

The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

November 2010 Report



Highlights

- **4 arrest operations** carried out in **4 different countries** with the arrest of a total of **21 major dealers within 5 days in Regional Law Enforcement.**
- Gabon- Conservation Justice arrests **16 ivory dealers in 3 operations with 105Kg ivory.**
- **4 arrest operations** carried out against **6 major dealers** in Cameroon.
- LAGA receives **2 trainees from the PALF (Congo – Brazzaville) and AALF (Gabon)** projects.

General

This month was marked by concrete regional wildlife enforcement with very good operations in Cameroon, Gabon, C.A.R and Republic of Congo with a total of 21 major dealers arrested.

Experience from Cameroon has proven that enforcing existing wildlife laws and providing measurable standards for the effectiveness of the enforcement, that is the number of major wildlife law violators receiving and serving a deterring punishment, is possible. Unfortunately baseline for this indicator is still zero in most countries in the Central and Western African Sub-regions highlighting the need for the extension of the **LAGA** model. The model has already been set up under the **PALF** project in **Congo Brazzaville** and the **RALF** project in **Central Africa Republic** with arrests and prosecutions carried out. In **Gabon**, the **AALF** project is responsible for replication under the NGO Conservation Justice. The vision of carrying out regional enforcement through the aforementioned organizations was concretized this month when operations were simultaneously carried out within 5 days in Cameroon, Gabon, the Central African Republic and the Republic of Congo.

Regional Wildlife Law Enforcement

26/11- Cameroon- 2 operations arresting 3 dealers with 17 turtle shells

26/11-Gabon- Conservation Justice arresting 16 ivory dealers in 3 operations with 105Kg ivory

29/11-C.A.R- RALF arresting dealer with 2 lion skins, 2 tusks, 7 leopard skins

30/11-Congo B – PALF arresting dealer with 30 Kg ivory

A regular dealer who owns an artifact shop and is also a carver was arrested in Bafang – West with a traditional bag made out of a **leopard skin** while trying to illegally trade in it. He hides behind this shop to launder the illegal trade in products of protected wildlife species. Another regular dealer who mainly sells in Yaounde but gets products from the Eastern Region was **arrested with 4 elephant tusks all less than 5 kg** while trying to illegally trade in them. In another operation, a long time dealer in primates who was **arrested while trying to illegally sell 2 live baboons**. He had been keeping the animals for years while waiting for them to grow sufficiently so that he could trade in them. He claims to have raised and sold many primates before. **In 2 separate operations** in Limbe and Bimbia-Limbe in the South West Region, **3 dealers were arrested with a total of 17 sea turtle shells**. In the first operation in Limbe, the **2 dealers arrested were of Nigerian nationality**, they were arrested while trying to illegally trade in 7 sea turtle shells. In the second operation, the dealer was arrested with 10 sea turtle shells.

In the replication of LAGA activities, 2 trainees – Gervais from the AALF Project in Gabon and Leslie from the PALF Project in Congo – Brazzaville traveled to Cameroon to carry out a one month and 2 weeks training session respectively on LAGA activities, values and results with the aim of getting skills and receiving tools and materials in order to improve on the effectiveness of the project activities, and in the case of PALF, to save the project's drop in results after LAGA pulled out. Under the supervision of the Head of Legal Department, they were trained on activities

of each LAGA department: Investigations, Legal, Operations, Communication and Management. They had specific training sessions with various members of LAGA staff on various issues including the collection and exploitation of information, field operations, establishment of wildlife complaint reports, building strong court cases and follow up procedures in court with assessment of each party involved (magistrates, suspect, lawyers) and identification of practices of corruption and other irregularities until final decision is given, how to execute court decisions and how to publicize results of wildlife law enforcement in media. They both attended court sessions and Gervais participated in an operation that resulted in the arrest of an ivory dealer in Muyuka – South West Region. It should be noted that LAGA’s goal from 2003 has been to create a new model for NGO-Government collaboration establishing wildlife law enforcement. Our hope was that by bringing about results with an innovative approach, we will be able to change the existing system and trigger a paradigm shift in the way NGOs tackle wildlife crime. The model is essentially shifting away from targeting small-time poachers in the forest and focusing in prosecution of major dealers, fighting head the major obstacle to the application of the wildlife law in Africa – Corruption.

