

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

December 2017 Report



Highlights

- **Legal assistance provided to Djoum wildlife officials following the arrest of 2 traffickers and seizure of 216 tusks in a military car.**
- **The entire LAGA family went on annual vacation.**
- **The Interim Director attended a human resource management training course at the Galilee International Management Institute in Israel**
- **A legal adviser participated in the anti-poaching committee meeting held at the Governor's in Yaounde**

General

This month was marked by the legal assistance provided to Djoum wildlife officials following the seizure of 216 ivory tusks from a colonel's car.

The legal team assisted wildlife officials after an arrest of 2 traffickers with 216 ivory tusks and 81 elephant tails, found in a military car belonging to a gendarmerie colonel. The assistance also involved fighting corruption and traffic of influence when the State Counsel handling the case had to resist pressure to hand over the entire case to the military following un-procedural requests.

A super volunteer came to the end of training and volunteering period with LAGA and went to the Mefou ape sanctuary to continue volunteering during the vacation period. He is expected to move over to the Ivory Coast project in January.

LAGA family went on annual vacation and the event was marked by the presentation and distribution of end of year gifts, a common lunch and the award of a certificate of commendation to the Head of the Investigation Department following his tremendous commitment and efforts, since he joined the organisation.

Investigations

26 investigation missions of varying lengths were carried out in **7 Regions** of Cameroon viz: Littoral, Centre, South, East, West, Southwest and North regions

Investigations Table

Investigation Missions	Regions	No. of Operations	No of traffickers arrested
26	7	0	0

Operation

No operation was carried out this month. While efforts were concentrated on finalising the year as the annual vacation started on December 21, much time was used on legal assistance provided to Djoum wildlife officials following the arrest of 2 traffickers with 216 ivory tusks.

Legal

- LAGA legal department carried **10 missions** out of Yaounde-Centre Region:
2 in Douala (Littoral), 1 in Nkongsamba (Littoral), 1 in Ebolowa and Ambam (South), 4 in Sangmelima (South) and 2 in Djoum.
- There are **15 traffickers behind bars this month**: 2 in East region, 2 in Adamaoua region, 2 in Northwest region, 1 in Southwest region, 1 in West region, 4 in South region, and 3 in Littoral region.
- **35 cases** were followed up by the legal department this month.
- **31 cases** were scheduled and being tried in court this month.
- **8 traffickers** were convicted this month.
- **Prosecution**: We had 5 judgments this month.
 - **05/12/2017**: The Sangmelima Court of First Instance found the accused **EVEGUE Frederick Marie** guilty as charged and ordered that he pays **200.000 FCFA as fine, 27.850 FCFA as court fees and 6.000.000 FCFA as damages**. He was arrested in Sangmelima on the 20/04/2017 for the illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species including 2 elephant tusks, a leopard skin and 4 leopard teeth.
 - **05/12/2017**: The Ebolowa Court of First Instance found the accused person **OBA'A ABOUTOU Celestin** as charged and sentenced him to **4 months imprisonment term and to pay 41.561 FCFA as court fees and awarded to MINFOF the amount of**

1.500.000 FCFA as civil damages. He was arrested in Ebolowa on the 30/08/2017 for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of a baby chimp and pangolin scales.

- **08/12/2017:** The Appeal Court of Centre maintained the ruling of the Bafia Court of First Instance that found the accused person **MBENTAIE Douglas** guilty as charged and sentenced him to **6 months suspended sentence during 3 years and 10.000 FCFA as fine and awarded MINFOF the amount of 450.000 FCFA as civil damages.** He was arrested in Yaounde on the 6/06/2015 for illegal capture, possession, circulation and commercialization of 4 chimpanzee skulls and a yellow back duiker skull.
- **12/12/2017:** The Ebolowa Court of First Instance found the accused **ANVELA Ernest Laurent and ZOBO EVINA Samuel** guilty of illegal capture, possession, circulation and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species (50kg pangolin scales). They were sentenced to: **3 months imprisonment suspended during 3 years and to pay 167.783 FCFA as court fees and 2.700.000 FCFA as civil damages.** They were arrested in Ebolowa on the 11/10/2017.
- **19/12/2017:** The Sangmelima Court of First Instance found the accused **MENGUE Jeanette** not guilty, **MBELECK Rigobert and NSUM NSUM Dany** guilty as charged and sentenced to **6 months suspended sentence during 3 years and to pay 150.000 FCFA as fine, 35.850 FCFA court fees and 2.625.000 as damages.** They were arrested in Sangmelima on the 15/11/2017 for the illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of trophies of totally protected species including 4 elephant tusks 10 kilograms of pangolin scales.

