



EAGLE

January 2018
EAGLE Network

Wildlife Law Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ *31 wildlife traffickers arrested in 6 countries*
- ✓ *A major crackdown on an international ivory trafficking network. The leader, a Vietnamese national, was arrested with five other members of his network, a criminal syndicate that has been operating for years in at least seven different countries. The arrest led to the confiscation of 478 kg ivory, over half a ton of pangolin scales, four illegal handguns, leopard parts, 7 cutting and carving machines and more contraband. The syndicate was also involved in money laundering and human trafficking to China.*
- ✓ *A baby chimp rescued and 3 wildlife traffickers arrested with 80 kg pangolin scales in Cameroon*
- ✓ *6 traffickers arrested with 15 tusks in Congo and ivory trafficking ring crushed*
- ✓ *11 ivory traffickers arrested in Gabon in 4 operations, including one for corruption after he attempted to bribe officials*
- ✓ *4 elephant and hippo ivory traffickers arrested in Uganda in two operations*

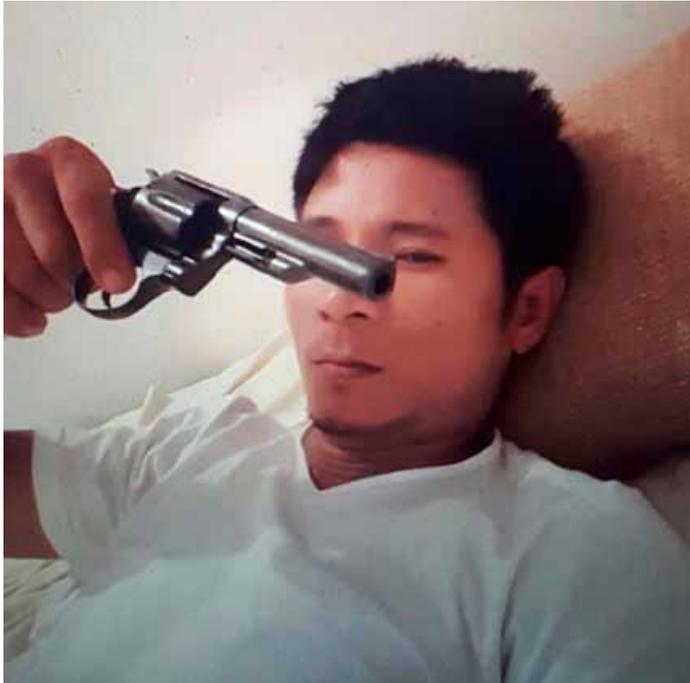


The Minister of Forestry and Minister of Interior of Ivory Coast participated at a press conference held after the arrest in Ivory Coast.

Summary

31 wildlife traffickers were arrested in 6 countries in January.

A major crackdown on an international ivory trafficking network. The leader, a Vietnamese national, was arrested in Abidjan with five other members of his network, a criminal syndicate that had been operating for years in at least seven different countries and



