

# THE LAST GREAT APE ORGANIZATION, CAMEROON LAGA

FIRST SEMESTER REPORT JANUARY - JUNE 2018



## Executive Summary

Tangible achievements and results were obtained during LAGA's collaboration with MINFOF in the fields of investigation, arrest, prosecution and media exposure, during the first semester of 2018. The focus was on the fight against corruption, illegal wildlife trade, principally trafficking in pangolin scales, ivory and primates. These activities also included relations with the government and international bodies. The team continued efforts started during the first semester to improve on its professionalism following new guidelines, recommendations and proposals during in house meetings and from working with the EAGLE's Central Coordination Unit (CCU). The results improved in many areas although some departments did not fully attain their set targets. Trafficking in pangolin scales, ivory and other wildlife contraband was targeted and it was observed to have attained a peak level and remained constant. A baby chimp and two mandrills were seized from traffickers.

18 major traffickers were arrested, at a rate of one per 10 days, approximately 89 % stayed behind bars from the day of arrest. Corruption was observed and combated in a number of the cases. 18 new cases were brought to the courts and 16 traffickers were found guilty. The court ordered the payment of damages totalling 47,662 000 F CFA (about \$95 124) to MINFOF by the convicted traffickers. Media exposure was at a rate of one media piece per day.

The EAGLE network achieved remarkable results as 104 traffickers were arrested across 9 countries. The LAGA team hosted a legal adviser from Senegal and another from Cote d'Ivoire for a training and experience sharing visit. The deputy director travelled to Ethiopia where he participated in a GIS workshop to combat wildlife trafficking while the head of the investigation department travelled to train investigators at EAGLE Togo.

The director arrived the country for a week-long visit during which he held several meetings with the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife and diplomatic officials in Yaounde and with many other stakeholders within the wildlife law enforcement domain. He was accompanied by the deputy director during most of the meetings.

**The work of LAGA was supported by: Wildcat, US Fish and Wildlife Service - EAGLE, AVAAZ, Neu Foundation, Mat Wijnen, NABU International Foundation for Nature, The Born Free Foundation, Joe Franklin Charitable Trust and The Wild Cat Foundation.**

**LAST GREAT APE ORGANISATION, CAMEROON (LAGA)**  
**SEMESTER REPORT**  
January - June 2018

**OVERVIEW**

**Investigations**

- A total of 165 investigation missions (of varying lengths) were carried out in 7 regions.
- Network of informants continued producing results leading to good operations.

**Operations**

- Operations were carried out in 3 regions arresting 18 major traffickers resulting in 18 court cases at a rate of 1 per 10 days. LAGA provided legal assistance in 3 other cases following arrest of 3 traffickers with 106 ivory tusks in Djoum by wildlife officials.
- Operations on pangolin scales and ivory accounted for over 75% of arrests while the remaining 25% were shared among chimp, mandrill, hippo teeth and python skins operations.
- The rate of imprisonment of arrested offenders was 89%.
- A baby chimp and two mandrills were rescued during 2 operations.

**Legal**

- 18 new cases were brought to court. Many of the 18 cases began during the period have not yet reached the prosecution stage but procedures are ongoing.
- 16 traffickers were found guilty and handed prison sentences and or fines, damages and penalties. Damages amounted to some 47, 662, 000 FCFA (about \$95 124) to be paid to MINFOF.
- 7 court judgements were passed during the 6-month period.
- A very high number of appeals (4) were lodged because of many very weak court rulings handed out by some of the courts.

**Media**

- A total of 185 media pieces were produced in national media (radio, TV, written press and internet) achieved at a rate of one media piece per day.

**Management**

- The annual report of 2017 was made available online.
- One candidate started training and testing period for the position of legal adviser while an internet investigator was recruited.
- Focus was on moving the organisation to even higher levels with recruitment and upgrading of present personnel

**External Relations and Policy**

- Several meetings were held with MINFOF officials, the diplomatic community, national and international NGOs to discuss corruption issues and wildlife law enforcement etc.
- LAGA carried out an anti-corruption training at the Garoua wildlife school.

**Strategic Highlights**

- The operational focus over this period was on pangolins scales and ivory that have been the contraband of choice by traffickers.

- The strategic focus was on bringing LAGA to an even higher level with emphasises on improving investigation techniques and strategies to tackle more big time traffickers. It is a process that was started with the support of the Central Coordination Unit (CCU) of EAGLE
- External relations activities principally targeted high level discussions at the Ministry to tackle issues of collaboration and with diplomatic missions to improve communication and collaboration.
- New rounds of recruitment in all the departments were initiated to enable the organisation upgrade its personnel.
- The CCU evaluated and provided strategic assistance to management and organisational functioning.

### **EAGLE Activities**

- A total of 104 traffickers were arrested across 9 countries of the network during this semester.
- Exchange visits continued among the countries specifically with the head of investigations department visiting EAGLE Togo while two legal advisers from EAGLE Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal arriving the country for training and experience sharing.

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### Also available:

1. Annual Financial Statement 2017
2. Monthly Financial and Activity Reports January to December 2017
3. Media archive – Excel database linked to recorded media pieces
4. Photo archive for media use

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## **NARRATIVE REPORT**

This report covers the period January to June 2018 and it focuses on progress in the activities of each department notably investigations, operations, legal, media and management, strategic overview of and the impact of operations on wildlife crime in Cameroon, progress in relations with the Cameroonian government, non-governmental bodies, collaboration with international partners and non-enforcement initiatives that LAGA undertook.

### **1. Investigations**

LAGA's investigation unit carried out 165 investigation missions in 7 regions of the country during this period. Collaboration with the CCU in planning and carrying out operations attained a satisfactory level with clear understanding of operation procedures. Discussions with the CCU and the steering committee on addressing gaps and errors in the respect of operation procedures took place and the problems were corrected along the way.

Efforts to take the investigation, under the guidance of the CCU, to the next level were started and the head of the investigations department held several meetings with some wildlife and customs officials to build collaborative platforms; enabling effective investigations and information exchange. Meetings were held with customs and or police officials in Douala (Littoral Region), Ebolowa (South Region), Yaounde (Centre), Kribi (South) and the assistant head travelled to Tiko (Southwest Region) for the same purpose. The head of department equally travelled Togo to train investigators at EAGLE Togo.

