



EAGLE

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EAGLE Network

Wildlife Law Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ *28 wildlife traffickers arrested in 5 countries*
- ✓ *3 ivory traffickers arrested in Ivory Coast in a kick off of a new EAGLE replication*
- ✓ *11 leopard skin traffickers arrested in Gabon and a ring of traffickers crushed*
- ✓ *3 traffickers arrested in Congo with 2 leopard skins, 2 elephant tails and a skull and hand of a baby gorilla*
- ✓ *8 ivory traffickers arrested in Uganda in 3 different operations*



The 10th replication of the EAGLE Network kicked off in a crackdown on ivory and leopard skin traffickers in Ivory Coast. In 3 operations 3 traffickers were arrested with 400 pieces of carved ivory, 40 kg of raw ivory, 7 leopard skins and other contraband.

Summary

28 wildlife traffickers were arrested in 5 countries.

The 10th replication of the EAGLE Network kicked off in a crackdown on ivory and leopard skin traffickers in Ivory Coast. In 3 operations 3 traffickers were arrested with 400 pieces of carved ivory, 40 kg of raw ivory, 7 leopard skins and other contraband. In two back to back operations 2 major traffickers were arrested, one with 6 tusks, weighting 40 kg and 7 leopard skins, the other one with 165 carved ivory pieces on the same day a few hours later. The third trafficker tried to escape the arrest but was captured two days later in the house of his parents with 235 carved pieces of ivory, a crocodile skin and several python skins. All three of them have been involved in an international network, trafficking ivory across the borders of the sub-region, mainly between Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea. The operations were carried in Abidjan with the Ministry in charge of Wildlife and the UTC - the special unit against transnational organized crime. The WARA director led the operation, the Coordinator of GALF and a legal adviser joined her to support the operation.



The 10th replication of the EAGLE Network kicked off in a crackdown on ivory and leopard skin traffickers in Ivory Coast.

11 leopard skin traffickers arrested in Gabon in 3 different operations. 6 traffickers arrested and a ring of leopard skin traffickers crushed in the West of the country. Two leopard skins and an elephant tail were seized. The first trafficker, a security guard, was arrested during an attempt to sell the skin and he quickly denounced two others, who were arrested a day after. A fourth trafficker, a father to one of the traffickers, was arrested after he arrived to the police station and admitted that he was the owner of the elephant tail. The other 2 traffickers were arrested in their homes four days later when the criminals revealed the source of the contraband. A

rifle with cartridges was found in the house of one of them. 2 traffickers were arrested with 2 leopard skins, 2 tusks and an elephant tail in the south of the country. 3 leopard skin traffickers were arrested with two leopard skins and leopard teeth. A rifle was found in the house of one of them.

3 traffickers were arrested with 2 leopard skins, 2 elephant tails and a skull and hand of a baby gorilla among other contraband. One of the traffickers uses his position of a healer, using animal body parts in his witchcraft, to cover trafficking in wildlife contraband. He repeatedly arranged the transactions between the other two traffickers and other buyers.

8 ivory traffickers were arrested in Uganda in 3 different operations. 2 ivory traffickers arrested in the North of the country with 35 kg of ivory. A muezzin and a watchman of a mosque were arrested in the act during an attempt to sell 3 tusks in the office of the mosque. The arrest highlights that religious positions can be used as a cover for wildlife crimes. 3 ivory traffickers were arrested with 2 tusks weighting 18.4 kg on the same



3 ivory traffickers were arrested with 2 tusks weighting 18.4 kg in Uganda

day, when the team rushed to nearby town for more action. The traffickers have been smuggling ivory from Congo regularly, using a trade with car spare parts as a cover for their criminal activity. 2 traffickers arrested in the west of the country near the Congo border with 25 kg of ivory. The traffickers were hiding the 4 tusks in their house, where they intended to sell it, but were surprised by Police Flying Squad and arrested in the act. Also these traffickers were using the proximity of Congo forests and their elephants as a resource of contraband for their illegal activity for years.

Cameroon – LAGA

■ An ivory trafficker arrested with two pieces of carved ivory. He travelled from the South to the capital with the statues wrapped his underwear and placed in a bag in an attempt to conceal them. He was trafficking ivory regularly, collecting it in the different

parts of the country from his collaborators, who were carving statues and other objects from raw ivory. He was then bringing them to the big cities in the South and selling the carved objects there.

■ The Deputy Director and the Head of the Legal Department held a meeting with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife to discuss the renewal of the memorandum between LAGA and the Ministry, legal representation in cases and collaboration in general. They also met with the Director of Wildlife to discuss on evolution of wildlife operations in the field. They carried out a visit to one of the Inspectors General at the Ministry.



