



**EAGLE**

February 2021  
EAGLE Network

# Wildlife Law Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ *20 traffickers arrested in 5 countries*
- ✓ *5 traffickers arrested in Côte d'Ivoire with 60 ivory tusks dismantling a network involving Ghana, Togo and Burkina Faso*
- ✓ *3 traffickers arrested in Côte d'Ivoire with 166 pieces of sculpted ivory in a crackdown against a vast Guinean syndicate*
- ✓ *A gendarmerie officer and a military man arrested in Congo with 3 ivory tusks*
- ✓ *A trafficker arrested in Congo with 8 tusks and 2 ivory pieces*
- ✓ *A customs official arrested in Cameroon with a live mandrill*
- ✓ *3 traffickers from Mali and Guinea arrested in Gabon with 2 ivory tusks*
- ✓ *3 traffickers arrested in Gabon with 3 leopard skins*
- ✓ *2 traffickers arrested in Benin with 2 ivory tusks*



*5 traffickers arrested in Côte d'Ivoire with 60 ivory tusks*



*A customs official arrested in Cameroon with a live mandrill.*

# Summary

20 traffickers arrested in 5 countries

5 traffickers arrested in Côte d'Ivoire with 60 ivory tusks dismantling a network involving Ghana, Togo and Burkina Faso. They were arrested in the interior of the country close to the Ghana border in a very small room. The traffickers violently attacked the arresting force and continued to resist even as they were handcuffed. The tusks were of mostly very young elephants and some were fresh with blood stains showing the elephants were recently massacred. The 30 slaughtered elephants in the seizure are a mere snapshot of the regular decimation of elephants generated by this illegal network.

3 traffickers arrested in Côte d'Ivoire with 166 pieces of sculpted ivory in a crackdown against a vast Guinean syndicate. The traffickers attempted to escape but were swiftly caught. The arrest was difficult because the Team had to do it at their shop in a busy part of the town. The owner of the ivory who is a carver, attempted to sell the ivory in the back court of the shop. The shop that is located in an area of intense trafficking in the commercial capital, was raided and a search found 56 items of ivory jewelry. The search of another shop next door found locked metal boxes containing several other ivory pieces.

A gendarmerie officer and a military man arrested in Congo with 3 ivory tusks. The 2 traffickers were arrested after the arrest of 4 other traffickers with an ivory tusk by the gendarmerie. The Legal Team followed up new information on the ivory trafficking ring and this led to the arrest of the gendarme officer with two ivory tusks and the military man with one ivory tusk. The gendarmerie officer is well known for selling carved ivory and the military man admitted to killing the elephant himself.

A trafficker arrested in Congo with 8 tusks and 2 ivory pieces weighing 28kg. He transported the ivory on a motorbike to the capital city where he was arrested as he attempted to trade the contraband. Interrogations uncovered other criminal activities the trafficker carried out including trading in radioactive substances

A customs official arrested in Cameroon with a live mandrill. He was arrested in the South of the country, close to the border with Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. He travelled with the mandrill clinging on

him, as he drove his car for over 40km to sell the animal. He kept the animal in iron chains in a small and unsuitable cage for over one year. He had earlier illegally traded another mandrill in the same town to a live animal trafficker who travelled about 400km for the deal. The hungry and frail looking mandrill was immediately taken care of following its rescue and moved to the Yaoundé zoo for further care.

3 traffickers from Mali and Guinea arrested in Gabon with 2 ivory tusks. The first two traffickers, of Malian nationality, were arrested in the North of the country as they attempted to sell the tusks. Soon after the arrest, they denounced the third trafficker, a Guinean, who was arrested in another town.

3 traffickers arrested in Gabon with 3 leopard skins. The traffickers were arrested during an intense sequence of arrests in a crackdown on this illegal trade. When the first trafficker who arrived the place of transaction with a leopard skin concealed inside a bag was arrested, two more arrests swiftly followed.

2 traffickers arrested in Benin with 2 ivory tusks. They were arrested in the act as they attempted to sell the ivory in the North of the country. They travelled to the place of transaction on a motorbike with the ivory carefully concealed in a jute bag, to avoid detection. A third trafficker is on the run as the Team fights to apprehend him.



*3 traffickers from Mali and Guinea arrested in Gabon with 2 ivory tusks.*

## Cameroon – LAGA

- A customs official arrested with a live mandrill. He was arrested in the South of the country, close to the border with Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. He travelled with the mandrill clinging on him, as he drove his car for over 40km to sell the animal. He kept the animal in iron chains in a small and unsuitable cage for over one year. He had earlier illegally traded another mandrill in the same town to a live animal trafficker who travelled about 400km for the deal. He bought the two mandrills from an area of intense trafficking, in the South of the country. He was actively searching for a baby gorilla to buy before his arrest. The hungry and frail looking mandrill was immediately taken care of following its rescue and moved to the Yaoundé zoo for further care.
- The Deputy Director trained rangers of the Dja Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, on information collection and management and the fight against corruption, during a training seminar.



- The Head of the Investigation Department held a meeting with Conservator of the Dja Reserve to discuss possible areas of collaboration.
- The Assistant Head of the Investigation Department held a series of meetings with the new Customs Chief of Brigade and Customs Chief of Subdivision at the Freight Section of the Nsimalen airport on the strengthening of collaboration and the fight against cross border wildlife crime.