A new internet investigator. Effayong Fabrice, was recruited to restart work on internet investigations that had been a big challenge for some years now following difficulties in recruiting a qualified and motivated candidate for the post. The head of the investigation department and his deputy carried out several training sessions for the benefit of investigators. One new investigator who was on trial was not retained following his inability to perform his duties to satisfaction.

Investigations were not carried out in some regions of the country because of the challenging security situation in these areas and these shall be covered immediately the situation gets better.



**Figure 1: Number of Investigations Missions per Month**

## **2. Operations**

LAGA and the Government of Cameroon carried out operations in 3 regions against 18 individuals resulting in 18 court cases at a rate of one every 10 days. New techniques were used during operations. Several pangolin scales operation were carried out and this represented 39% of those arrested, 36 % for ivory and 25% for chimp, mandrill, hippo parts and python skins trafficking

In January, 3 traffickers were arrested with a live baby chimp and 80kg of pangolin scales in Ambam, South Region. The three operated a wildlife crime ring that ran pangolin scales and primate trafficking from the area. The operation involved a house search and the live chimp was found hidden inside a toilet. Administrative officials of the region followed with keen interest as the operation occurred. In an unprecedented and surprise move, the baby chimp was taken to the Mvogbetsi zoo despite informed advice and explanations from professionals against this destination and preferred the animal taken to the Mefou sanctuary where appropriate care and facility were available. Despite repeated efforts to get the chimp to Mefou, the decision which was primarily not for the interest of the animal but for people who want to put the animal on display, was maintained.

In February, a trafficker was arrested with 37kg of pangolin scales in Betare Oya, East Region. The trafficker operated a bar which was used as a perfect cover to carry out trafficking in several wildlife species and other contraband including gold. A relative of his (a junior brother) narrowly missed being arrested last year following a failed operation caused by some technical problems at the Regional Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife. They worked as a two-man team trafficking principally in pangolin scales and the team was partially dismantled following the arrest. He was suspected to have sold two leopard skins shortly before his arrest and was immediately recognised by gendarme offices who arrived the scene of his arrest.

The month of March saw the arrest of 5 suspects. 2 traffickers were arrested with 4 ivory tusks in Ebolowa. They were arrested along a highway that is notoriously used by traffickers to transport ivory from the source area in the South of the country to major towns. Four ivory tusks, a rifle and a military uniform were seized. The gun was given to one of the arrested traffickers by a lady whose husband had been a senior police commissioner and had died some years back, leaving the weapons with her. She was later arrested. The military uniform was given to one of the traffickers by an army colonel, who is a relative to the trafficker.

During the second operation, 2 other traffickers were arrested for ivory trafficking. 121 carved ivory objects were seized from a shopkeeper who was arrested on the spot while the owner of the shop was later arrested. The ivory was found displayed among hundreds of wooden arts objects for sale in a shop on the ground floor of a popular Yaounde hotel. The owner of the shop had been in the business for 40 years, getting cover from the husband who is a colonel in the army and who used his influence to get her out of jail following the operation. She has been dealing mostly with Chinese buyers.

In April, a trafficker was arrested with 2 live mandrills in Ambam. He was arrested at his residence where the two live mandrills were kept to be sold. He had had the female mandrill for a couple of years now and had recently bought the male chimp from a village located some 30km from Ambam. Initially, he had planned to get the two mandrills copulate and reproduce so that he could start a mandrill business but then decided to sell the two mandrills. He is a businessman and also the manager of a local hotel. He was supposed to be crowned quarter head but the arrest interrupted the process. He is well known in the area.

May month saw the arrest of 8 major traffickers. During the first operation, 4 traffickers were arrested with an ivory tusk, pangolin scales, elephant bones in Santchou, West Region. They transported the contraband using motorbikes as is generally the case with traffickers, who use this means of transport that is very flexible and easy to use for escape when threatened. They were arrested shortly after they began negotiations to sell the products some of which originated from the nearby Santchou wildlife reserve. The reserve is being depleted of its wildlife resources and is in a very bad state. One of the traffickers was already known to the conservator of the reserve as a major target for arrest. He was very alert and attempted to escape when he realized the team was moving in for the operation.

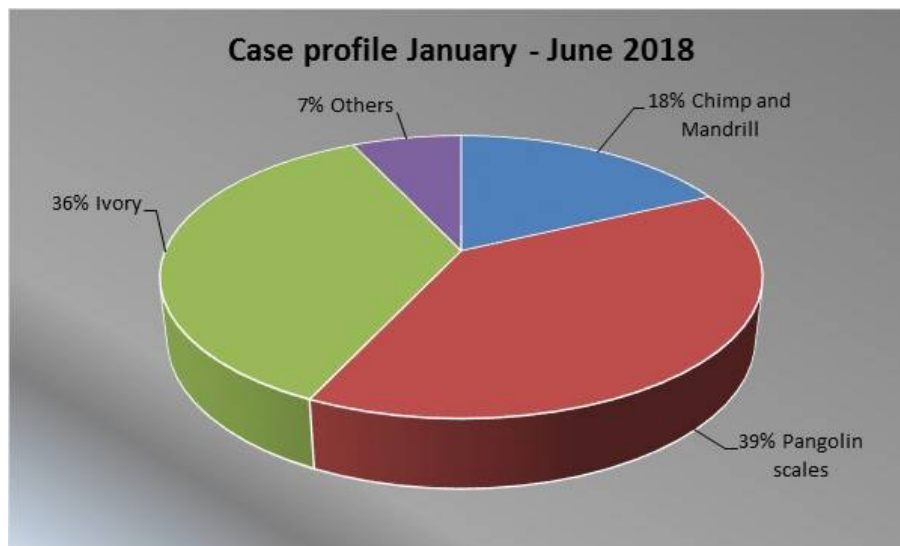
A trafficker was arrested in Bertoua, East Region with 4 ivory tusks and 3 hippo teeth during the second operation of May. He attempted to move the ivory and hippo teeth from its hideout when he was arrested. He transported the contraband hidden inside a truck transporting cattle from the North where he bought the ivory to East of the country and was just about to move the products for trafficking. The operation uncovered a trafficking route that moves in the opposite direction to that generally used by ivory traffickers. Normally, they would move ivory from the South and East regions to the North where it is smuggled across to Nigeria that has not yet put in place strong wildlife law enforcement measures. The ivory this time around was moved in the opposite direction, from the North to the East. The trafficker also dealt in leopard and lion skins as well.