An ivory trafficker arrested with two pieces of carved ivory.

Congo – PALF

■ 3 traffickers arrested with 2 leopard skins, 2 elephant tails and a skull and hand of a baby gorilla among other contraband. One of the traffickers uses his position of a healer, using animal body parts in his witchcraft, to cover trafficking in wildlife contraband. He repeatedly arranged the transactions between the other two traffickers and other buyers. The two arrived to his place with the second skin, concealed in a bag, and they all were arrested in the act.

■ The legal team continued to fight hard to get the prosecution back on track of the corrupt police officer, arrested for releasing repeat offender trafficker in April. This situation points to a widespread corruption in the



3 traffickers arrested with 2 leopard skins, 2 elephant tails and a skull and hand of a baby gorilla

enforcement and justice sectors.

- The coordinator met with several authorities to prepare the operation, including the State Counsel the Departmental Commander of Gendarmerie, the Departmental Director of Ministry of Environment and the Prefect of the Department.
- A legal advisor and an investigator continued their test period.



3 traffickers arrested with a skull and hand of a baby gorilla

Gabon – AALF

- 6 traffickers arrested and a ring of leopard skin traffickers crushed in the West of the country. Two leopard skins and an elephant tail were seized. The first trafficker, a security guard, was arrested during an attempt to sell the skin and he quickly denounced two others, who were arrested a day after. A fourth trafficker, a father to one of the traffickers, was arrested after he arrived to the police station and admitted that he was the owner of the

elephant tail. The other 2 traffickers were arrested in their homes four days later when the criminals revealed the source of the contraband. A rifle with cartridges was found in the house of one of them.

- 2 traffickers arrested with 2 leopard skins, 2 tusks and an elephant tail in the south of the country. The first one, a notorious trafficker, arrived with 2 leopard skins to a small town and was swiftly arrested during an attempt to sell them. The same



2 traffickers arrested with 2 leopard skins, 2 tusks and an elephant tail



6 traffickers arrested and a ring of leopard skin traffickers crushed



3 leopard skin traffickers arrested with two leopard skins and leopard teeth

day during a house search two tusks and other contraband was seized and his accomplice, a taxi driver, arrested too.

- 3 leopard skin traffickers arrested. First a trafficker was arrested with two leopard skins and leopard teeth, he denounced the two other traffickers, who were arrested the day after. A rifle was found in the house of one of them.
- AALF undertook the legal follow up of a case of a Chinese trafficker arrested during a routine road check up by Anti-Criminal Brigade after an ivory tusk, cut in 4 pieces and pangolin scales were found in his car. He is behind bars, awaiting trial.
- An ivory trafficker arrested in April with 18 tusks weighting 75 kg was prosecuted and sentenced to 6 months in prison and about 9,500 USD in fines and damages. Another ivory trafficker, arrested in April, was sentenced to 6 months in jail

and about 2,500 USD in fines and damages.

- 3 ivory traffickers, arrested in March, were prosecuted. Two of them sentenced to 6 months in jail and the third one to 3 months in prison.
- The coordinator met with several officials from US Embassy and US FWS attaché based in Gabon, to discuss the fight against wildlife crime and AALF project.
- He also met with the Environment and Economic Officer of the EU Delegation in Gabon and with the FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade) representative, who arrived from Brussels within the Congo Basin Forest Partnership.
- The Head of Legal Department graduated from one year long Hubert Humphrey Fellowship Program at the University of California, Davis, in the area of Natural Resources, Environmental Policy and Climate Change.

Republic of Guinea – GALF

- GALF hosted a meeting of the USAID and WABICC regional offices in May. The participants including the Political Adviser of the US Embassy in Guinea, the WABICC National Coordinator, the West Africa Sub-Regional Coordinator on behalf of WABICC and the USAID Regional Environmental Affairs Officer discussed wildlife trafficking in Guinea, reviewed the progress being made and evaluated the obstacles slowing down the fight.
- Legal department continued follow up the case of Sidimé family, arrested in 2012 for ivory trafficking.
- The Coordinator held a series of meetings with authorities, including the focal point of CITES, the focal point of wildlife crime at the Ministry of Environment, the Political Adviser of US Embassy, the State Counsel and the Judge in Kindia.
- The Coordinator, the head of investigations and a legal adviser travelled to Ivory Coast to support the first operation of the new EAGLE replication.
- A legal adviser finished his training under the EAGLE Network Exchange Programme in Cameroon.