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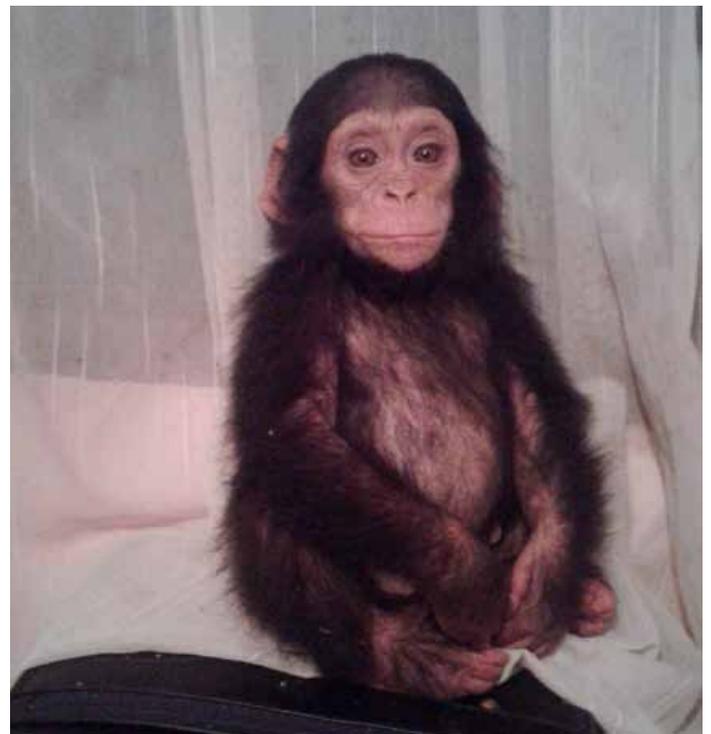
is estimated to have generated the slaughter of tens of thousands of elephants for their tusks. This arrest led to the confiscation of 478 kg ivory, over half a ton of pangolin scales, some packed and ready for export, four illegal handguns, leopard parts including crushed and boiled bones, 7 cutting and carving machines and more contraband. The head of the criminal organization in Cote d'Ivoire is directly linked to two prior seizures, one in Vietnam and another in Cambodia, where 619 kg and 941 kg of ivory was seized by authorities, respectively. The syndicate was also involved in money laundering and human trafficking to China.

6 traffickers arrested with 15 tusks in Congo. One member of the ring is Cameroonian, he had been organizing poaching squads. The ring was activating poachers, supplying guns and ammunition. An automatic assault rifle with 4 magazines was seized as well as a motorcycle, used to transport the contraband. For transport to the place of transaction the

traffickers concealed the ivory under a carpet in the trunk of a taxi, in the space used for a spare wheel, so it went unnoticed at checkpoints.

11 ivory traffickers arrested in Gabon in 4 operations, including one for a corruption after he attempted to bribe officials to have released other three traffickers. They were arrested with 16 tusks. One of them was arrested in the act in a motel, trying to sell the contraband, concealed in a rice bag, while the other two were waiting in neighbouring room for their share. 3 ivory traffickers arrested in the South of the country with 2 tusks. An ivory trafficker arrested in the capital city with 4 tusks. 3 ivory traffickers arrested in an attempt to sell 2 tusks in the North of the country. Two of them, of Malian nationality, were arrested in the act when they tried to sell the tusks. The third one was arrested one day later after he fell in a trap, when he was going to pick up his share for the transaction.

4 elephant and hippo ivory traffickers were arrested in Uganda in two operations. 3 traffickers were arrested with 25kg ivory, 100 hippo teeth weighing 50kg and pangolin scales in the West of the country. An ivory trafficker was arrested with 3 tusks and 124 pieces of hippo ivory in the North of the country. He is a repeat offender, already arrested for trafficking ivory and illegal possession of firearms in 2014.



A baby chimp rescued and 3 ape and pangolin traffickers arrested in Cameroon

Cameroon – LAGA

- A baby chimp rescued and 3 ape and pangolin traffickers arrested. One of the three is a Niger national. The baby chimp was found concealed inside a toilet of a house belonging to one of the traffickers; 80 kg of pangolin scales were behind the main door. Two traffickers were arrested inside the house, the third, who arrived on a bike, stumbled on the arresting team that gave him no chance as he attempted to escape. The baby chimp has been taken to the Mvog-betsi zoo that lacks appropriate structure, the expertise and the manpower to cater for the chimp, which risks dying from negligence, therefore LAGA team pushed the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife to send him to an appropriate sanctuary.
- The LAGA family resumed work on January 12, after an annual vacation that started in December.
- The Deputy Director attended a meeting organized by TRAFFIC, which brought together a US Embassy official, WWF, and ZSL, to prepare for the World Pangolin Day, coming up next month.
- He also held a meeting with Chris Plowman, ZSL law enforcement coordinator who was on a working visit to Cameroon.



Congo – PALF

- 6 traffickers arrested with 15 tusks in the north of the country. One member of the ring is Cameroonian and he had been organizing poaching squads. The ring was activating poachers, supplying guns and ammunition. An automatic assault rifle with 4 magazines was seized as well as a motorcycle, used to transport the contraband. For transport to the place of transaction the traffickers concealed the ivory under a carpet in the trunk of





a taxi, in the space used for a spare wheel, so it went unnoticed at checkpoints.

