

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

June 2020 Report



Highlights

- **7 traffickers arrested during 2 operations with 2 full human skeletons, 380kg of pangolin scales and 2 ivory tusks seized**
- **2 corrupt military men and a woman detained with 380kg pangolin scales seized**
- **2 human parts trafficker arrested with two full human skeletons.**
- **2 ivory traffickers who have been trafficking in the East Region for many years arrested.**
- **France 2, a French TV channels covers and broadcast the operation involving two military men and the trafficking of pangolin scales.**

General

The month was marked by the **arrest of 7 traffickers with 380kg of pangolin scales, human bones and ivory tusks.**

2 military men were arrested with 380kg of pangolin scales in the capital city Yaounde as they moved to sell the booty in a pickup car. A woman who was part of the deal and was arrested a couple of hours later at her residence. A house search at her premises would reveal several animal carcasses including pangolins. The military men explained explicitly how they used their military status to avoid arrest during trafficking. One of them was of the Presidential Guard, and was swiftly removed by his hierarchy following this arrest in a strong message that its uniforms will not be used to cover illegal activities, and any knowledge of an illegal activity will result in swift action. Despite the link between pangolins' consumption and the Covid-19 pandemic, the illegal trade goes on.

Investigations on wildlife trafficking in the West of the country, led to the discovery of network of human bones trafficking leading to the arrest of 2 with almost full 2 human skeletons packed inside two suitcases. This is the second network of human bones traffickers that has been busted, just one month away from a first operation that saw the arrest of 4 human bones traffickers in the same town. The two belong to a larger network that uses the internet to advertise their products under code names and equally search for clients who they claim included clients from abroad. One of the traffickers travelled from Ambam near the Cameroon south border to the west to carry out the transaction.

2 traffickers were arrested in Bertoua with 2 ivory tusks. One of them had been able to glide through law enforcement for several years as his involvement in ivory trafficking was well known and has been a target for investigations for a long time. He admitted to gold trafficking. They are a part of a network stretching to CAR and connected to Congo.

Investigations

- **16 investigation missions** were carried out in **5 Regions** out of the 10 Regions of Cameroon including the Centre, East, South, Littoral and West Regions.
- Good investigation in **Kenzou** led to the arrest of **2 traffickers with 2 elephant tusks in Bertoua**.
- Good investigation in **Yaounde** led to the arrest of **3 pangolin scales traffickers including 2 military men** with 380kg of pangolin scales in Yaounde.
- Good ivory investigation in **Kenzou** led to the discovery and arrest of **2 traffickers with 2 human skeletons in Fombot**.

Investigations Table

<i>Investigation Missions</i>	<i>Regions</i>	<i>No. of Operations</i>	<i>No of traffickers arrested</i>
16	5	3	7

Operation

3 operations carried out this month with MINFOF **arresting 7 traffickers**.

3/6/2020 – 2 traffickers arrested in Bertoua, East Region with 2 ivory tusks. One of the two had been under investigations for a long time as he had been involved in ivory trafficking for several years. He violently resisted arrest during the operation. They are a part of a network stretching to CAR and connected to Congo.

7/6/2020 – 3 traffickers including two military men were arrested in Yaounde in the Centre Region with 380kg of pangolin scales, a woman who was part of the deal and was arrested a couple of hours later at her residence following the arrest of the two military men. She is a well-known trafficker in several wildlife products at the Nkolndongo bushmeat market and a house search at her premises would reveal several animal carcasses including pangolins. She had been the target of investigations for at least two years. The military men explained explicitly how they used their military status to avoid arrest in trafficking. One of them was of the Presidential Guard, and was swiftly removed by his hierarchy following this arrest in a strong message that its uniforms will not be used to cover illegal activities, and any knowledge of an illegal activity will result in swift action.

26/6/2020 – 2 traffickers were arrested in Fombot in the West Region with human bones, following a wildlife crime investigation. The two were arrested with 2 almost complete human skeleton that had carefully backed in two suitcases. They used the internet to carry out their illegal activity where they advertised their products under code names and equally searched for clients who

they claimed included clients from abroad. One of the traffickers travelled from Ambam near the Cameroon south border to the west to carry out the transaction.

Operations Table

<i>No of Operations</i>	<i>Regions</i>	<i>No of Traffickers Arrested</i>	<i>Contraband</i>
2	2	7	2 full human skeletons, 380kg of pangolin scales, 2 ivory tusks

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **15 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 1 in Kribi (South), 2 in Ebolowa (South), 1 in Abong-Mbang (East), 4 in Bertoua (East), 2 in Douala (Littoral), 2 in Foumbot (West) and 3 in Mfou (Centre).
- There are **14 traffickers behind bars this month**: 5 in East region, 3 in Littoral region and 6 in West region.
- **39 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **36 cases** were scheduled in court this month.
- **8 traffickers** were convicted this month.
- **Prosecutions**: There were 4 court rulings this month.
 - **01/06/2020**: The Kribi Court of First Instance found the accused **NGAMBI Ruben and TSOGO BIKUE Sinclair guilty and sentenced them to pay 50.000 FCFA each as fine and 500.000 FCFA as damages.**

He was arrested in Lolodorf on the 25/04/2020 for illegal possession of a mandrill.