Togo – EAGLE Togo

- The Coordinator met with the Principal Commissioner of the Police at the main Ghana border to discuss cooperation on fighting cross-border trafficking.
- The Coordinator and the Deputy Coordinator held a meeting with the the Deputy Director and the Chief of UMCC of OCRTIDB to discuss cooperation, and with two officials of the Ministry of Environment to discuss concrete cases of the wildlife crime in Togo.
- The Coordinator met with two experts on wildlife law enforcement from Born Free who were conducting a mission in Togo.
- The Deputy Coordinator travelled to Ivory Coast to support newly started replication in building a new team.
- A new investigator started a test period.

Senegal - SALF

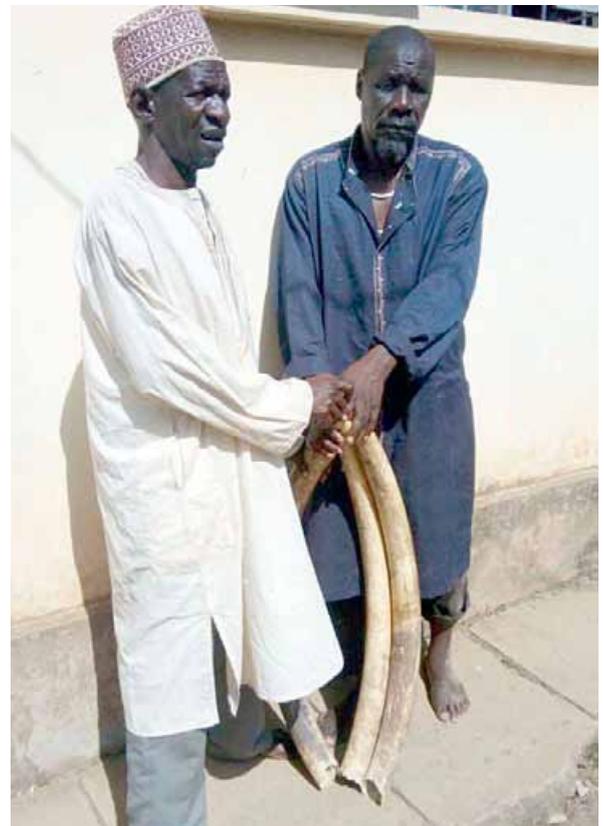
- Building the new team continued by recruitment process: 2 legal advisers and an investigator were selected. They will start their test period on July.
- Nicolas Charron, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer arrived to Senegal to support the recruitment process, to test and train newly selected activists.
- The activities were limited as the Coordinator injured her knee in April during the arrest operation in Guinea, when she was trying to save a rescued giant trionyx turtle.

Benin – AALF-B

- The Coordinator presented the role of AALF-Benin in the fight against wildlife crime at the workshop “The protection of fauna in Benin: Roles of the different actors?” organized by the General Directorate of Water and Forests for the International Day of Biological Diversity.
- The Coordinator, the Assistant Coordinator and legal advisers met with representatives of International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) to discuss possible cooperation in the fight against wildlife crime.
- The intense recruitment process continued, 4 new investigators and 2 legal advisers started the test period.

Uganda - EAGLE Uganda

- 2 ivory traffickers arrested in the North of the country with 35 kg of ivory. A muezzin and a watchman of a mosque were arrested in the act during an attempt to sell 3 tusks in the office of the mosque. The arrest highlights that religious positions just as any other influential position can be used as a cover for the illegal wildlife trade.
- 3 ivory traffickers arrested with 2 tusks weighting 18.4 kg on the same day, when the team rushed to nearby town for more action. The traffickers have been smuggling ivory from Congo regularly, using a trade with car spare parts as a cover for their criminal activity.
- 2 traffickers arrested in the west of the country near the Congo border with 25kg of ivory. The traffickers were hiding the 4 tusks in their house, where they intended to sell it, but were surprised by Police Flying Squad and arrested in the act. Also these traffickers were using the proximity of Congo forests and their elephants as a resource of contraband for their illegal activity for years.
- 3 traffickers arrested with 8 kg of pangolin scales in the North of the country. They were arrested in the act during an attempt to sell the contraband in a bar, owned by one of them. They have been trafficking pangolin scales in the



2 ivory traffickers arrested in the North of the country with 35 kg of ivory.



3 ivory traffickers arrested with 2 tusks weighting 18.4 kg



2 traffickers arrested in the west of the country near the Congo border with 25kg of ivory.

region for years.

- A trafficker, arrested in March with 58 kg of ivory was prosecuted and sentenced to 5 years imprisonment with no option of fine.
- The coordinator presented the work of EAGLE Uganda at the 26th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna, Austria, at a side event organised by the Environment Investigation Agency.
- Ofir Drori, the founding director, conducted mission to Uganda to support the project by making the management more effective, to improve the



interrogation capacity of legal advisers, to train investigators in using technique and bring general improvement in following procedures.