- 2 legal advisers and one investigator continued their test period.
- The Assistant Coordinator met with the Director General of the Forest Economy about the procedure concerning the chimpanzee seized in Dolisie.
- She also held a meeting with the Departmental Director of Waters and Forests of Pointe-Noire on the legal follow-up of the case at the TGI of Pointe-Noire and with the Owando Departmental Director of Water and Forests, the State Counsel and the



Court of Owando on the legal follow-up of cases at the TGI of Owando and the transfer of prisoners to Brazzaville.

Gabon – AALF

- 4 traffickers arrested with 16 tusks. One of them was arrested in the act in a motel, trying to sell the contraband, concealed in a rice bag, while the other two were waiting in neighbouring room for their share. A fourth one, the uncle of the traffickers, got arrested for corruption after attempting to bribe officers in order to release the traffickers.
- 3 ivory traffickers arrested in the South of the country with 2 tusks. One of them, a Burkina Faso national, was already monitored by police when arriving to a hotel on a motorbike with the contraband concealed in a black travel bag. Few minutes later he was arrested in the act when he was weighing the ivory to proceed with the transaction. He denounced two other traffickers who were arrested on the same day.
- An ivory trafficker arrested in the capital city with 4 tusks. He was arrested in an attempt to sell the



4 traffickers arrested with 16 tusks.



ivory in an apartment building and remains behind bars awaiting trial.

- 3 ivory traffickers arrested in an attempt to sell 2 tusks in the North of the country. Two of them, of



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Malian nationality, were arrested in the act when they tried to sell the tusks. The third one was arrested one day later after he fell in a trap, when he was going to pick up his share for the transaction.

- A chimpanzee baby was rescued by the joint team of Conservation Justice and Wildlife officers, and handed to the International Center for Medical Research in Franceville to receive a proper care.
- The legal team held meetings with different Gabonese authorities, including the State Counsels of several regions, the Provincial Directors of Waters



An ivory trafficker arrested in the capital city with 4 tusks.

and Forests, the Head of Anti-Poaching, the Head of Judicial Police and others.

Republic of Guinea – EAGLE Guinea – GALF

- A trafficker arrested with worked ivory in a mining town, trying to sell 9 ivory necklaces and 4 bracelets. He is a sculptor, connected to a highly organized ring of traffickers with connection to Chinese traffickers, to whom he had been selling ivory for years. He remains behind bars, awaiting trial.
- 2 traffickers, arrested in December with 2 dead chimpanzees and alive chimp baby, were prosecuted and sentenced to one year in jail, the maximum sentence possible, and to pay over 55,000 USD in fines and damages each.
- The Coordinator had a meeting with the UK Am-

bassador and the External Relations Officer of the UK Embassy to discuss the project activities and the support of the Ambassador in the fight against wildlife crime.

- The Coordinator held a series of meetings with Guinea authorities including the Focal Point of the Fight Against Wildlife Crime of the Ministry of Environment, the General Director of the Corps des Conservateurs de la Nature, the Focal Point of CITES, the General Director of Water and Forests, several State Counsels and Regional Directors of Water and Forests and others. He also met with the Director of Guinea Ecology, the Coordinator of WABICC and with the USAID I Representatives.



Togo – EAGLE Togo

- Still continuing political unrest, leading to many demonstrations, limited the activities of EAGLE-Togo.
- Rens Ilgen, the Coordinator of EAGLE-Togo, continued his mission to Ivory Coast to lead the operation and coordinate the project. The Acting Deputy Coordinator travelled to Ivory Coast to support the operation there.
- The acting Assistant Coordinator held several

meetings with Togolese authorities, including the Head of the Legal Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and representative of the Ministry of Administration to discuss the registration of EAGLE-Togo, the has been met to discuss the registration of EAGLE-Togo, and the Secretary of the Minister of Forestry to organize a meeting concerning the MoU.

- One investigator continued his test period.