- **04/06/2020**: The Foumbot Court of First Instance found the accused **AMADOU TIJANI, KPOUHENZEN Radifatou, SAPTT Aboubakar and ABDEL Aziz guilty and sentenced them to a 5-year imprisonment term and to pay 100.000 each FCFA as fine.**

They were arrested on the 20/05/2020 for illegal sale of a human skeleton.

- **16/07/2019**: The Douala – Ndokoti Court of First Instance found the accused **ABDOUL NASSIR Sali guilty and sentenced him 20 days closed imprisonment term and to pay 54.000 FCFA as fine and 1.042.000 FCFA as damages.**

He was arrested in Douala on the 20/06/2019 for the illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 95kgs of pangolin scales.

- **16/06/2020:** The Abong-Mbang Court of First Instance found the accused NGOBA Lucie **guilty and sentenced her to pay 500.000 FCFA as fine and 3.000.000 FCFA as damages.**

She was arrested in Dimako on the 09/04/2020 for the illegal possession, circulation and sale of 50kg of pangolin scales.

Legal Table

<i>No of Missions (Out of Centre Region)</i>	<i>No of Court Judgements</i>	<i>No of Traffickers Given Prison Sentence</i>	<i>Prison term (in months)</i>	<i>No of Traffickers Sanctioned (No prison sentence)</i>	<i>No of Appeals lodged</i>	<i>No of Cases Tried in Courts</i>
15	3	4	60 months 22 days	3	0	36

Media

- **43 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, internet, radio, and television including; 20 written press materials (13 in English and 7 in French), 8 internet publications (6 in French and 2 in English), 11 radio news flashes (7 in French and 4 in English), and 4 TV news flashes (1 in English and 3 in French).
- Interviewee: The Gendarmerie Company Commander in Foubot, the Foubot Brigade Commander and the LAGA Deputy Director.
- Subjects focused this month on wildlife law enforcement including the arrest of 3 traffickers with close to 400kg of pangolin scales in Yaoundé, and the arrest of 2 human bones traffickers in Foubot and the Bertoua arrest of two with ivory tusks.
- 27 media pieces in English language and 16 in French language making a percentage of 62.7% in English and 37.2% in French
- French TV channel France 2 during its prime time programme “Sur Le Front”, broadcast the pangolin scales operation that saw the arrest of two military men with an interview of the Deputy Director.
- The three top TV channels in Cameroon equally carried the story on the arrest of the human bones traffickers in Foubot, West Region.

Media table

<i>No of media pieces</i>	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet
43	4	11	20	8

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director held a meeting with the Director of Criminal Matters at the Ministry of Justice to discuss a wildlife case.
- The Head of the Investigations Department held a meeting with the Project Manager of the Ebo Forest Research Project to discuss issues pertaining to the proposed plan to contract portions of the forest to logging companies.
- The Head of the Legal Department had a meeting with the state counsel of Douala Ndokoti to discuss legal strategies concerning a matter pending before the court. He held another meeting with the state counsel of Foubot to discuss strategies concerning a matter that was forwarded to him.
- A legal adviser had a meeting with the state counsel of Kribi to discuss legal strategies concerning the matter pending before the court, while a second legal adviser had a meeting with the state counsel of Abong Mbang and Bertoua for the same purpose. A third legal adviser had a meeting with the state counsel of Mfou to discuss matters pending at his court.
- Two legal advisers met with the Director of Criminal Matters at the Ministry of Justice to discuss the fight against wildlife crime.

Management

- Guidelines aimed at fighting the spread of Covid-19 continued to be implemented.

Activism Front

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/Actiwithvism/tabid/77/Default.aspx>.

Presentation: Due to the Covid-19 situation presentations have been suspended until further notice.

Finance

In preparation and would be made available soon as possible on the LAGA website www.laga-enforcement.org .

Link of the month

The link of the month is on our YouTube channel, and it focuses on human bones traffickers arrested in Foubot on the 20th Of May 2020. The 3 traffickers were about to sell a full skeleton when they were arrested. Several traffickers in human bones have been arrested in the Noun Division.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izFzdyh0EPE>

This Month in Pictures



Gendarmes arrest military men trafficking in pangolin scales



380kg of pangolin scales seized from two military men



Two arrested in Foubot for human bones trafficking (left and above) Two arrested ivory traffickers in Bertoua (below)