There was an appeal against the court ruling in the matter concerning **EVEGUE Frederick Marie** at the Sangmelima court of first instance.

Legal Table

No of Missions (Out of Centre Region)	No of Court Judgements	No of Traffickers Given Prison Sentence	Prison term (in months)	No of Traffickers Sanctioned (No prison sentence)	No of Appeals lodged	No of Cases Tried in Courts
12	5	1	0	7	1	35

Media

- **16 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press and internet, including; 13 written press material (9 in English and 4 in French), and 3 internet publications (2 in French and 1 in English) .
- Quotes from: Ofir Drori EAGLE founder and LAGA director
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: the Douala arrest of 3 persons with 128kg of pangolin scales, the arrest of another 2 in Ebolowa with 71kg of pangolins as well as Bangangte arrest of 2 trafficking pangolin scales and leopard skins, the Yaounde arrest of 2 with ivory, and the arrest of 2 traffickers in Djoum over the illegal possession of 216 ivory tusks and 81 elephant tails.
- 10 media pieces in English and 6 in French making a percentage of 62.5% in English and 37.5% in French.

Media Table

No of Media Pieces	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet
16	0	0	13	3

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director held a meeting with the Centre Regional Delegate of Forestry and Wildlife to discuss issues connected to wildlife law enforcement operations in the Centre region.
- A legal adviser participated in the regional anti-poaching committee meeting held at the Governor's in Yaounde.
- The Head of the Legal Department held meetings with the State Counsel of Djoum and Douala – Bonanjo to discuss legal strategies concerning arrest operations carried out by wildlife officials and the police in the two towns respectively and legal advisers of the department held meetings with various state counsels in the following areas Ebolowa, Ambam, Nkongsamba and Sangmelima to discuss matters (cases) pending in the various courts.

Management

- Jean Claude Vignoli, a super volunteer, came to the end of his three-month training and volunteering programme and moved on , during the vacation period, to provide his volunteer services at the Mefou National Park. He is expected back to LAGA in January to finalise his travel modalities to the Ivory Coast project.
- Four volunteers continued their test with the investigation department.
- LAGA family went on annual vacation and the event was marked by a common lunch and the distribution of end of year gifts. During the event, a certificate of commendation was handed to the Head of the Investigation Department.
- The Interim Director attended a human resource management training course at the Galilee International Management Institute in Israel. This program that also focused on experience exchange and sharing included visiting Israel's most significant cultural and religious sites.

Activism Front:

Presentation: AC participation at the 7th Session of Conference of State Parties to UNCAC at Vienna

The presentation covers the recent participation by two members of the AC team to the UNCAC CoP 7 that took place in Vienna from the 6 to 10, November 2017 and it touched on the understanding of UNCAC and the activities of UNCAC coalition to which AC is a member. The objective of the participation was highlighted and this included offering AC an active participation in the UNCAC Coalition of Civil Society, strategize and strengthen AC's fight against corruption while building an international portfolio for international cooperation. During the conference, they gave a presentation on technical assistance at a plenary session and equally attended several side events that focused on diverse topics including tackling grand corruption, asset recovery and

international cooperation, judicial integrity and corruption in wildlife crime. Several of AC's goals and objectives were effectively articulated during the Vienna convention. They equally talked about issues to be addressed by AC which included taking the fight against corruption to another level, initiating collaboration with state agencies like CONAC as well as other civil society organizations that fight against corruption, gaining financial independence and increasing international allies.

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>.

Link of the month

Camer.be, published the story on the seizure of 216 ivory tusks on board a military car and the indictment of the two involved while also highlighting the murky role played by the military in ivory trafficking in the country.

<http://www.camer.be/65078/11:1/cameroun-deux-personnes-inculpees-a-la-suite-de-la-saisie-de-216-pointes-daivoire-et-81-queues-daalaphant-dans-la-voiture-daun-colonel- cameroon.html>

Finance

Please check LAGA website www.laga-enforcement.org for monthly financial reports.

This Month in Pictures



216 ivory tusks seized on board a military car belonging to a gendarmerie colonel



Among the seized wildlife products on board on the military car were 81 elephant tails. A network of ivory traffickers was uncovered and the suspicious links with the military is troubling.



The entire LAGA family receives end of year presents as they start a 3-week traditional annual vacation.



The Head of investigation department was awarded a commendation certificate during end of year lunch for his tremendous efforts and work since he joined the organization