Senegal - EAGLE Senegal – SALF

- The activist Michel Marie Senghor, an accountant of SALF since March 2016, succumbed to a deadly disease in January. The entire EAGLE Senegal team paid him a final tribute at his funeral.
- Daniele Mbui, the Financial Officer, arrived to Senegal to support the financial department and to start a recruitment process of a new accountant.
- The test period of new legal advisors and investigators continued and 2 legal advisors joined the team.
- The Coordinator held meetings with the High Airport Authorities of the new Dakar Airport (AIBD) and the OCRITIS (Central Office for the Repression of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotics) to discuss future training of officials and to get support during operations in the fight against wildlife crime.
- Saidou Barry, the Coordinator of Guinea, arrived to Senegal to train new team members and to discuss fostering activism.

Benin – AALF-B

- The Assistant Coordinator trained 15 customs officers at the Cotonou International Airport on regulations and concealment techniques used in wildlife trafficking.
- The coordinator met with an US delegation including the US Ambassador in Cotonou, to introduce them the project and discuss the fight against wildlife crime.
- The coordinator and the legal team held a series of meetings with Benin authorities including the Deputy General Director of Waters, Forests and Hunting, the Director of Conservation and Promotion of Natural Resources, former Deputy Director of the Judicial Police, currently Director of Foreign Travel of the National Police School, and with several State Counsels and judges to discuss ongoing cases.

Uganda – EAGLE Uganda

- 3 traffickers arrested with 25kg ivory, 100 hippo teeth weighing 50kg and pangolin scales in the West of the country. They are Ugandans, residing in Congo, and trafficking various kinds of contraband for years, getting it from Congo or nearby Murchison Falls National Park.
- An ivory trafficker arrested with 3 tusks and 124 pieces of hippo ivory in the North of the country. He is a repeat offender, already arrested for trafficking ivory and illegal possession of firearms in 2014.



3 traffickers arrested with 25kg ivory, 100 hippo teeth weighing 50kg and pangolin scales in the West of the country.

- 2 ivory traffickers were prosecuted and sentenced to 1 year in jail. They were arrested in September 2017 with 4 tusks.
- An ivory trafficker, arrested in November 2017 with 2 tusks, was sentenced 2 years and 10 months in prison.
- A trafficker, arrested in July with one okapi skin and 4 ivory tusks, was sentenced to 10 months in jail.



An ivory trafficker arrested with 3 tusks and 124 pieces of hippo ivory in the North of the country.

Ivory Coast – EAGLE Ivory Coast



The leader, a Vietnamese national, was arrested in Abidjan

- A major crackdown on an international ivory trafficking network. The leader, a Vietnamese national, was arrested in Abidjan with five other members of his network, a criminal syndicate that had been operating for years in at least seven different countries and is estimated to have generated the slaughter of tens of thousands of elephants for their tusks. This arrest led to the confiscation of 478 kg ivory, over half a ton of pangolin scales, some packed and ready for export, four illegal handguns, leopard parts including crushed and boiled bones, 7 cutting and carving machines and more contraband. The head of the criminal organization in Cote d'Ivoire is directly linked to two prior seizures, one in Vietnam and another in

Cambodia, where 619 kg and 941 kg of Ivory was seized by authorities, respectively. The syndicate was also involved in money laundering and human trafficking to China.

- Rens Ilgen, coordinator of EAGLE Ivory Coast led the action.
- Ofir Drori, the founding director, travelled to Ivory Coast to coordinate and support the arrest operation.
- Nicolas Charron, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer travelled to Ivory Coast to support the follow up of the operation.
- The acting Deputy Coordinator of Togo arrived to



UCT in action

Ivory coast to support the operation.

- Ofir and the Coordinator held several external relations meetings. Both the Minister of Forestry and Minister of Interior participated at a press conference held after the arrest.
- There were several meetings held with the Chargé des Affairs of the US Embassy, the RSO and his deputies and other representatives of US government to assist with the case.
- Meetings were also held with the State Counsel General, the Republic State Counsel, his first substitute and the 4th Instruction Judge to explain the case.



