



EAGLE

# Wildlife Law

# Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ **27 significant traffickers arrested in 6 countries**
- ✓ **9 reptile traffickers arrested in Madagascar in the kick off of a new EAGLE replication despite corruption attempts**
- ✓ **2 significant traffickers arrested with 250 kg of ivory in Uganda**
- ✓ **3 ivory traffickers arrested with 35 kg ivory in Congo**
- ✓ **An ivory trafficker with 109 pieces of carved ivory arrested in Cameroon**
- ✓ **5 significant traffickers, one of them a pastor, arrested with 29 kg of ivory in Uganda**
- ✓ **Charlotte Houpline participates in CITES CoP as member of Guinea Government Delegation**

## Summary

The 9<sup>th</sup> replication in the EAGLE Network kick-started the project with a crackdown on reptile trafficking and a series of arrests focused on the organized illegal trade in radiated tortoise. The value of one small radiated tortoise exceeds the illegal value of 1 kg of ivory. 9 traffickers were arrested with 428 radiated tortoises. The total value of the seized tortoises in their target Asian market is well beyond half a million dollars.

The crackdown faced traffic of influence and corruption - a bribing attempt of about 6,800 USD was reported by police, and a pressure made by a General to release the traffickers was combated.

5 traffickers with 199 radiated tortoises were arrested during the very first operation carried out by the new ALARM team and police. The traffickers arrived to a hotel in the centre of capital city with an intention to sell the tortoises. They were carrying them in 3 large suitcases. Sixth accomplice, a house guard, was arrested a few days later during a house search after he admitted that he removed the remaining tortoises. Another trafficker was arrested with 229 radiated tortoises, during a house raid. The arrested woman concealed the tortoises in her residence. She was trading

them for years, having a network of capturers in the South of Madagascar. She revealed two other members of her ring, who were arrested two days later.

2 significant international traffickers were arrested with 250 kg of raw ivory in Uganda. Both are major players of an international network of ivory traffic which includes many African countries. They belong to the Ma-



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lian Diaspora, but several IDs were found suggesting that one of them is living between Kampala and DRC. They had a meeting arranged with a potential buyer in a private residence, but after arriving at the place they were stopped by Flying Police Squad with the team of EAGLE Uganda and arrested after being under an intense investigation for more than one month. They were a part of a large chain of criminals, supplying raw ivory to different Asian traffickers. Evidences shows that they have been in the business for several years. 5 significant traffickers arrested with 29 kg of ivory in Uganda, one of them is a pastor. It is not uncommon for clergy to be involved in trafficking. Often, criminals use fake pretence of morality to cover illegal activities. They arrived to the centre of Kampala in a van with an intention to sell 2 tusks, but were arrested by police and EAGLE Uganda team. The van used for the trafficking was seized.

3 ivory traffickers were arrested in Congo with 10 tusks weighing 35 kg. They concealed the tusks in a cooling container, which they brought to a hotel, where they intended to sell the ivory. They are well situated notorious traffickers, one of them a repeat offender arrested before for trafficking ammunition to elephant poachers. 2 of them pretend to be fishermen, but it was only a cover for their illegal business, they used the fisherman boat to transport ivory. The third one is

a taxi driver.

A trafficker arrested in Cameroon with 109 pieces of carved ivory objects during an operation at a very dangerous area which is considered as the centre of illegal ivory in the country. The trafficker was subject to a long undercover investigation and proved to be smart and suspicious and managed to avoid getting caught on several occasions. This time the team finally managed to outsmart him. The trafficker was violent and resisted arrest while being assisted by friends and accomplices that agitated the violence, but the situation was put under control by the team.

The Congo coordinator met with the Minister of Justice in an important breakthrough in external relations standing with government. The minister has been very positive in instructing magistrates on severe sentencing in wildlife cases and ensuring good governance in court.

4 members of EAGLE have been to the US this month – training, participating in US Government meetings and exchange programs.

The director of WARA participated at the 17 CoP of the CITES as a member of the official Guinean Government delegation. She actively fought for increasing the level of protection of elephants, pangolins, African grey parrots and pangolins under international law.