Investigations

- **28 investigation missions** of varying lengths were carried out in **8 Regions** of Cameroon- North West, South West, South, West, East, Center, Adamawa and North.
- Investigations led to the arrest of 6 dealers in 4 different operations in Bafang – West, Yaounde – Center, Bafoussam – West and Limbe – South West.
- Focused evaluation and new expectations and procedures continued this month with encouraging results in the form of produced operations.

Operations

4 operations were carried out this month against **6 subjects**.

- **05/11/10** – A regular dealer who owns an artifact shop and is also a carver was arrested with a traditional bag made out of a **leopard skin** while trying to illegally trade in it. He hides behind this shop to launder the illegal trade in products of protected wildlife species.
- **10/11/10** - Another regular dealer who mainly sells in Yaounde but gets products from the Eastern Region. **He was arrested with 4 elephant tusks all less than 5 kg** while trying to illegally trade in them. Some of the tusks still bore blood of the killed elephants; and he brought the tusks from Messamena - East Region.
- **16/11/10** - A long time dealer in primates who was **arrested while trying to illegally sell 2 live baboons**. He had been keeping the animals for years while waiting for them to grow sufficiently so that he could trade in them. He claims to have raised and sold many primates before.
- **26/11/10** – **In 2 separate operations** in Limbe and Bimbia-Limbe in the South West Region, **3 dealers were arrested with a total of 17 sea turtle shells**. In the first operation in Limbe, the **2 dealers arrested were of Nigerian nationality**, they were arrested while trying to illegally trade in 7 sea turtle shells. In the second operation, the dealer was arrested with 10 sea turtle shells.

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **16 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 1 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Buea (South West), 1 in Limbe (South West), 1 in Abong-Mbang (East), 3 in Sangmelima (South), 2 in Kribi (South), 2 in Dschang (West), 1 in Bafoussam (West), 2 in Bafang (West) and 2 in Bamenda (North West).
- There are **14 dealers behind bars during this month**: 2 in the East Region, 6 in the South West Region, 4 in South Region, 1 in West Region and 1 in Centre Region.
- **32 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.

- **24 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions:** 1 dealer was sentenced this month.
 - **18/11/2010:** The Court of First Instance of Yaounde-Ekounou sentenced a dealer to pay **\$648 as damages and fine**. He was arrested in Yaounde for illegally trying to trade in 10 hippopotamus teeth.
- 1 appeal was registered this month against the ruling given by the court of first instance of Yaounde-Ekounou in the matter of MINFOF Vs Biyouha Alleluia;

Media front

- **45 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio and written press including: 12 written press materials, 8 in English and 4 in French, 32 radio news flashes 16 in English and 16 in French and 1 talk show in English.
- Guests include: Minister of Forestry and Wildlife and the Director of LAGA.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; Yaounde ivory dealer arrest, Bafang arrest of leopard skin dealer, Yaounde arrest of dealer with 4 tusks, Baboon dealer arrested in Bafoussam, arrest of two Nigerians with sea turtle shells and replication.
- 25 media pieces in English, 20 in French making a percentage of 44.4% in English and 46.7% in French.

External Relations and Policy

- As part of the LAGA replication and the vision of Regional enforcement, the Director of LAGA travelled for a one week mission to assist Luc Mathot, leader of Conservation Justice in kick-starting law enforcement in Gabon. This resulted to the arrest of dealers with 105kg ivory including 9 Senegalese and 2 Cameroonians.
- LAGA Director met with the Director General of National Security to talk on wildlife law enforcement and the need to further formalise collaboration with the Police Forces.
- LAGA Director met with Ushahidi Founder in Nairobi discussing the use of technology to promote democracy in Cameroon.
- Presentation by Alain – Head of Legal Department on "NGO-government collaboration on wildlife law enforcement: Lessons for a better involvement of WWF in Central Africa": The aim of this paper was to present the scope of wildlife crime in Cameroon and in Central Africa as a whole, to show the necessity of collaboration between NGOs and governments on law enforcement at national and regional levels with the case study of LAGA in Cameroon and to present PALF, RALF and AALF projects as results of the replication of LAGA model in Congo, CAR and Gabon respectively. WWF involvement in the replication process was also highlighted with various results and challenges as well as orientations were given on what WWF can practically do in the future with existing replication projects and in countries where it does not yet exist.
- Presentation given by Alain to Transparency International - "Fighting corruption in the judiciary: Case study of an unusual partnership": this paper intends to present how LAGA through his collaboration with the Cameroonian government fights corruption as the main obstacle in the law enforcement and application process.
- German Embassy received LAGA Director in a meeting and discussed the following: LAGA's experience and its collaboration, uniting Civil Society in Cameroon, maintaining peace during election and the APT-AID principles.
- Meeting between LAGA Director and the Vice President of the Appeal Court, Head of Cameroon Association of Female Jurist (CAFEJ) on maintaining peace during the election, corruption and the judiciary system.