During the third operation, 3 traffickers were arrested in Doume, East Region with 35kg of pangolin scales. The arrest was done in two phases. During the first phase, 2 of the 3 suspects were arrested with a bag containing the pangolin scales and were taken to the gendarmerie brigade alongside 2 bikes the traffickers had used for transporting the contraband. During the operation, as the 2 were being arrested, the third trafficker escaped leaving behind his bike. When he realized that the bike had been impounded and taken to the gendarmerie brigade, he came back to the brigade to bribe for the release of the bike and was gratefully arrested. The traffickers buy the scales from smaller traffickers in villages around Doume and sell to bigger traffickers in some commercial centres including Yaounde and Douala.

***Operations Table***

<b><i>Number of Operations</i></b>	<b><i>Number of Traffickers</i></b>	<b><i>Contraband</i></b>
8	18	One live baby chimp, 80kg of pangolin scales, 37kg pangolin scales, hippo teeth, 2 boa skins, 4 ivory tusks, 121 ivory pieces, An elephant molar, 2 live mandrills, 5 ivory tusks, 38kg of pangolin scales, 3 hippo teeth, An elephant jawbone

***Figure 2: Operation Table***



**Figure 3: Operations profile**

### **3. Legal**

During this period, 18 new cases reached the court and the cases joined old cases that were scheduled, followed-up, tried in various courts and jail visits were organized. LAGA provided legal assistance in 3 other cases following arrest of 3 traffickers with 106 ivory tusks in Djoum by wildlife officials. Most of the cases initiated within this period have not yet reached the judgement stage with 89% imprisoned during trial.

A total of 80 missions were carried out of the Centre Region for follow-up of new cases and the creation and strengthening of relations with judiciary authorities. More emphasis as a direct result of operations was on ivory and pangolin scales.

During the period, 7 court judgements were passed with 16 traffickers were found guilty and 1 of them given prison sentence while 15 others were either given suspended prison sentences and or were heavily fined. The high number of weak sentences account for the high number of appeals, as 4 of the 7 court rulings were appealed against. A total of 47, 662, 000 FCFA (about \$95 124) was awarded as damages.

The Douala-Bonanjo Court of First Instance found the accused TCHINDLJI Francois & AYATAGA Djalla Martial guilty as charged and sentenced them to pay 200,000 FCFA (about \$400) each as fine, 136,025 FCFA (about \$272) each as cost fees and 5,275,000 FCFA (about \$10,550) jointly as damages. They were arrested in Douala on the 30/06/2017 for the illegal capture, possession, circulation and commercialization of two chimpanzees.

The Bertoua Court of First Instance found the accused MOUATCHO KAMENI Pierre Armel guilty as charged and sentenced him to a one-month imprisonment term. He was arrested in Betare-Oya on the 02/02/2018 and charged with illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species including 36,5kg of pangolin scales, 6 hippopotamus teeth and 2 python skins.

The Ambam Court of First Instance found the accused KOUALIAGNIGNI Soulé, NTIECHE Issah and ABOUBAKAR Moussa guilty as charged and sentenced them to 2 years suspended sentence during 3 years and to pay 145,000 FCFA (about \$290) as court fees, 100,000 FCFA (about \$200)



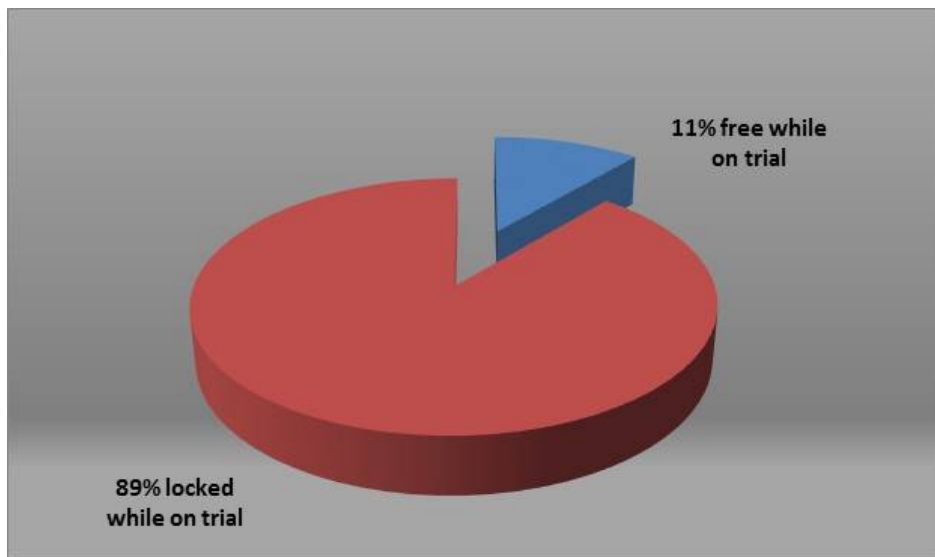
each as fine and awarded to MINFOF the amount of 1,800,000 FCFA (about \$3,600) as civil damages. They were arrested in Ambam on the 30/01/2018 for illegal possession of trophies of totally protected species including 80kg of pangolin scales and a baby chimp.

The Ebolowa Court of First Instance found the accused AFOUMOU Emile and MOUKO Clément guilty as charged and sentenced them to 2 years suspended sentence during 3 years and to pay 202,760 FCFA (about \$404) as fines and 3,000,000 FCFA (about \$6000) as civil damages. They were arrested in Ebolowa on the 11/10/2016 for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species including two sculptured ivory tusks, carved ivory pieces and chips.

The Dschang Court of First Instance – Centre, found the accused MFONGOCK Didier, MELAT Blaise, ATOKI Suzanne and NYAMPE Charles guilty of illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species. They were ordered to pay 100,000 FCFA as fines and 38,000 FCFA as court cost. They were arrested in Santchou for illegal possession, and commercialization of an elephant tusk, an elephant jaw bone and pangolins scales.

The East Region Appeal Court, found the accused FEUSSI André guilty of illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species. He was ordered to pay 50,000 FCFA (about \$100) as fines and 35,587,000 FCFA (about \$71,174) as civil damages. He was arrested in Betare Oya for illegal possession, and commercialization of 36.5 Kg of pangolin scales, 6 hippopotamus teeth and 2 boa skins.

