

# The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA December 2024 Report



## Highlights

- **3 traffickers, including a Born Again Church pastor, arrested with 6 elephant tusks in Yaounde, Centre Region.**
- **The Deputy Director continued his mission in Abidjan where he is assisting EAGLE Cote d'Ivoire for a couple of months.**

## General

This month was marked by the arrest of **3 traffickers with 6 elephant tusks.**

3 ivory traffickers, including a pastor, arrested with 6 tusks. The Born Again Church pastor was the mastermind of the ring and got the tusks from a former magistrate. They used a Yango taxi to arrive at the scene of transaction with the tusks concealed in a flour sack. They were quickly arrested and marched off to the wildlife office for interrogation and further investigations.

The Deputy Director continued his stay with EAGLE Cote d'Ivoire where he is assisting the Team following the departure of the Coordinator last month.

The Team went on annual vacation following a very demanding year and all are expected back in January 2025.

## Investigations

- **7 investigation missions** were carried out in **4 regions** including the East, Centre, Adamawa and South regions.
- After the successful arrest of 4 ivory traffickers in Ebolowa, good infiltration continued in the same network leading to the arrest of 3 ivory traffickers with 6 elephant tusks weighing 30kg in Yaounde

*Investigations Table*

| Investigation Missions | Regions | No. of Operations | No. of traffickers arrested |
|------------------------|---------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 7                      | 4       | 1                 | 3                           |

## Operation

**An operation** carried out this month with MINFOF **arresting 3 traffickers.**

**18/12/2024 – 3 traffickers arrested with 6 elephant tusks in Yaounde, Centre Region.** 3 ivory traffickers, including a pastor, arrested with 6 tusks. The Born Again Church pastor was the mastermind of the ring and got the tusks from a magistrate. They used a Yango taxi to arrive at the scene transaction with the tusks concealed in a flour sack. The traffickers are linked to an ivory trafficking network that operated from the South Region. They were quickly arrested and marched off to the wildlife office for interrogation and further investigations.

*Operations Table*

| <i>No of Operations</i> | <i>Regions</i> | <i>No of Traffickers Arrested</i> | <i>Contraband</i> |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1                       | 1              | 3                                 | 6 elephant tusks  |

## Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **3 missions** out of Yaounde - Centre Region: 1 in Ebolowa (South), 1 in Akonolinga (Centre), and 1 in Ngaoundere.
- There are **15 traffickers behind bars this month**: 5 in Centre, 3 in Littoral region, 1 in South region, and 6 in West region.
- **17 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **13 cases** were scheduled in court this month.
- **No traffickers** were convicted this month.
- **Prosecutions**: There was one court ruling this month.

**20/12/2024**: The Ambam Court of High Instance found the accused **DEUDJUI TCHOKOUALI Alain Fabrice guilty and sentenced him to 4 months in prison and to pay 200,000 FCFA as fines**. The court dismissed the Ministry's claim for damages as unfounded. He was arrested in Ambam on the 18/08/2024 for the illegal possession of 15 ivory tusks.

An appeal was filed against the case of **DEUDJUI TCHOKOUALI Alain Fabrice** in the South Court of Appeal.

### *Legal Table*

| <i>No of Missions<br/>(Out of Centre<br/>Region)</i> | <i>No of Court<br/>Judgements</i> | <i>No of<br/>Traffickers<br/>Given Prison<br/>Sentence</i> | <i>Prison<br/>term (in<br/>months)</i> | <i>No of<br/>Traffickers<br/>Sanctioned<br/>(No prison<br/>sentence)</i> | <i>No of<br/>Appeals<br/>lodged</i> | <i>No of<br/>trials in<br/>Courts</i> |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 3  | 1                                 | 1  | 4                                      | 0  | 1                                   | 17                                    |

## Media

- **15** media pieces were produced and pushed to the media including: 2 written press (1 in English & 1 in French), 11 radio news flashes (7 in French & 4 in English) and 2 internet publication (1 in English & 1 in French).
- Giving a total of 9 media pieces produced in the French language and 6 in the English language making 60% in French and 40% in English.

- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: the arrest of 3 traffickers including a military officer with three and a half elephant tusks and the arrest of 3 other traffickers including a born again pastor with 6 elephant tusks in Yaounde.

### *Media Table*

| <i>No of media pieces</i> | <b>TV</b> | <b>Radio</b> | <b>Newspapers</b> | <b>Internet</b> |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 15                        | 0         | 11           | 2                 | 2               |

### **External Relations and Policy**

- The Head of the Legal Department and two legal advisers held a meeting with the State Council of Yaounde Centre Administratif to discuss operation and legal strategies.
- He held a meeting with the State Council of Djoum to discuss legal strategies on a matter pending before the court.
- A legal adviser had a meeting with the State Council of Ebolowa to discuss the legal strategies on a matter pending before the court.
- Another legal adviser held meetings with the State Councils of Abong Mbang, Akonolinga and Ebolowa, respectively, to discuss the legal strategies concerning matters pending before their courts.
- A legal had a meeting with the State Council of Ntui to discuss the legal strategies on matters pending before the court.
- The legal advisers distributed copies of the new wildlife law to several authorities.

### **Management**

- Preparations for the hosting of an audit firm went well .
- The Team was granted an annual vacation after a long and tedious year. They are expected to rest and come back in January.
- The Deputy Director continued his mission in Abidjan where he is assisting the EAGLE Cote d'Ivoire Team.

### **Finance**

**In preparation and would be made available soon as possible on the LAGA website [www.laga-enforcement.org](http://www.laga-enforcement.org) .**

### **Activism Front**

No activism activities were carried out within the month and plans are underway to boost activism activities.

### **Link of the month**

Eco-Outlook, a news site, published the arrest of 3 traffickers including a Born Again Church pastor with 6 elephant tusks in Yaounde. The traffickers were arrested in a crackdown operation conducted by wildlife officers in collaboration with the Police and technically assisted by LAGA. Click the link below to read the full story:

<https://ecooutlooknews.com/2024/12/05/a-military-officer-arrested-for-wildlife-trafficking/>

**This Month in Pictures**



*Born again church pastor among traffickers who await prosecution process at wildlife office shortly after arrest with 6 elephant tusks in Yaounde*

