



**EAGLE**

March 2019  
EAGLE Network

# Wildlife Law Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ *12 wildlife traffickers arrested in 5 countries*
- ✓ *International criminal syndicate crashed in Cameroon, 4 traffickers arrested with 73 ivory tusks and 1.7 tons of pangolin scales*
- ✓ *A Chinese trafficker arrested with ivory in Senegal, 3 Senegalese traffickers arrested in follow up with 391 carved ivory pieces*
- ✓ *2 ivory traffickers arrested with 3 elephant tusks in Gabon*
- ✓ *2 traffickers arrested in Togo with 9 kg of ivory*
- ✓ *An ivory trafficker arrested with two carved tusks in Côte d'Ivoire*
- ✓ *LAGA signed a Collaboration Convention with Customs in Fighting Transboundary Crime. A breakthrough in establishing formal relations with Customs for the EAGLE Network*



*4 traffickers were arrested with 73 ivory tusks and 1.7 tons of pangolin scales in Cameroon.*



*A Chinese was arrested in Senegal at the airport with ivory in her suitcase.*

# Summary

12 wildlife traffickers were arrested in 5 countries.

4 traffickers were arrested with 73 ivory tusks and 1.7 tons of pangolin scales in Cameroon. They are members of a well-organized syndicate, operating across Africa for years. One of them owned a telephone shop and used it as a cover-up for the illegal trade in pangolin scales and ivory. The owner of the shop made regular trips to China. A second trafficker dealt in pepper and local spices called “djansang”. Ivory and pangolin scales were concealed inside the pepper and djansang bags when being transported from the South-East of the country where the traffickers activated groups of small traffickers and poachers. They were stocking the contraband in a house in Douala, which was in a construction with nobody living around. Then they delivered it to Nigeria. The contraband then continued to Asia, which is the biggest source of demand for pangolin scales and ivory.



*A Chinese was arrested in Senegal at the airport with ivory in her suitcase. Later 3 traffickers were captured and arrested, with 391 pieces of carved and fresh ivory.*

A Chinese was arrested in Senegal at the airport after the CAAT Unit detected ivory in her suitcase. She concealed the contraband, consisting of 6 statues, 2 bracelets and a pendant, inside packets with milk powder, which were hidden in between of 20 illegally exported cigarette cartons. The trafficker, who worked as a shopkeeper in Dakar, remains in jail awaiting trial. She cooperated on identification the traffickers, who traded ivory with her.

After three days of intense nonstop investigation the 3 traffickers were captured and arrested, including a repeat offender, who was already arrested for ivory

trafficking in 2017 and sentenced to three months in jail. It is a clear proof that stronger sentences, creating better deterrent, are needed. 391 pieces of carved and fresh ivory were found during the house search.

2 ivory traffickers were arrested with 3 elephant tusks in Gabon. They were surprised in the act while they were getting ready to sell the tusks. The first trafficker was arrested in the act trying to sell the ivory, the woman was arrested shortly after being monitored by operation team while she was bringing the contraband to the place of transaction. The ivory originated from Congo – Brazzaville.

2 traffickers were arrested in Togo with 9 kg of ivory. These two are linked to networks in Benin and Burkina Faso. The connections are under investigation. Phone evidence shows also a link with gold trafficking. The first trafficker was arrested when he tried to sell the tusk, which was concealed in his house. The ivory was found during a house search. The second trafficker, who was also involved in the transaction, was arrested later.

An ivory trafficker was arrested in Côte d'Ivoire with two carved tusks. The Senegalese national travelled by overnight bus to sell the contraband in the capital city.

LAGA signed a Collaboration Convention with Customs in Fighting Transboundary Crime. A breakthrough in establishing formal relations with Customs for the EAGLE Network.



*4 traffickers were arrested with 73 ivory tusks and 1.7 tons of pangolin scales in Cameroon.*

# Cameroon – LAGA

■ 4 traffickers arrested with 73 ivory tusks and 1.7 tons of pangolin scales. They are members of a well-organized syndicate, operating across Africa for years. One of them owned a telephone shop and used it as a cover-up for the illegal trade in pangolin scales and ivory. The owner of the shop made regular trips to China. A second trafficker



dealt in pepper and local spices called “djansang”. Ivory and pangolin scales were concealed inside the pepper and djansang bags when being transported from the South-East of the country where the traffickers activated groups of small traffickers and poachers. They were stocking the contraband in a house in Douala, which was in a construction with nobody living around. Then they delivered it to Nigeria. The contraband then continued to Asia, which is the biggest source of demand for pangolin scales and ivory.