The East Region Appeal Court, found the accused NJEUDJI Jules, TIKAYA Franc and TOUE Moussa Liboire guilty of illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of a live chimpanzee. They were ordered to pay 2,000,000 FCFA (about \$4000) as civil damages and 38,000 FCFA (about \$78) as court cost. They were arrested in Batouri for illegal possession and commercialization of a live chimpanzee.



**Figure 4: Rate of locking accused behind bars**

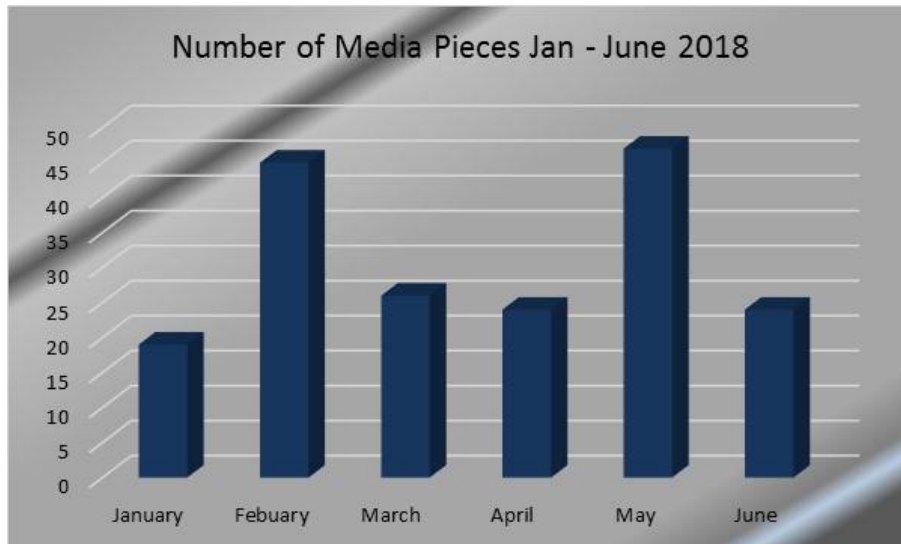
#### **4. Media**

A total of 185 media pieces were produced and pushed into media including numerous articles in all media – radio, television, written press and the internet; achieved at a rate of one media piece per day. February and May months recorded the highest number of media pieces but generally it was evenly spread out throughout the months with no substantial gaps in between the various months.

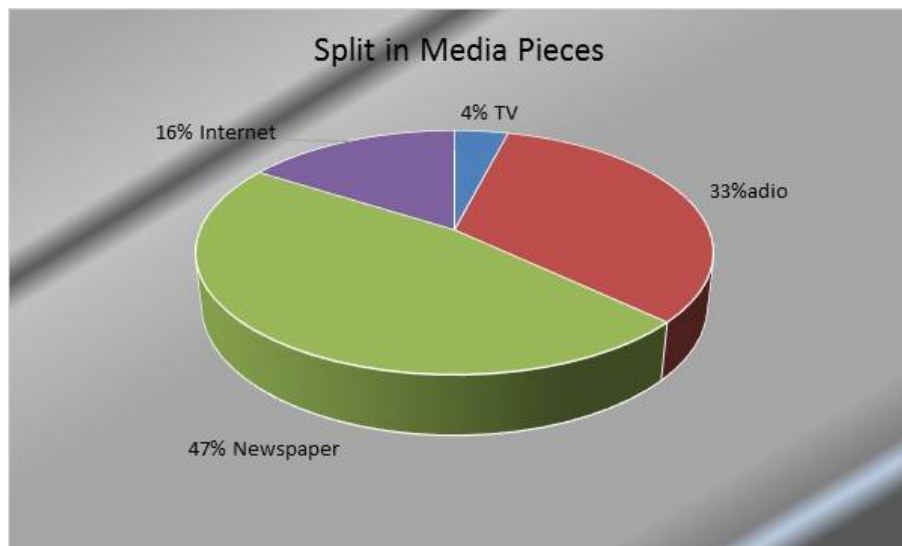
Subjects were on a broad range of wildlife law enforcement issues including all of LAGA-MINFOF operations, prosecutions and fighting corruption. These included the arrest of a Vietnamese ivory trafficker in Ivory Coast and the court hearing of 3 men who were arrested in Douala over the illegal possession of pangolin scales; the Ambam arrest of three with a live baby chimp and pangolin scales; the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of World Pangolin Day; the arrest of two in Djoum with 216 ivory tusks and the court case that ensued Djoum; the apprehension of a trafficker in Betare-Oya with pangolin scales, hippo teeth and python skins; the arrest of three suspects in Meyo centre with ivory tusks and a rifle; the Yaounde arrest of two for trafficking in ivory artefacts; the Bertoua arrest of an ivory trafficker, the Doume arrest of three with pangolin scales, the rescue of two mandrills and the arrest of a man in Ambam and the wildlife crime workshop.

Interviews and quotes used in the various media pieces were from; Ambam divisional delegate of forestry and wildlife, the coordinator MENTOR PoP programme, the head of the south regional judicial police, and wildlife controllers at the south regional MINFOF delegation, the head of the investigations bureau at the gendarmerie legion in Bertoua and the head of the Doume forestry and wildlife control post, the deputy director of LAGA.

The distribution of Wildlife Justice Magazine continued. Wildlife Justice is a thematic journal that focuses on wildlife law enforcement and conservation issues.



**Figure 5: Number of Media Pieces Produced and Published**



**Figure 6: Split of Media Pieces**

## **5. Management**

Working in close collaboration with the CCU, efforts were made to improve on management effectiveness, its professionalism through new management techniques that were provided. The deputy director participated in a workshop on management and leadership in Ghana that was organised to improve leadership and management skills of coordinators of the entire EAGLE network. Efforts carried out in the past years on improving and upholding the finest moral and ethical values among staff started bearing fruits as there was a visible sign of awareness of what is at stake and good level of commitment to improving on those standards. Management arranged for the visit of two legal advisers from EAGLE Senegal and Ivory Coast to the country and equally took care of them during their entire stay.

Management organised a special English classes for some LAGA members with the objective being to improve on their English while one person took Spanish classes. Also on training, some members undertook primate first aid and general first aid training.

Recruitment for various positions within the organisation continued with volunteers recruited for the test period. In this regard, a volunteer started his test period at the legal department while an accountant also completed his volunteer period. An internet investigator was tested and recruited. Some volunteers who started their test have not yet reached satisfactory levels to be recruited. This situation is expected to be concluded within the next semester. Management ensured that those who often come in close contact with live animals were vaccinated against communicable diseases.