## Congo – PALF

- A gendarmerie officer and a military man arrested with 3 ivory tusks. The 2 traffickers were arrested after the arrest of 4 other traffickers with an ivory tusk by the gendarmerie. The Legal Team followed up new information on the ivory trafficking ring and this led to the arrest of the gendarme officer with two ivory tusks and the military man with one ivory tusk. The gendarmerie officer is well known for selling carved ivory and the military man admitted to killing the elephant himself.
- A trafficker arrested with 8 tusks and 2 ivory pieces weighing 28kg. He transported the ivory on a motorbike to the capital city where he was ar-



A gendarmerie officer and a military man arrested with 3 ivory tusks after the arrest of 4 other traffickers with an ivory tusk by the gendarmerie



A trafficker arrested with 8 tusks and 2 ivory pieces weighing 28kg



rested as he attempted to trade the contraband. Interrogations uncovered other criminal activities the trafficker carried out including trading in radioactive substances

- The Coordinator held meetings with the Regional Commander of Gendarmerie of Brazzaville to discuss some ongoing cases.

# Gabon – AALF

- 3 traffickers arrested with 2 ivory tusks. The first two traffickers, of Malian nationality, were arrested in the North of the country as they attempted to sell the tusks. Soon after the arrest, they denounced the third trafficker, a Guinean, who was arrested in another town.
- 3 traffickers arrested with 3 leopard skins. The traffickers were arrested during an intense sequence of arrests in a crackdown on this illegal trade. When the first trafficker, who arrived at the place of transaction with a leopard skin concealed inside a bag was arrested, two more arrests swiftly followed.
- The Coordinator granted an interview to TeleAfrica a Gabonese television channel and l'Union, a national daily.



3 traffickers arrested with 3 leopard skins.



3 traffickers arrested with 2 ivory tusks.

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## Togo – EAGLE Togo

- The Assistant Coordinator held a meeting with the Customs Chief of Brigade at the Lome Port to examine areas of collaboration and legal assistance.
- The Assistant Coordinator held a meeting with the Executive Officer of the non-governmental organization Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement to discuss recruitment opportunities for investigators.

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## Senegal – EAGLE Senegal

- Two traffickers arrested last month for leopard skin trafficking were sentenced to 6 months in prison. They were sentenced to an additional 3 months in prison for illegal possession of a firearm.
- The Coordinator held meetings with the internal security service of the French Embassy, the Regional Director of the US Forestry Service, the Director General of the National Police, the Director of the Central Office for the Repression of Illicit Drug Trafficking (DOCRTIS) and the Technical Adviser No 1 to the Director General of the National Police.
- The Legal Team followed up the various pending issues with MoUs with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the General Directorate of Customs and the General Directorate of the National Police where meetings were held to finalise the process.

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## Benin – AALF-B

- 2 traffickers arrested with 2 ivory tusks. They were arrested in the act as they attempted to sell the ivory in the North of the country. They travelled to the place of transaction on a motorbike with the ivory carefully concealed in a jute bag, to avoid detection. A third trafficker is on the run as the Team fights to apprehend him.
- The Coordinator and the Legal Team held a series of meetings with high officials including some State Counsels, Police Commissioners and others.



# Côte d'Ivoire – EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire

■ 3 traffickers arrested with 166 pieces of sculpted ivory. The arrest was difficult because the Team had to do it at their shop in a busy part of the town. The traffickers attempted to escape but were swiftly caught. The owner of the ivory who is a carver, attempted to sell the ivory in the back court of the shop. The shop that is located in an area of intense trafficking in the commercial capital, was raided and a search found 56 items of ivory jewelry. The search of another shop next door found locked metal boxes containing several other ivory pieces. The area that has been on our radar for years is the center of ivory trafficking in the country with connections all over the continent. The traffickers are the front door to a major Guinean syndicate spanning at least several countries in West, Central and East Africa.



3 traffickers arrested with 166 pieces of sculpted ivory.

■ 5 traffickers arrested with 60 ivory tusks weighing 114kg. They were arrested in the interior of the country close to the Ghana border in a very small room. The traffickers violently attacked the arresting force and continued to resist even as they were handcuffed. The tusks were of mostly very young elephants and some were fresh with blood stains showing the elephants were recently massacred. The 30 slaughtered elephants in the seizure are a mere snapshot of the regular decimation of elephants generated by this illegal network. The trafficking ring was very organized with shared roles. 3 of the traffickers, of Burkina Faso nationality, had the task of smuggling the ivory from Ghana, Togo and Burkina Faso to the Ivorian border where the contraband was stored. Two oth-

ers, Ivorians, were in charge of the financing and trade in the country.

- The Coordinator and the Assistant Coordinator held meetings with the OIPR, the Ivorian administration in charge of the management of parks and reserves to discuss modalities for collaboration with EAGLE - Côte d'Ivoire.



5 traffickers arrested with 60 ivory tusks weighing 114kg.



- The Assistant Coordinator held a meeting with the UCT (Unité de lutte contre la Criminalité Transnationale) to collaborate on important investigations
- The Coordinator and the Assistant Coordinator held a meeting with the UCT to plan for the two arrest operations.

# Burkina Faso - EAGLE Burkina Faso

- A trafficker was sentenced to 2 years in prison. He was arrested in December last year with 4 ivory tusks. The project carried out the legal follow up of the case from the PONASI project.
- The recruitment of legal advisers intensified.

## Headquarters

- Nicolas Charron, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, travelled to the Republic of Congo on a three-week mission to support the new Coordinator with structural reorganization, training, evaluation, monitoring and application of procedures.
- Jana Hajduchova, the Support Officer, came to end of her period with the network, following 6 years of active and committed service to fighting wildlife crime on the continent.

## 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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