- A supervolunteer came to the end of a five-week long training. He participated with the Deputy Director at a meeting organized by ZSL which aimed at understanding what is done at the level of training among the various conservation organizations and how to synchronize efforts.
- The Deputy Director held a meeting at the European Union Delegation to discuss issues related to collaboration in wildlife law enforcement.
- LAGA signed a Collaboration Convention with Customs in Fighting Transboundary Crime. A breakthrough in establishing formal relations with Customs for the EAGLE Network.
- Several team members started a self-defense course, while first aid training continued for those who have not completed it yet.

## 4 traffickers arrested, 1.7 tons of pangolin scales and 300 kg of ivory seized

*The biggest crackdown on organized trafficking ring in Cameroon this year so far!*

On Thursday 14 March 2019 four Cameroonian traffickers have been arrested in a crackdown operation in Douala, with 1.7 tons of pangolin scales and 300 kg of ivory. They are members of a well-organized syndicate, operating across Africa for years.

They were taken by surprise after they carried the pangolin scales and ivory to the place of transaction in two vans. The cars stopped on a silent and peaceful road in a residential area of Douala, the traffickers ready to do the transaction. Suddenly the forces of law blocked both ends of the road and within seconds all four were handcuffed and arrested in a swift arrest operation.

LAGA has been working on this arrest following a long-term high-level investigation, and collaborating with the Cameroon authorities.

The organized ring has been collecting ivory and pangolin scales in large amount in South and East regions of Cameroon, stocking them in a house in Douala, which was in a construction with nobody living around. Then they were delivering the contraband to Nigeria. The contraband then continued to Asia, which is the biggest source of demand for pangolin scales and ivory.

EAGLE Network has identified more cases where this pattern of trafficking repeats – pangolin scales or ivory originating from central Africa, Cameroon being the hub for collecting them, and then send to Nigeria, from where it is easier to ship them to Asia, due to poor law enforcement in the country.

In August 2018, six traffickers were arrested in Douala due to LAGA work with more than 700 kg pangolin scales in a crackdown on an international syndicate dealing also in rhino horns and lion parts. The exposed modus operandi of the syndicate consisted of buying the scales from smaller traffickers in Cameroon, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo and exporting them to Nigeria via Cameroon. When the scales arrived in Nigeria, they were assembled for illegal export.

The US consul in Douala accompanied by Jonathan Baas, US Embassy diplomat based in Yaoundé, visited the Divisional Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife to see for themselves the huge quantities of wildlife products seized and to congratulate the authorities to their success in fighting wildlife crime.

1.7 tons of pangolin scales represent between 1,700 and 3,400 killed pangolins, depending on the species. And yet this is still only a fracture of all the massacred pangolins. Pangolins are the most trafficked animals of the world, we estimate that between 0.4 and 2.7 million pangolins are hunted every year in central African forests.



## Congo – PALF

- An Ivory trafficker was prosecuted and sentenced to 5 years in jail – a very good deterring sentence. He was arrested last month with 4 elephant tusks. He activated a ring of poachers and provided them with ammunition in the North part of Congo, and they massacred the elephants also in Odzala-Kokoua National Park.
- 6 ivory traffickers, arrested with 41 tusks last month, were prosecuted. Two of them were sentenced to one year in jail, three to 6 months in jail. One of them was released, but an appeal was made.
- The Coordinator held a series of meetings with several high authorities including the General Director of Forest Economy, the Advisers and Attachés of US Embassy, several State Counsels and Department Directors of Water and Forest and others.
- Luc Mathot, a Founding Director, arrived to Congo to support the PALF project and to hold a meeting with the EU Governance Officer.
- A legal adviser started his test period, another one continued on test.

## Gabon – AALF

- 2 ivory traffickers arrested with 3 elephant tusks in the North-East of the country. They were surprised in the act while they were getting ready to sell the tusks. The first trafficker was arrested in the act trying to sell the ivory, the woman was arrested shortly after being monitored by operation team while she was bringing the contraband to the place of transaction. The ivory originated from Congo – Brazzaville.
- 3 leopard skins traffickers were sentenced to jail for 4 months. They were arrested in February with 2 leopard skins.
- The legal team followed a case of 2 Chinese traffickers, arrested by the Central Office of Anti-Drug Control, during a routine check with 2 ivory bracelets, 50 ivory pearls and four panther teeth. They were sentenced to 3 months imprisonment.
- The Director of Conservation Justice continued his mission in CAR in the Protected Areas of Dzanga-Sangha, where he held meetings with EU and US officers, with WWF, with WCS. Then he travelled to the Republic of Congo to support the PALF project and to hold a meeting with the EU Governance Officer.
- The Director of Conservation Justice also met the Director General of the National Police, the Chargé d’Affaires at the US Embassy in Gabon, the UNODC Manager in Gabon and the Director of the Anti-Poaching Campaign.