Four illegal handguns



Ivory concealed under a bed



478 kg ivory, over half a ton of pangolin scales, some packed and ready for export, 7 cutting and carving machines and more contraband.



Almost half ton pangolin scales was seized



This is the story of how Ofir, Cecile and Rens as well as most of the Ivory Coast team, cancelled their holidays vacation at the last minute and instead started cooking something big for a few intensive weeks...

On 18th January 2018, the EAGLE Network and the government of Ivory Coast began the coordination of a crackdown operation against an international ivory trafficking network. The leader, a Vietnamese national, was arrested in Abidjan with five other members of his network, a criminal syndicate that has been operating for years in at least seven different countries and is estimated to have generated

the slaughter of tens of thousands of elephants for their tusks. The arrests led to the confiscation of 478 kg ivory, over half a ton of pangolin scales, some packed and ready for export, four illegal handguns, leopard parts, 7 cutting and carving machines and more contraband. The head of the criminal organization in Cote d'Ivoire is directly linked to two prior seizures, one in Vietnam and another in Cambodia, where 619 kg and 941 kg of Ivory seized by authorities, respectively.

The arrests were carried by the UCT (The Unit Against Transnational Organized Crime) and the Ministry of Waters and Areas with the assistance of the EAGLE Network, a wildlife law enforcement NGO. The US Government carried out an extensive investigation against the international trafficking ring. The arrests are the result of a tight American-Cote d'Ivoirian enforcement collaboration.

The exposed modus operandi of the syndicate consisted of hollowing out timber logs, hiding ivory inside them, and filling up the remaining space with wax. The logs were then re-closed with glue, mixed with normal timber, and exported in containers to Asia.

The same method has been observed in additional seizures, in Kenya and Mozambique where more than two tons of ivory have been seized. At least four African countries (Kenya, Mozambique, Uganda, Cote d'Ivoire) and two Asian ones (Cambodia, Vietnam) are implicated, making this criminal syndicate an extremely important one in wildlife trafficking.

Phone analysis shows calls from those arrested to three known tax haven countries. The extent of the money laundering hints at the level of organization in the syndicate's operations.

One of those arrested in the operation, a Chinese national, was found in possession of pages listing the identities of young Ivorian women, their pictures, height and weight, and whether they had a female genital mutilation. This starts an investigation on Traffic in Persons for prostitution in China using fake passports.



Headquarters

- Ofir Drori, the Founding Director, travelled to Ivory Coast to lead the arrest operation.
- Daniele Mbui, the Financial Officer, travelled to Senegal to support the financial department and to start a recruitment process of a new accountant.
- Nicolas Charron, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer travelled to Ivory Coast to support the follow up of the operation.

International Media

- New York Times reported on the Ivory Coast arrest: Ivory Coast Arrests Six in Ring That Smuggled Parts of Elephants, Leopards and Pangolins

[Link to the New York Times](#)

- Reuters article about the Ivory Coast arrest: Ivory Coast seizes huge haul of elephant tusks and pangolin scales

[Link to the Reuters](#)

- Several international media including Vietnamese one published the Reuters article in English:

[Link to MailOnline](#)

[Link to Yahoo News](#)

[Link to New Straits Times](#)

[Link to VN Express](#)

[Link to MedAfrica](#)

- Many articles were published in French as well:

[Link to Le Quotidien](#)

[Link to Al Wihda](#)

[Link to Africa News](#)

[Link to La Nouvelle Tribune](#)

THE EAGLE Network

EAGLE: Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement, is a network of members across Africa, who are replicating effectively a program and operational model to undertake wildlife law enforcement, which is based on the LAGA-Cameroon model, trailed, practiced and tested since 2003. The EAGLE Network currently operates in nine African countries and keeps expanding.

The over-arching objective of the EAGLE Network is: *Developing civic activism and collaborating with governments and civil society to improve the application of national and international environmental legislation, through a program of activities: investigations, arrests, prosecutions and publicity. Through this, EAGLE aims to generate a strong deterrent against the illegal*

trade in wildlife, timber and related criminal activities, including corruption.

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