave them the rights to all they ever wanted (the right to vote, the right to have same wages like men and the right to have a say in their children's lives).

The debating question was to know if sacrificing one's life necessary mean to die. This question was argued from different angles with some concluding that a sacrifice for a cause is worth loosing anything that one holds dearly. However, death can only come by chance and not by choice.

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.

Link of the month

The news site, alwihda info reports on the arrest of 3 wildlife traffickers in Meiganga, the Adamawa Region of Cameroon. The three were caught red handed with a lion skin, 2 leopard skins and 2 crocodile skins hidden in bags of grains.

http://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-Meiganga-Trois-trafiquants-arretes_a53847.html

This Month in Pictures



Catholic priest attempts to sell ivory and leopard skins and got arrested. He had turned to wildlife trafficking transporting ivory to deliver in major cities without being detected. (Above) Pangolin scales trafficker arrested in the East squats at the wildlife office shortly before of legal procedures begin , he was found with close to 100 kg of scales (right)



Three arrested in Adamawa for trafficking in lion, leopard and croc skins, they stand in front of the wildlife office and the skins are displayed (below and left)