A legal adviser from the project in Senegal travelled to the country (Cameroon) for a three-week training and he was hosted by the legal department while The head of the legal department at EAGLE Cote d'Ivoire arrived for a short training and experience sharing visit.

LAGA continued search for a new office. The search was started last year because of the dilapidated state of the present office and the increase in the number of members who are finding it difficult to have enough space within the present structure.

The annual report of 2017 uploaded online. The electronic versions are available on line on the LAGA website [www.laga-enforcement.org](http://www.laga-enforcement.org). This is a result of teamwork involving all the departments in LAGA – Investigations, Legal, Media, Operations and Management.

A series of thought-provoking sessions of presentations and debates for the LAGA team were organised to foster activism and leadership skills. A wide range of topics including activism were presented and debated. This initiative also aims at strengthening the capacity, unity and values of the LAGA family.

## **6. External Relations and Policy**

LAGA director arrived Cameroon for a week-long visit during which he held meetings with the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife. During one of the meetings with the minister, he was accompanied by the deputy director and discussions focused on issues of collaboration and wildlife law enforcement. He and the deputy director equally held meetings with the British high commissioner, French ambassador, the Belgian ambassador and the European Union head of mission to discuss the wildlife law enforcement process in the country and its associated governance issues. They equally held a meeting with ZSL officials to examine the state of collaboration and proposals for better partnership.

During this period the deputy director held several meetings with some government and diplomatic officials including US embassy and state department officials, British High Commission officials, European Union officials, the secretary general and director of wildlife at MINFOF, the secretary general at MINJUSTICE, several wildlife officials, to discuss strategies for effective wildlife law enforcement.

The deputy director equally attended several events including events marking World Pangolin Day, a workshop on combatting corruption in wildlife law enforcement where he did a presentation, a workshop in Addis Ababa on the use of GIS to combat wildlife trafficking where he did a short talk and a conservation event at the French Cultural Centre where he did a presentation on wildlife law enforcement.

The deputy director carried out an anti-corruption training for students of the Garoua Wildlife School. The training was done for students of both cycles (B and C) of the school. He equally distributed wildlife justice magazine on corruption to all of the students.

The deputy director attended the official ceremony of the installation of the management team of OCFSA that had been revamped and a couple of months after the installation, the OCFSA team held a meeting with the deputy director and heads of the various departments at the LAGA office.

The head of the legal department attended a meeting aimed at reinvigorating the CITES committee of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife that had for a long time gone into lethargy. The assistant head of the media department held a meeting with the head of communications unit to smoothen relationship and ensure effective collaboration between the two units.

Accompanied by the heads of investigations and legal departments, the deputy director held a meeting with the wildlife chief of post and another with the customs brigade chief at the Nsimalen airport to ensure smooth collaboration and partnership.

## **7. LAGA and the EAGLE Network**

LAGA's new model for NGO – Government collaboration establishing wildlife law enforcement, bringing about results with an innovative approach geared at changing the existing system and triggering a paradigm shift in the way NGOs tackle wildlife crime is being realised within the EAGLE network. The model is focusing on the prosecution of major traffickers, not the small-time poacher who is motivated by the city dwelling traffickers. This involves fighting head on the major obstacle to the application of the wildlife law in Africa – Corruption. LAGA's experience and model is currently operating within the EAGLE network that group 9 countries.

The replication of the LAGA model is also geared at taking cross section lessons outside of wildlife conservation; these include the fight against corruption, fostering activism, fight against child trafficking etc.

**<http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Replication/tabid/166/Default.aspx>**

The EAGLE network is now responsible for the replication activity of the LAGA model that was formerly the preserve of LAGA and the youngest project is in Ivory Coast where the Deputy Director and the Interim Director have contributed to coordinating during two separate visits to the country. Collaboration between the EAGLE CCU and LAGA were intensified during this semester at all levels including investigations, operations, legal, media and management. LAGA continued to host training sessions in the country and in this regard, LAGA hosted Jean Claude Vignoli who received training and participated in numerous field activities.

## **8. Fostering Activism**

During this period, LAGA continued to foster activism internally and externally. Creating independent activists is one aspect that LAGA uses to foster activism. The NGO members are encouraged to develop their own projects on the various development issues of their country and are given NGO time and management time to develop the project in the vision of turning it in to an independent NGO paperbook. The function of leadership is not producing more followers but to produce more leaders.

**<http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Activism/tabid/77/Default.aspx>**

Activism was focused on documentaries and presentations listed below.

**The Ghost of King Leopold:** The colonial past in Africa keeps revealing its nastiness every day, indicating the enormity of the cruelty and evil inflicted on the African people and there is no other movie that captures this bitter reality better than The Ghost of King Leopold. Cutting someone's arm to justify you actually did not waste a bullet may look bizarre but understanding that the bullet was supposed to shoot and kill the person and the hand brought back to the colonial master to indicate that the person had been killed, is mindboggling and that is what happened when Congo was the property of King Leopold of Belgium who unleashed untold cruelty and harshness on a people in their own land. The movie depicts the essential cruelty of the king, his spin to deflect public attention, his illicit and grotesque enrichment, the mechanisms of power domination in the area and the braveness of some to report on the activities. The debate focused on the colonial past, Africa's inability to emancipate, neo-colonialism, geopolitics and international and bilateral relations.

**In Malawi, violent sexual initiation of young girls by "hyenas".** It may look and sound surreal but it is true, a young girl is offered by her family to a man to have sex for a full night after she gets her first period. This happens in Malawi and the ancient rite for "sexual cleaning" happens in the remote southern regions of the country. A violent traditional practiced on young women who are forced to

have sex for the first time with these men who are called “hyenas”. They say the outrageous rite is a mark of passage to womanhood, sexually cleaning the young innocent girls who are basically raped without any protection in a country that has some of the highest rates of HIV prevalence. The events are shrouded in secrecy despite being outlawed but enforcing the law is difficult. NGOs and some female locals are now taking this on but it is a long hard battle. Discussions focused on African rites, women’s rights, education, enforcement and criticism of government’s role.

**History of Apartheid:** The head of the investigation department takes us through the history of apartheid recounting how the Dutch and the English occupied the territories which were owned by the Zulus and other African tribes that were forced to leave. He analysed the situation, the discrimination and maltreatment Africans went through and highlighted the process that led to the final liberation. Discussions focused on some of the treatment blacks suffered, the role played by the Mandelas and the fight engaged by black South Africans.