- LAGA Director gave a presentation in Catholic Relief Service (CRS) on how to use LAGA's model to combat child trafficking and to solve the problem of lack of prosecution of child traffickers by fighting corruption.
- A presentation was given by LAGA Director to Peace Corps on fostering community activism; manual available on LAGA's website.
- The French Embassy held a meeting with LAGA Director and Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife officials to discuss on guide book for field personnel.
- Cameroon Obosso met LAGA Director and they discussed on the issues of NGO technological tools, a project for maintaining peace during the election and putting in place a website on Cameroon languages and cultures.
- COMISUD received LAGA in a meeting to discuss issues on wildlife law enforcement.
- Meeting between World Bank Governance Officer and LAGA Director on corruption in the forest sector, transparency and accountability in NGO projects.
- LAGA Director held meeting with volunteer on corruption in the NGO sector and assisting WPE after the death of its Director in Environmental Education.
- Meeting between Transparency International and LAGA Director: Top on the agenda; using the LAGA's experience to improve the fight against corruption in Cameroon and using lessons from AC for TI Hotline - Le Centre d'Assistance Juridique et d'Action Citoyenne de Transparency international - Cameroon (CAJAC).

Management

- In the replication of LAGA activities, 2 trainees – Gervais from the AALF Project in Gabon and Leslie from the PALF Project in Congo – Brazzaville traveled to Cameroon to carry out a one month and 2 weeks training session respectively on LAGA activities, values and results with the aim of getting skills and receiving tools and materials in order to improve on the effectiveness of the project activities, and in the case of PALF, to save the project's drop in results after LAGA pulled out. Under the supervision of the Head of Legal Department, they were trained on activities of each LAGA department: Investigations, Legal, Operations, Communication and Management. They had specific training sessions with various members of LAGA staff on various issues including the collect and exploitation of information, how to make field operations, the establishment of wildlife complaint reports, how to build a good and strong court case and how to follow up procedures in court with assessment of each party involved (magistrates, suspect, lawyers) and identification of practices of corruption and other irregularities until final decision is given, how to execute court decisions and how to publicize results of wildlife law enforcement in media. They both attended court sessions and Gervais participated in an operation that resulted in the arrest of an ivory dealer in Muyuka – South West Region. It should be noted that LAGA's goal from 2003 has been to create a new model for NGO-Government collaboration establishing wildlife law enforcement. Our hope was that by bringing about results with an innovative approach, we will be able to change the existing system and trigger a paradigm shift in the way NGOs tackle wildlife crime. The model is essentially shifting away from targeting small-time poachers in the forest and focusing in prosecution of major dealers, fighting head the major obstacle to the application of the wildlife law in Africa – Corruption.

Activism Front

All the education activities carried out by the LAGA family are online; this could be gotten at the LAGA website – www.laga-enforcement.org. This month, the following educational activities were carried out:

- 1) 'Origine du Sida' – Documentary
L'origine du sida is a documentary that traces the root of HIV-AIDS in apes. In this film some

Belgian researchers claim that HIV- AIDS originated from Congo in Africa and later spread to the West. In the process of coming up with vaccine against polio, some researchers used kidneys of chimps which were later diagnosed with viruses related to HIV-AIDS. The painful thing in the creation of vaccine is not the use of parts of chimps but the maltreatment and eventual death of the animals in the process.

Question

1. How authentic is the findings of these researchers?
2. After discovering that apes have transmitted virus, why didn't they discontinue the use of the animals' kidneys for vaccine?

Presented by i66 - Investigation

2) Bike hikers

Dean and Eric from the UK made a presentation in the office to LAGA workers on their experiences and objective in moving on bikes across Africa. This was complimented by pictures taken along the way.