Madagascar - ALARM

- The Coordinator was interviewed by Canal Plus Africa on the actions of civil society in relation to human and environmental rights in Madagascar. The documentary will be released on this French TV channel in October 2017.
- The Coordinator met with the Supreme Court magistrate, the President of the Union of Judges for the Revaluation of the Functions of Judges to discuss the organization of a round table on the theme "Madagascar in the face of illicit trafficking threatening the future of its biodiversity". The objective of the event is to take measures and cre-

ate a synergy between actors in order to make the fight against wildlife crime more effective.

- The Coordinator had a presentation on "Challenges in the fight against corruption in natural resource management" to the Platform of Networks of Agents (PRA) against Corruption and the Trafficking of Natural Resources in Madagascar. This platform is composed of 5 ministries (Justice, Environment, Public Security, Gendarmerie and Communication) as ex-officio members, and 3 civil society organizations (AVG, WWF and GNEFM) as quality members.

Ivory Coast - EAGLE Ivory Coast

- The 10th replication of the EAGLE Network kicked off by a crackdown on ivory and leopard skin traffickers. In 3 operations 3 traffickers were arrested with 400 pieces of carved ivory, 40 kg of raw ivory, 7 leopard skins and other contraband. In first two back to back operations 2 major traffickers were arrested, one with 6 tusks, weighting 40 kg and 7 leopard skins, the other one with 165 carved ivory pieces on the same day few hours later. Third trafficker tried to escape the arrest but was captured two days later in the house of his parents with 235 carved pieces of ivory, a crocodile skin and several python skins. All three of them have been involved in an international network, trafficking ivory across the borders of the sub-region, mainly between Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea. The operations were carried in Abidjan with the Ministry in charge of Wildlife and the UTC - the special unit against transnational organized crime. The WARA director led the operation, the Coordinator of GALF and a legal adviser joined her to support the operation.
- The legal team followed a case of ape traffickers arrested in December.
- The Monitoring and Evaluation officer arrived to Ivory Coast to support recruitment process and building the new team, to test and train new team members. 2 legal advisers and 1 investigator



started their test period.

- The Deputy Coordinator from Togo arrived to Ivory Coast to manage the project, test new candidates and continue the recruitment process.
- The WARA Director held series of meetings with authorities to introduce them the newly established replication and to discuss cooperation, including the First Adviser of British Embassy, the Director of Legal Affairs of the Ministry of Environment and UTC officials.
- A series of meetings was held to prepare the operation, including the Director of Wildlife and The State Counsel.



Charlotte Houpline, the WARA director led the operation, the Coordinator of GALF and a legal adviser joined her to support the operation.



EAGLE - Ivory Coast

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special unit against transnational organized crime. The WARA director led the operation, the Coordinator of GALF and a legal adviser joined her to support the operation.

The role of Ivory Coast as a significant hub in international wildlife trafficking has been identified long ago for its major role as a trade junction in the illegal ape, ivory and birds trades. The latest arrest of chimpanzee traffickers Ibrahima Traore and his uncle Mohamed in January this year, well documented by BBC, showed that the number of apes smuggled from this country was very important. Sidibe Abdourahamane, one of the biggest apes trafficker, who exported hundreds of chimpanzees to China with the help of Ansoumane Doumbouya, also lived in Abidjan before his arrest.

Ivory Coast is an important international center in ivory trafficking as well, as an important trade junction between Central Africa and the rest of West Africa. The potential for an EAGLE replication in the country is huge.

EAGLE Network started operations in Ivory Coast at the beginning of this year, providing a legal support to the January arrest of Ibrahima and Mohamed Traore, and then focusing on building a new team. Charlotte Houpline, the WARA Director, led the process, and after the first operations in May Mensah Akomedi, the Deputy Coordinator from EAGLE Togo, arrived to temporary manage the project.

Headquarters

- Ofir Drori, the founding director, conducted a mission to Uganda to support the project by making the management more effective, to improve the interrogation capacity of legal advisers, to train investigators in using technique and bring general improvement in following procedures.
- The Monitoring and Evaluation officer arrived to Ivory Coast to support recruitment process and building the new team, to test and train new team members. 2 legal advisers and 1 investigator started their test period.

International Media Coverage

- The first EAGLE-Ivory Coast arrest appeared in several international media. Jeune Afrique was among them (in French):

[Link to the article](#)

- RFI Afrique brings an article about the arrest in Ivory Coast (in French):

[Link to the article](#)

- The reportage of French TV France24 on the arrest in Ivory Coast (in French):

[Link to the video](#)

- The reportage on RTI1 on the arrest in Ivory Coast (in French):

[Link to the video](#)

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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