**The skill of self confidence:** While many think talent is the most important thing to have in athleticism, Dr. Ivan Joseph, a professional coach thinks self-confidence is and primordial in not only athleticism but our lives. This short video on Ted Talk takes us through how important self confidence is in achieving great successes and how it dictates whether we become successful in our goals and lives. The presentation that was done in the English language was briefly summarized in French by the deputy director who explained in greater details some of the things presented by the Ted Talk guest of the day. The talk was very explanatory and was seen very much as an advice that didn’t necessitate much ado and analysis.

**The Franc CFA, a tool to control African states within the franc zone:** The presentation that was done by the head of the legal department goes down memory lane, explaining how the colonial history of a currency that was forced upon African French colonies and designed singularly for the benefit of the metropole – France. It describes the changes that took place after independence and the split into the West and Central Africa franc zones. The presenter argues that it is a system that blocks economic growth for these countries and hampers their economic independence with France holding exchange reserves worth 12 billion euros for these countries. The fixed exchange rate to the euro has disadvantaged the competitiveness of these economies and France’s participation in the management of the two central banks is an absurdity considering these banks are for independent states. Criticisms of CFA F was unanimous and bitter because of the inability or the unwillingness of African leaders to strip off this currency for independent national currencies. The currency is a reminder of the hated colonial past and the master perpetuating the legacy. This is just one of the reasons France is not roundly loved by the people of Francophone Africa.

## **9. Strategic Overview of Wildlife Crime in Cameroon and Operations’ Impact**

Beyond the number of operations and their effectiveness, there is an even more important factor in evaluating LAGA’s work – the strategic value of the operations in reducing the level of illegal wildlife trade. In this regard, LAGA is choosing diversified operations, which carry an added value to expose and map the different angles of wildlife crime in Cameroon. Consequently, the LAGA-MINFOF work sheds light on the nature of illegal wildlife trade in the sub-region. The strategic focus over this period was on pangolin scales, primates (chimps and a mandrill), ivory and leopard skins.

### ***9.1 Pangolin Scales***

Operations involving pangolin scales continue to be carried out as the trafficking become more organised. Just as the case during the period July – December last year, operations against pangolin

scale traffickers accounted for 39% indicating the illegal trade may have attained peak levels and are being sustained over time. The first was done in January when three traffickers were arrested in Ambam, South Region with a baby chimpanzee and 80kg of pangolin scales. The same kind of operation (arresting a trafficker with a baby chimp and pangolin scales) was carried out last year in August when a trafficker was arrested in Ebolowa in the South Region with a baby chimp and 35kg of pangolin scales. This may indicate a link between the apes and pangolin scales trafficking. Another pangolin scales trafficker was arrested in Betare Oya in the East Region where he owns a bar, which seems to be his base, where he stores the scales that require good enough logistics. He deals in several contraband including gold. This is a normal pattern for pangolin scales traffickers to use a perfect cover for the illegality. The bar is not only a suitable location to discuss business but also a perfect outlet to check out potential business partners.

Two other operations concerning pangolin scales were carried out in May with a small quantity of pangolin scales seized from four ivory traffickers in Santchou, West Region and another in Doume where three were arrested for trafficking in 35kg of pangolin scales. These are the first line of traffickers who are in direct contact with the poachers at the source. They go around villages collecting pangolin scales from villagers he engages and when they put together some sizeable quantities, they embark on trading with the next trafficker who is generally urban-based or Chinese.

## **9.2 Ivory**

It is well known that that organized ivory trade relies heavily on complicity and corruption. This was once again exemplified where two were arrested for operating an ivory shop in the heart of the capital, at the basement of a popular hotel. The seller was arrested in the shop that displayed the ivory among wooden art objects. The owner who was later arrested is a notorious trafficker, dealing in ivory for over 40 years and working with a large supplying network. She had operated from the capital city without any arrests for dozens of years. Only a sense of impunity can explain why this trafficker was never arrested and coupled with the fact that her husband is a colonel, the picture starts to get clearer. It seems that being powerful and well connected may determine if one is considered an offender or not, proves the kind of sophistication that ivory traffickers command as is the case of a trafficker who was arrested in the East region with 7 ivory tusks and hippo teeth. He couldn't speak French nor English the two official languages but travelled all the way from the North with the products that was concealed in a truck ferrying cattle to the East region to sell the contraband. He didn't need any official language, he needed to have a bag of tricks and experience to run his ivory business. He bought the ivory in Ngong where a thriving black market for ivory exists, located some 45km from Garoua. He took the opposite direction, moving the ivory from the north to south whereas ivory is generally moved to the north and across to Nigeria.

In another ivory trafficking case that took place in March, two traffickers were arrested in Ebolowa in the South region. During the first operation, two traffickers were arrested in Ebolowa with four ivory tusks and a gun. A military uniform was also recovered from the traffickers and while the uniform is reported to have been obtained by one of the traffickers from a relative who is a colonel in the army, the gun was provided by the widow of a senior police officer. The lady was also arrested following the arrest and interrogation of the first two. Again the link with the military comes in as was the first ivory case mentioned above. This is a worrying trend that buttresses arguments raised by some who point a finger at the military's role in ivory trafficking.

Four traffickers were arrested in Santchou, West Region with an ivory tusk, elephant bones and pangolin scales. The four who arrived on bikes with bags of contraband were arrested as they were just about to illegally sell the products. One of the traffickers had been on the run and was a major target for arrest by the Santchou wildlife reserve conservator. Motorbikes have become the preferred mode of transport for wildlife criminals in the country.

### **9.3 Chimp and mandrill**

A baby chimp and two mandrills were rescued during the beginning of 2018 in Ambam when three traffickers were arrested with a live chimp and 80kg of pangolin scales. The chimp was seized from the home of one of the traffickers who had hidden it inside a toilet. The animal was found in very poor state; dehydrated, weak and traumatised. This is the usual situation when baby chimps are rescued as the traffickers generally do not have neither the required skills nor the willingness to take proper care of the babies. His sole interest is minimising cost of keeping the chimp and selling it off as soon as possible to a well paying buyer. Over the years mandrills have been the object of trafficking and in April, a primate trafficker was arrested with two live mandrills, a male and female. He was just about to start breeding them for the illegal black market before his arrest. The operation revealed the possibility of breeding attempts within the country as generally primates are plucked from the wild and sold immediately. This is the first time we are seeing attempts at captive breeding of primates in the country.

