

# The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

## February 2014 Report



### Highlights

- **4 dealers arrested in 3 operations with leopard skins and elephant parts.**
- **3 traffickers in elephant products sentenced to prison terms.**
- **Ivory dealer given 1 year prison term and to pay 25,000,000 FCFA as damages.**
- **LAGA Director still receiving treatment in Israel after a crocodile attack.**

### General

This month was marked by the arrest of 4 dealers and the conviction of 3 dealers in ivory and other elephant products.

**In 2 different operations in the West, 3 dealers were arrested with 3 leopard skins within 6 days.** In the first operations, **2 dealers were arrested with 2 skins in Baham**; they are known to have been in the business for a long time and also sell in Douala and other big cities in the country. In the second operation, **another dealer was arrested with a large and fresh skin while trying to illegally trade in it in Bandja.**

**In Yaounde – Center, a well-known poacher and dealer in elephant products was arrested with 19 full elephant jaws while arriving from Abong Mbang.** He is known to traffic in elephant tusks and owns a bike he uses to facilitate the trade. In addition to also being a poacher, he also has a network of suppliers some of whom hunt for him after being supplied with arms and ammunition.

3 dealers in ivory and other elephant products sentenced to serve prison terms. In the first case, the Court of First Instance of Yaounde – Administrative Centre convicted one ivory trafficker to **1 year imprisonment** and to pay **1.000.000 FCFA (about \$2,000)** as fine; and another to **6 months imprisonment** and to pay **300.000 FCFA (about \$600)** as fine. They were also convicted to pay jointly **25.000.000 FCFA (about \$50,000)** as damages. They will be retained in jail for 2 years more in case of default of payment of fine. They were arrested in Yaounde for the illegal detention of 24 elephant tusks.

In another case, the Court of First Instance of Abong-Mbang - East convicted a dealer to **4 months imprisonment** and to pay **2.560.000 FCFA (about \$5,100)** as fine. He was also convicted to pay **25.000 FCFA as court fees.** He will be retained in jail for further 3 months in case of default of payment of the fines. He was arrested in Lomie for illegal detention of elephant products.

LAGA Director is still receiving treatment in Israel following a crocodile attack in Ethiopia in December 2013 while on holidays. In spite of his absence the LAGA family is continuing to run LAGA and the excellent results in all fronts including arrest operations continue to show more responsibilities taken by the team and proving more capacity and independence of all the Departments.

### Investigations

- **23 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **6 Regions** of Cameroon - South West, South, East, West, Littoral and Center.
- Good investigations led to arrest operations in the West and Center Regions against dealers in leopard skins and elephant parts.
- 2 arrest operations given by a former Investigator who had worked with LAGA before and is being given another chance.

- 3 volunteers are being trained on investigation and operation procedures with the goal of identifying and arresting major dealers in and out of Cameroon and on data analysis especially phone data.
- The distribution of hotline flyers in both English and French continued.
- LAGA Investigations Department worked with TALFF – Togo on post-arrest investigations following the arrest of 3 international ivory traffickers and 7 dealers in other protected wildlife products.

## Operations

**3 operations** carried out this month with MINFOF arresting **4 suspects**

- **20/02/14 – 2 major dealers arrested with 2 skins in Baham** – West while illegally trying to trade in them; they are known to have been in the business for a long time and also sell in Douala and other big cities in the country.
- **23/02/14 – A well-known poacher and dealer in elephant products arrested with 19 full elephant jaws in Yaounde and arriving from Abong Mbang.** He is known to traffic in elephant tusks and owns a bike he uses to facilitate the trade. In addition to also being a poacher, he also has a network of suppliers some of whom hunt for him after being supplied with arms and ammunition.
- **26/02/14 - Another dealer in leopard skin in the West Region arrested with a large and fresh skin while trying to illegally trade in it.** He lied under oath that he is a chief but this information was verified not to be true; and it was understood that he uses this cover to escape the laws set to protect wildlife.

## Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **8 missions** out of Yaoundé - Centre Region: 1 in Mfou (Centre), 1 in Kribi (South), 1 in Djoum (South), 1 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Abong-Mbang (East), 1 in Bertoua (East), 1 in Baham (West) and 1 in Bafang (West).
- There are **30 dealers behind bars during this month**: 14 in the East Region, 9 in Centre region, 2 in North Region and 5 in South Region.
- **26 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **23 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 3 dealers were sentenced this month.
  - 03/02/2014: The Court of First Instance of Abong-Mbang - East convicted GNAO Jean Pierre to **4 months imprisonment** and to pay **2.560.000 FCFA as fine**. He was also convicted to **pay 25.000 FCFA as court fees**. He will be retained in jail for further 3 months in case of default of payment of court fees. He was arrested in Lomie for illegal detention of elephant products.
  - 04/02/2014: The Court of First Instance of Yaounde – Administrative Centre convicted NOUHOU Ibrahim to **1 year imprisonment** and to pay **1.000.000 FCFA as fine**; and MAMA MFongouop to **6 months imprisonment** and to pay **300.000 FCFA as fine**. They were also convicted to pay jointly **25.000.000 FCFA as damages**. They will be retained in jail for 2 years more in case of default of payment of fine. They were arrested in Yaounde for the illegal detention of 24 elephant tusks.

## Media front

- **43 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio, written press including: 31 written press material (17 in English 14 in French), 4 radio talk show all in English and 8 news flashes all in English.
- **Guests include**: chief of forestry and wildlife Baham.

- **Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including;** 2 tons of ivory seizure and arrest in Togo, court sentence 24 ivory dealer arrested in Yaounde last year, Baham arrest of 2 dealers in fresh leopard skin, Yaounde arrest of dealer in elephant teeth.
- 29 media pieces in English, 14 in French making a percentage of 67.4% in English and 32.6% in French.

### **External Relations and Policy**

- LAGA Head of the Media Department met with a team of ZSL officials headed by the Chris Ransom, the West and North Africa Programme Manager who was on a visit to Cameroon. Discussions focused on collaboration and experience sharing in the domain of wildlife law enforcement especially on information and use of the information to arrest targeted wildlife dealers, and equipping ZSL staff with basic enforcement procedures as outlined by LAGA.
- LAGA meets with the Judicial Unit of Customs in Yaounde general office for collaboration and operations arresting wildlife traffickers at the outlets especially the airports and the seaports; and to come out with a MoU between the two structures.

### **Management**

- LAGA Director still receiving treatment in Israel following a crocodile attack in Ethiopia in December 2013 while on holidays. In spite of his absence the LAGA team in Cameroon is still continuing with work and producing good operations.
- A former Investigator given another chance with LAGA ; and it started well with her field investigations leading to 2 operations.

### **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>. For this month, the activism front was on:

**Film: Africa - War is Business** reveals how conflict and war come into being in Africa as a result of the continent's natural resources. The film investigates the causes and effects of economies, and where the Western consumers fit into the equation. The main character in the documentary wonders how countries (Africa) so rich in these resources could be so overwhelmed by poverty. Of course yes! The Africa continent has a problem which has to do with mentality, individualism, mismanagement just to list these few. The way forward is for us Africans to change our mentality, come out of individualism above all embrace good governance at all levels.

### **Replication**

During this month, LAGA worked with other replication projects in planning and coordinating missions with PALF, AALF, TALFF and GALF on investigations, operations and financial procedures.

LAGA worked with TALFF on post-arrest investigations and legal procedure following arrest of 3 international dealers including a Vietnamese with about 4 tons of ivory; and also pertaining to 7 other major traffickers arrested with different wildlife products including more than 20 felid skins, more than 15 felid heads, elephant and gorilla parts.

### **Finance**

**In preparation, will be made available as soon as possible**

## This Month in Pictures



**3 dealers arrested with 3 leopard skins within 6 days in the West Region. One of the dealers unfolding a leopard skin from a bag after arrest (*left*); he was arrested with his accomplice with 2 skins at Baham. Another dealer was arrested with a large fresh leopard skin in Bandja (*right*). They are all known to have been in the business for a long time and also sell in Douala and other big cities in the country.**



**Arrested trafficker answering questions at the police station after his arrest in Yaounde – Center. He is a well-known poacher and dealer in elephant products and arrested with 19 full elephant jaws while arriving from Abong Mbang. He is known to traffic in elephant tusks and owns a bike he uses to facilitate the trade. In addition to also being a poacher, he also has a network of suppliers some of whom hunt for him after being supplied with arms and ammunition.**

## **Links of this month**

- A network of elephant poachers and ivory traffickers dismantled in Lomie – East following the arrest of 4 members with elephant tusks and elephant meat in January 2014. One of the members, a well-known poacher and a recidivist popularly called "Samedi" confessed on record to have killed 12 elephants for the past couple of months mostly in the Nki National Park. The operation was carried out with the MINFOF - Djomedjo Chief of Post and Lomie Delegation.

<http://cameroonmirror.com/arrestation-de-4-personnes-pour-detention-de-livoire-a-lomie/>