## Cameroon – LAGA

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- The head of investigation of EAGLE Uganda participated in the EAGLE Network Exchange Program in LAGA Cameroon.



*After a long undercover investigation and avoiding getting caught the team finally managed to outsmart him.*

## Congo – PALF

■ 3 ivory traffickers were arrested with 35 kg ivory. They concealed the 10 tusks, representing 5 killed elephants, in a cooling container, which they brought to a hotel, where they intended to sell the ivory. They are well situated notorious traffickers, one of them a repeat offender arrested before for trafficking ammunition to elephant poachers. 2 of them pretend being fishermen, but it was only a cover for their illegal business, they used the fisherman boat to transport ivory. The third one, a taxi driver, was released after the arrest but thanks to PALF legal team and Perrine fighting these attempts he was arrested again. All 3 are behind bars, waiting for a trial.



The coordinator met with the Minister of Justice. The important meeting was well covered by National TV and other major media.



3 ivory traffickers were arrested with 35 kg ivory.

■ The coordinator met with the Minister of Justice in an important breakthrough in external relations standing with government. The Minister has been very positive in instructing magistrates on severe sentencing in wildlife cases and ensuring good governance in court, he agreed to issue two memos to bring this attitude to practice. The important meeting was well covered by National TV and other major news outlets.

■ The legal advisers conducted training of 450 policemen on the anti-corruption law.

■ Luc Mathot, the member of Steering group visited Congo to support PALF team on management and external relations.

■ The intensive recruitment process continues to increase strength of the PALF team.

## Gabon – AALF

■ The political situation in Gabon after the presidential elections held at the end of August turned into violent protests, which interrupted the AALF team from full functioning. Some of the team members used this opportunity to travel to other countries to support other EAGLE projects.

■ A legal adviser traveled to USA to participate in the program of the US State Department “International Visitor Leadership Program” on fight against wildlife trafficking.

■ The Head of Investigations and the Assistant Coordinator travelled to Benin to support the development of the team, legal department and investigations.

■ The Coordinator travelled to Congo and Madagascar to support the teams, the management and external relations of the projects. He also participated as a trainer combating corruption at the US Government International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Botswana.



# Guinea – Conakry – GALF

- A strong punishment was achieved by GALF legal team. An ivory trafficker was sentenced one year in prison in the case followed by the legal team. He was arrested by police at the beginning of the month in the far south-east part of the country, the only part of Guinea where there still is an elephant population. US Ambassador in Conakry followed the case.
- Charlotte Houpline participated at the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the CITES UN Convention as a member of the official Guinean Government delegation. She actively fought for increasing the level of protection of elephants, pangolins, African grey parrots and pangolins under international law. She cooperated with other NGOs in this fight. While for pangolins and grey parrots the fight was successful, the battle was lost for lions and elephants, for whom the status did not change.
- The coordinator, Saidou Barry participated at the training in leadership and law

enforcement at the International Conservation Chief’s Academy in USA, bringing together leaders of conservation law enforcement agencies from Africa in an effort to build capacity and collaborate with other leaders. He used the opportunity to meet other leaders from African countries and to network with the officials from US FWS.



*Charlotte Houpline participated at the 17th Conference of the Parties of the CITES UN Convention as a member of the official Guinean Government delegation.*

# Togo – TALFF

- 2 traffickers arrested with 4 hippo skulls, 14 hippo teeth and 15 bones. They brought the contraband on a motorbike to a bar in the capital, where they intended to sell it. They were arrested in the act. One of them used to kill hippos for many years, contributing in this way to the extermination of this

fully protected animal.

- A series of meetings were held with the Director of Judicial Police in Lomé, the Head of INTERPOL in Lomé, the US Embassy and magistrates in several provinces to discuss cases of wildlife trafficking.