## **10. Corruption and Wildlife Crime**

LAGA has been an experiment field for methods of fighting corruption within a law enforcement and application process. All bribing attempts are documented into our case tracking systems. LAGA is not an observer of corruption; it was created to fight corruption, redirecting the positive pressures existing within the system, usually wasted in large conferences, to specific corruption attempts and the field realities that form corruption. These bribery attempts are vigorously fought against and vehemently condemned by LAGA. LAGA is not a watchdog group and not created as an observer, it fights directly whenever corrupt practices or bribery attempts have been observed.

This ongoing fight is directed towards issues that touch on corruption and bad governance. The Mfoundi divisional delegate obstructed a wildlife law enforcement operation by refusing to receive and sending away our legal adviser who was at his office to collaborate with the delegation to rescue some live primate species which were openly being sold at the train station in Yaounde. Although this was not directly connected to corruption, this action is obstructive and linked to governance issues. A letter was written to the minister on this deplorable situation. During this period, most of the corruption attempts were immediate on wildlife officials taking statements and writing complaint reports. In six of the seven cases handled, attempts were made at stopping the prosecutorial process at this stage by offering bribes, and traffic of influence.

In February, after the arrest of a pangolin scales trafficker, and as wildlife law enforcement officials were establishing the offence statement, they received pressure from the trafficker's family members. They offered a bribe to the wildlife and police officers, but with LAGA's help resisted the corruption attempt. After the first corruption attempt was combated, they attempted to corrupt one of the substitutes of the prosecutor. The conviction was disappointing pointing to the possibility that the last corruption attempt succeeded as the trafficker was given a one-month imprisonment term contrary to the law that stipulates the punishment to be 1 to 3 years imprisonment.

In March, while the wildlife law enforcement officials were establishing the offence statement during one of the arrests, they received undue pressure from one of the traffickers' daughter working at the regional delegation of MINFOF. She attempted to pressure her colleagues to illegally release the trafficker at their level but the wildlife officials and police handling the matter with LAGA's help resisted the pressure. Seeing that her corruption attempt was combated, she even approached the LAGA team, to advance her agenda, to no avail.



During the second case in March, those establishing the offence statement at the police station equally received high pressure from one of the suspect's husband who is a colonel in the army. The enforcement officials, again, with help of LAGA resisted the traffic in influence.

The situation after the arrest of four in Santchou in the West Region for ivory trafficking was characterised by high profile traffic of influence from an administrative official and a parliamentarian and from family members who piled pressure to illegally release the trafficker and this was combated by LAGA at the various levels. At first, this was concentrated on the divisional delegate to illegally release the trafficker but when this failed, the state counsel was next on the line to receive traffic of influence but this too was combated. Unfortunately, it seems LAGA did not control all corruption attempts during the trial and at the end, the case got one of the weakest ever rulings that the country has witnessed since LAGA started assisting government in 2003.

Following the arrest of three in Doume in May, one of the three traffickers who escaped during the arrest and whose bike was impounded and taken to the gendarmerie brigade, would return to the brigade to bribe and collect his bike and was rightly arrested. Another trafficker attempted to bribe the wildlife chief of post and this attempted was successfully combated as well.

The case in Ambam following the arrest of three for chimp trafficking in January witnessed one of the most extraordinary circumstances as family members made to and fro movements to the judge's office. When the judge took a break for a couple of hours during one of the trials, family members of the trafficker, decided to visit him at his office, moving in and out of his office several times. The judge gave the three traffickers a suspended a 2-year suspended sentence for 3 years and this very poor conviction hints that the corruption attempts may have played a role.

## Annex I – Case Tracking System – January – June 2018

Case Operation						International		
No.	date	Location	Case name	Offence	Profile	Remarks	Connecton	Status
564	31/1/2018	Ambam South	<a href="#">KOUALIAGNIG</a>	80 Kg of pangolin scales and 1 baby chimp	Seller	A member of a big network involved in pangolins scales and live ape including chimpanze. He is in charge of collecting pangolin scales in South region and East region	none	Locked while on trial
565	31/1/2018	Ambam South	<a href="#">NTECHE Issaa</a>	80 Kg of pangolin scales and 1 baby chimp	Seller	Accomplice of KOUALIAGNIGNI leaving in Ambam; he assisted him in trafficking the pangolin scales and chimp	none	Locked while on trial
566	31/1/2018	Ambam South	<a href="#">ABOUBAKAR</a>	80 Kg of pangolin scales and 1 baby chimp	Seller	A Nigerien involved in pangolin scales and chimp trafficking in Cameroon	Nigerien	Locked while on trial
567	02/09/2018	Betare-Oya - East	<a href="#">Mouatcho Kan</a>	36,5 Kg of pangolin scales, 6 hipopotamus teeth and 2 python skins	Seller	He is a business man well know in Betare-Oya and in Bertoua. Used a cover as a barman to trafiking wildlife products	none	Locked while on trial
568	02/03/2018	Meyo-Centre South	<a href="#">NKOMO Joseph</a>	2 elephant tusks, 1 fire arm, 1 electronic scale, 1 torch, 1 machete and 1 calculator	Poacher and seller	A member of a big network. He is in charge of the recruitment of poachers.	none	Locked while on trial
569	02/03/2018	Meyo-Centre South	<a href="#">AWOUKA Basile</a>	2 elephant tusks, 1 fire arm, 1 electronic weight, 1 torch, 1 machete and 1 calculator	Poacher and seller	Poacher recruited by Nkomo Joseph	none	Locked while on trial
570	02/03/2018	Meyo-Centre South	<a href="#">MBO Epouse ASSAM Bernadette</a>	2 elephant tusks, 1 fire arm, 1 electronic weight, 1 torch, 1 machete and 1 calculator	Poacher and seller	Involved at a high level in the killing of protected species particularly elephants. She gave the weapon to the poachers in order to kill elephants and extract ivory.	none	Locked while on trial
571	28/03/2018	Yaoundé Centre	<a href="#">NJOFANG TATCHOU NYAMSSI Marie Rose</a>	Illegal possession of 121 sculptured ivory objects including 2 elephant tusks sculptured .	Seller	The dealer is a notorious trafficker in ivory and related products since 1975. She works in collaboration with some persons all of the same network who supply him with these sculpted ivory to sell to potential buyers upon demand. She uses the sale of artistic objects to conceal his trafficking in ivory objects.	none	Free while on trial
572	28/03/2018	Yaoundé Centre	<a href="#">KUITCHE Michel</a>	Illegal possession of 121 Sculptured Ivory objects including 2 elephant tusks sculptured .	Seller	Accomplice of NJOFANG TATCHOU	Cameroonian	Free while on trial
573	27/04/2018	Ambam South	<a href="#">DJUMPBONG Jean Noe</a>	Illegal possession of 2 live mandrill	Seller	He is director of an hotel , and he hides behind his profession and his title of chief to carry out trafficking in wildlife species	none	Locked while on trial
574	04/05/2018	Santchou West	<a href="#">MELAT Blaise</a>	Illegal possession of 1 elephant tusks, 1 elephant jowbone and pangolins scales	Seller	A member of a big network in the Littoral region and West region involved in elephant tusks and pangolins scales	none	Locked while on trial
575	04/05/2018	Santchou West	<a href="#">NFONGOCK Didier</a>	Illegal possession of 1 elephant tusks, 1 elephant jowbone and pangolins scales	Seller	A member of a big network in the Littoral region and West region involved in elephant tusks and pangolins scales	none	Locked while on trial