## Togo – EAGLE Togo

■ 2 traffickers arrested in the capital city with 9 kg of ivory. These two are linked to networks in Benin and Burkina Faso. The connections are under investigation. Phone evidence shows also a link with gold trafficking. The first trafficker was arrested when he tried to sell the tusk, which was concealed in his house. The ivory was found during a house search. The second trafficker, who was also involved in the transaction, was arrested later.



- The Coordinator arrived to Togo to lead the operation and to manage the project.
- The Coordinator and the legal team held a series of meeting with authorities, including INTERPOL,

the State Counsel, the officials of the Ministry of Environment and others.

- An investigator on test continued his test period.

## Senegal – EAGLE Senegal

■ A Chinese arrested at the airport after the CAAT Unit detected ivory in her suitcase. She concealed the contraband, consisting of 6 statues, 2 bracelets and a pendant, inside packets with milk powder, which were hidden in between of 20 illegally exported cigarette cartons. The trafficker, who worked as a shopkeeper in Dakar, remains in jail awaiting trial. She cooperated on identification the traffickers, who traded ivory with her.



■ After three days of intense nonstop investigation the 3 traffickers were captured and arrested, including a repeat offender, who was already arrested for ivory trafficking in 2017 and sentenced to three months in jail. It is a clear proof that stronger sentences, creating bet-





ter deterrent, are needed. 391 pieces of carved and fresh ivory were found during the house search.

- The accountant from Benin travelled to Senegal to train the accountant on test.

- The Assistant Coordinator and a Legal Adviser trained the students of the Master in Natural Resource Management and Sustainable Development at the Institute of Environmental Sciences (University Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar) in the methods of fighting wildlife crime.

## Benin – AALF-B

- A trafficker was sentenced to 1 year in jail. He was arrested in February with a leopard and 3 crocodile skins together with his accomplice, who was released.
- The new German Ambassador visited the headquarters of Nature Tropicale to get familiar with AALF-B project and its activities in fighting wildlife crime in Benin.
- The Coordinator trained 12 officers of the Special Border Monitoring Unit based at Athiémé in Mono on the methods of combating wildlife crime.

- The Coordinator held a series of meetings with government authorities, including the General Director of W National Park, the secretary of the Court of Appeal in Parakou, the Deputy Director of the Judicial Police, the Head of the General Directorate for Water, Forests and Hunting, several State Counsels and others.
- The accountant from Benin travelled to Senegal to train the accountant in test period.

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## Côte d'Ivoire – EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire

- An ivory trafficker arrested with two carved tusks. The Senegalese national travelled by overnight bus to sell the contraband in the capital city.
- The Head of the Legal Department presented the fight against wildlife crime at the seminar of OIE that focused on animal health issues and in which 26 francophone African countries participated.
- The building up of the case of the criminal syndicate taken down in January 2018 continued, focusing on money laundering investigations and the procedures for money laundering charges in Côte d'Ivoire.
- The Coordinator travelled to Togo to lead the operation and to manage the project.
- The Coordinator held a series of meetings with authorities including UCT.
- Recruitment process was intensified to strengthen the Investigation and Legal Departments.



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## Burkina Faso - EAGLE Burkina Faso

- The investigations were interrupted due to the security situation in the country. The frequent strikes paralyzed the courts and no hearings were happening.
- The recruitment process was intensified to strengthen the Investigation and Legal Departments with for candidates starting their test period next month.

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## Headquarters

- Jana Hajduchova, the Support Officer, conducted a mission to Uganda to train the Coordinator on finances, to evaluate recruitment process for the accountant and to support the management of the newly developed project.
- Adams Cassinga, an activist from DRC, arrived to Nairobi for training. With his small NGO and no funding, he already succeeded in arresting wildlife traffickers and keeping them behind bars.
- Luc Mathot, the Founding Director, continued his mission in CAR in the Protected Areas of Dzanga-Sangha, where he held meetings with EU and US officers, with WWF, with WCS. Then he travelled to the Republic of Congo to support the PALF project and to hold a meeting with the EU Governance Officer.

# International Media

- Voice of America picked up the story of the four Cameroonian traffickers arrested in a crackdown operation in Douala, with 1.7 tons of pangolin scales and 300 kg of ivory. They are members of a well-organized syndicate, operating across Africa for years.

[Link to VoA](#)

- Many French media informed about the four Cameroonian traffickers arrested.

[Link to RFI](#)

[Link to France Info](#)

[Link to GEO](#)

[Link to 20 minutes](#)



## 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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