# SENEGAL - SALF

- 2 freshwater turtle traffickers arrested. Following the crackdown of the ring of turtle traffickers at the end of previous month, SALF team with police arrested another trafficker with 84 live freshwater turtles at the beginning of the month. A day later he denounced his supplier, who was arrested and who confessed for his role in the ring. Altogether 212 turtles were sent to a rehabilitation centre and later will be released in the Niokolo-Koba National Park.
- New round of recruitment started to strengthen investigation and legal departments and find a

media officer.

- An investigator travelled to Cameroon to undergo a training program under the EAGLE Network Exchange Program.



*2 freshwater turtle traffickers arrested.*

## Benin – AALF-B

- The coordinator traveled to USA to represent Nature Tropical at the World Congress of IUCN in Hawaii.
- Gabon's Head of Investigations and Assistant Coordinator arrived to Benin to support the development of the team, legal department and investigations.
- The recruitment process was intensified to strengthen the investigation and legal departments. 3 investigators and one legal adviser re-

mained on test period.

- The Assistant Coordinator of AALF Gabon and a legal advisor were the main speakers in 2 TV shows about law enforcement and the fight about wildlife crime.
- A series of meetings were held with several authorities, the Commissioner of the Criminal Brigade, the Head of Interpol, the Acting Director of CENAGREF and other officials.

## Uganda - EAGLE Uganda

- EAGLE Uganda team continues in the impressive run in fighting wildlife crime by arresting 10 traffickers this month.
- 2 significant international traffickers arrested with 250 kg of raw ivory. Both are major players of an international network of ivory traffic which includes many African countries. They belong to the Malian Diaspora, but several ID were found suggesting that one of them is living between Kampala and DRC. They had a meeting arranged with a potential buyer in a private residence, but after arriving at the place they were stopped by Flying Police Squad with the team of EAGLE Uganda and arrested. They were under an intense investigation for more than one month. They were a part of a large chain of criminals, supplying raw ivory to dif-

ferent Asian traffickers. Evidences shows that they have been in the business for several years. They also held a voter's card from the Democratic Re-

- 5 significant traffickers arrested with 29 kg of ivory, one of them is a pastor. They arrived to the centre of Kampala in a van with an intention to sell 2 tusks, but were arrested by police and EAGLE Uganda team. The van used for the trafficking was seized. It is not uncommon for clergy to be involved in trafficking. Often, criminals use fake pretence of morality to cover illegal activities.

- A trafficker arrested in western Uganda with 13 kg of hippo teeth. He has been trafficking hippo ivory, bushmeat and other contraband between Uganda and Tanzania for many years, having connection to poachers and traffickers in both countries.



*2 significant international traffickers arrested with 250 kg of raw ivory*



*5 significant traffickers arrested with 29 kg of ivory, the one on the left in a suit is a pastor.*

- 2 traffickers arrested with 11 kg of hippo ivory and a leopard skin in northern part of the country. They arrived with the contraband to a guesthouse in a small town and were arrested by police and EAGLE Uganda team.
- The coordinator travelled to USA to participate

in the program of the US State Department “International Visitor Leadership Program” on fight against wildlife trafficking, and stays in the US to attend more US Government meetings.

- The head of investigation participated in the EAGLE Network Exchange Program in LAGA Cameroon.



The 9th replication in the EAGLE Network kick started the project with a crackdown on reptile trafficking and a series of arrests focused on the organized illegal trade in radiated tortoise.

Ndranto Razakamanarina, the President of AVG and ALARM Coordinator, is a well known activist, fighting for good environmental governance; he is also chief of anti-corruption commission for ROHY, the largest platform of Malagasy civil society, who significantly contributed to the development of the real civil society in Madagascar.

“This result is a concrete example of the effective collaboration in fight against corruption and wildlife trafficking between civil society and the Malagasy administration.” Ndranto said about their first operation. “We are very grateful because this shows a strong determination to service my country.”

Ndranto has a background in forestry, but he has been focusing more generally on rural development and especially on community mobilization and public participation. He actively participated in the development and implementation of the three phases of the National Environmental Action Plan in various institutions (SAF/FJKM, USAID, WWF). Ndranto is the Founding President of the AVG.