Case Operation							International	
No.	date	Location	Case name	Offence	Profile	Remarks	Connecton	Status
576	04/05/2018	Santchou West	<a href="#">NYAMPE Charles II</a>	Illegal possession of 1 elephant tusks, 1 elephant jowbone and pangolins scales	Seller	A member of a big network in the Littoral region and West region involved in elephant tusks and pangolins scales	none	Locked while on trial
577	04/05/2018	Santchou West	<a href="#">ATOKI Suzanne</a>	Illegal possession of 1 elephant tusks, 1 elephant jowbone and pangolins scales	Seller	A member of a big network in the Littoral region and West region involved in elephant tusks and pangolins scales	none	Locked while on trial
578	23/05/2018	Bertoua East	<a href="#">MOUSSA Adamou</a>	Illegal possession of 4 elephant tusks, 3 hippopotamus teeth	Seller	A big network in the North region and East region involved in elephant tusks and hippopotamus products	none	Locked while on trial
579	23/05/2018	Doume East	<a href="#">DJANGA Metsinda Stéphane</a>	Illegal possession of 35 Kg of pangolins scales	Seller	A member of a big network in the Littoral region and East region involved in pangolins scales	none	Locked while on trial
580	23/05/2018	Doume South	<a href="#">MESSI Mbane Stéphane</a>	Illegal possession of 35 Kg of pangolins scales	Seller	A member of a big network involved in pangolins scales and live ape including chimpanze. He is in charge of collecting pangolin scales in South region and East region	none	Locked while on trial
579	23/05/2018	Doume South	<a href="#">DANWE Dianqa Serge</a>	Illegal possession of 35 Kg of pangolins scales	Seller	The head of a big network dealing in East, Littoral and South region. He is involved in the trafiking of elephant tusks and pangolins scales	none	Locked while on trial

**Annex II - Semester in Pictures**



*Four in front of Gendarmerie brigade following arrest for ivory and pangolin scale trafficking operation done in May (above)*



*Two pangolin scale traffickers at the wildlife office shortly after they were found with 35kg of pangolin scales they were looking forward to selling, a third trafficker who escaped was later arrested in May (above)*



*Trafficker at gendarmerie legion following his arrest with ivory and hippo teeth which he transported from the north hidden inside a cattle truck. Arrested in May*



*Baby chimp rescued from wildlife traffickers in Ambam, is now living at the Mvogbetsi zoo in March*



*In March, arrested traffickers waiting for complaint reports at wildlife office*



*Wildlife officials who carried out arrest with pangolin scales (giant pangolin and black bellied pangolin scales) and traffickers being matched off after arrest (right)*





*He uses the cover of a drinking spot he owns to traffic in pangolin scales and other contraband including hippo teeth, python skins. He awaits prosecution, arrested in February*



*He was arrested in April for unlawful possession of two live mandrills which he has been keeping at his residence*

## **First Semester 2018 Links**

In January, Camer.be, a renowned website published the arrest of a Vietnamese kingpin in Ivory Coast, detailing the arrest and the extent of the crime ring that operated in several countries. It also indicated the link between EAGLE Ivory Coast that assisted authorities during the arrest and LAGA.

<http://www.camer.be/65984/11:1/cate-divoire-rapression-contre-la-criminalita-faunique-un-vietnamien-arratae-en-cate-daivoire-cote-divoire.html>

In February, Canal 2, the most popular TV channel in the country, followed up on the rescue of a baby chimp at Ambam, South of Cameroon and the arrest of three persons. The baby orphan chimp was given a first aid care and transported to the Mvogbetsi zoo in Yaounde for better treatment and the guarantee of its safety.

<https://youtu.be/wRV2OmOWApU>

In March, the arrest of two persons in Meyo Centre (Ebolowa) with ivory tusks and a rifle given to them by a widow of a superintendent of police, was published. Among other things found in their possession was a military uniform. This was broadcast over one of Cameroon national television programs, Hello Cameroon.

<https://youtu.be/7bakCb58fDw>

In April, the seizure of hundreds of ivory and the involvement of two persons arrested in Yaounde, was published on Camer.be site.

<http://www.camer.be/67409/11:1/cameroun-cameroon-over-one-hundredof-carved-ivory-pieces-seized-in-hotel-shop-in-yaounde.html>

In May, the link of the month was on the arrest of a trafficker for unlawful possession of ivory in Bertoua. He was apprehended by officials of the Regional Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife of the East Region with the collaboration of the gendarmerie legion. The story was published by Camer.be site.

<http://www.camer.be/68243/11:1/cameroun-cameroon-ivory-trafficker-arrested-in-bertoua.html>

In June, the news website, Alwihda info, published the arrest of three traffickers in Doume in East region of Cameroon with 35kg of pangolin scales. One of the traffickers who escaped the initial arrest could not stand losing his bike and decided to come back and corrupt the gendarmes who could not have dreamt better, he was immediately arrested.

[https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-des-trafiquants-fauniques-arretes-a-Doume\\_a64294.html](https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-des-trafiquants-fauniques-arretes-a-Doume_a64294.html)