Finance

LAGA Expenditure by budget line for November 2010

Amount CFA	Budget line		Amount USD
2,351,050	Investigations	28 inv, 8 Regions	\$4,665
1,006,300	Operations	4 Operation against 6 subjects	\$1,997
3,429,360	legal	follow up 32 cases 14 locked subjects	\$6,804
1,655,285	Media	45 media pieces	\$3,284
2,945,813	Policy & External Relations	Congo/Gabon/CAR/Uganda	\$5,845
918,000	Management	Coordination	\$1,821
1,860,586	Office		\$3,692
14,166,394	TOTAL EXPENDITURE NOVEMBER		\$28,108

LAGA Expenditure by donor for November 2010

AmountCFA	Donor	Amount USD
4,425,610	FWS	\$8,781.0
2,845,613	FWS-Replication	\$5,646.1
363,000	BornFree Foundation	\$720.2
1,325,121	Rufford Foundation	\$2,629.2
5,570,050	Neu Foundation	\$11,051.7
14,529,394	TOTAL	\$28,828.2

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



A regular dealer who mainly sells in Yaounde but gets products from the Eastern Region arrested with 4 elephant tusks all less than 5 kg while trying to illegally trade in them. Some of the tusks still bore fresh blood stains of the killed elephants; and he brought the tusks from Messamena - East Region. He has steady suppliers from the Eastern Region.



2 dealers arrested of Nigerian nationality arrested while trying to illegally trade in 7 sea turtle shells in Limbe – South West Region. We carry out illegal trade in wildlife under the cover of fishermen.



Another dealer trying to illegally trade in sea turtle shells arrested in Bimbia – Limbe – South West Region. He was arrested with 10 sea turtle shells, and he has a motorcycle which he uses to transport his products.

Links of this month

Fostering Activism - The NGO is not a technical institute in charge of mere execution of Program. The NGO should foster activism and act in the spirit of fighting for a cause and undertake a secondary goal to produce activist, leaders and bring a positive change to their country beyond the service of the NGO. The NGO should instil specified values in its members. Staff is recruited not according to merely skills but examined in their values and potentials to become independent activists. The rarest quality of personnel is honesty and the desire to bring a change in one's country. Any recruit has to pass a period of volunteering where these aspects (values) are thoroughly examined. The post in the NGO should not be regarded as a job but as a mission and therefore demanding exceptional devotion, commitment, sacrifice, initiatives, self discipline fitting a fight for a cause. At any point of time, when a member of the organization does not prove these qualities, he/she will be removed. LAGA members are encouraged to carry any external activities connected to a cause and some NGO's time will be given to do so.

Weekly Activism Debates

Every week, the NGO is carrying educational activities where members are encouraged to debate issues of development, activism and encourage critical thinking of the realities of the country and the ways to bring change. For that, the organization is having a library of films and presentations prepared by the NGO members.

Food for Spirit

A weekly quote stressing a specific value is posted in the office under the title 'Food for Spirit' as a part of creating a supporting working environment for activists.

Food for Thought

A quote from research / book containing figures or other facts provoking critical thought on development in Africa are posted weekly under the title 'Food for Thought'.

Library

As part of educational activities the NGO maintains a library at the service of the staff and visitors aim at propelling activism

Involvement

Daily, the NGO is supplying the members with news papers of the day. One of the NGO members is in charge of daily press briefing. This is done to get the members more involved in the realities of the country as the basis of citizen's involvement and activism.

Creating Independent Activists

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 do develop the project in the vision of turning it in to an independent NGO/paper/book. The function of leadership is not producing more followers but to produce more leaders.

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

LAGA Replication - LAGA's goal from 2003 has been to create a new model for NGO-Government collaboration establishing wildlife law enforcement. Our hope was that by bringing about results with an innovative approach, we will be able to change the existing system and trigger a paradigm shift in the way NGOs tackle wildlife crime. The model is essentially shifting away from targeting small-time poachers in the forest and focusing in prosecution of major dealers, fighting head the major obstacle to the application of the wildlife law in Africa – Corruption. Following several awards and recommendations from the international community to replicate the model in other countries, LAGA has started working with other NGOs transferring the LAGA experience and model throughout the sub-region. The LAGA model is currently operating in 4 countries – RCA, Congo Brazzaville, Congo Kinshasa, Gabon and contacts have started with Nigeria.

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