The newest EAGLE project - ALARM - in Madagascar was launched in August 2016 and succeeded to carry on the first arrest operations quite fast.

ALARM (Application de la Loi contre les Abus sur les Ressources naturelles de Madagascar) is carried by Alliance Voahary Gasy (AVG), a coalition of Environmental organizations created to promote good governance of environment and natural resources in Madagascar and to contribute to the Malagasy well-being from a good management of Natural Resources.

## Madagascar - ALARM

- The 9<sup>th</sup> replication in the EAGLE Network kick started the project with a crackdown on reptile trafficking and a series of arrests focused on the organized illegal trade in radiated tortoise. The value of one small radiated tortoise exceeds the price of 1 kg of ivory. 9 traffickers were arrested with 428 radiated tortoises. The total value of the seized tortoises in their target Asian market is well beyond half a million dollars.
- The crackdown faced traffic of influence and corruption - a bribing attempt of about 6,800 USD was reported by police, and a pressure made by a General to release the traffickers was combated.
- 5 reptile traffickers arrested with 199 radiated tortoises during the first operation carried out by the new ALARM team and police. The traffickers ar-



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*The traffickers were carrying the tortoises in 3 large suitcases*

rarity makes them popular pets all around the world. The seized tortoises were transferred to the Tsihombe conservation center.

■ Luc Mathot spent most of the month in Madagascar, supporting the external relations and the development of the project.

rived to a hotel in the centre of capital city with an intention to sell the tortoises. They were carrying them in 3 large suitcases in very harsh conditions for these sensitive animals. When they tried to sell them, they were arrested in act in a swift and well prepared operation. Sixth accomplice, a house guard, was arrested few days later during a house search after he admitted that he removed more tortoises out of the house. Despite all corruption and traffic of influence attempts, the traffickers remain in prison, awaiting trial.

- A trafficker arrested with 229 radiated tortoises, during a house raid. The arrested woman concealed the tortoises in her residence. She was trading them for years, having their own collectors in the south of Madagascar. She revealed two middle men, who were arrested two days later. Unfortunately 11 young tortoises were found dead as the trafficker kept them in a bag mixed with big onions.
- Radiated Tortoises are endemic to Madagascar. It is a very long-lived species, with recorded lifespan of at least 188 years. These tortoises are classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN, mainly because of the destruction of their habitat and because of intense international trafficking. They are also listed on CITES Appendix I. Their

- Rens Ilgen, a supervolunteer, worked with the ALARM team to support the development of the team, to help with investigations and to reach the first results.
- The coordinator met with the Minister of Justice, who confirmed his determination to apply the wildlife law. He ensured about his personal commitment in the fight and about severe and exemplary sentences for wildlife traffickers.
- The coordinator met with the Minister of Defence, who welcomed the establishment of ALARM project and conveyed his readiness to play a role in the fight.
- The coordinator and Luc Mathot met with the British Ambassador who agreed to push for law enforcement and exemplary punishment for traffickers. He welcomed ALARM's operations and offered joint meetings with Ministers.
- More meetings with officials were held. Brigadier General, Senior Commander of the Gendarmerie, the Prosecutor of the First Instance of Antananarivo Court, a judge of the Supreme Court in Anosy, the Regional Directorate of Ecology, Environment and Forestry (DREEF) and the Gendarmerie Commander of the Division of Criminal Investigation all expressed support to ALARM project and said they would cooperate.

# Headquarters

- Ofir Drori participated as a trainer at the International Conservation Chief's Academy in USA, bringing together leaders of conservation law enforcement agencies from Africa. He gave training in fighting corruption to 35 participants from 8 African countries. He gave a presentation to FWS and held a series of meetings in FWS.
- Luc Mathot participated as a trainer at the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Botswana. ILEA - the International Law Enforcement Academy is a US Government prestigious training program for enforcers from all over Africa. EAGLE has been asked to develop training on ethics and anti-corruption for ILEA's Wildlife Crime Course, which is now conducted for 7 years.
- Danielle Mbui, the financial officer, traveled to Cameroon to support the recruitment process of a new accountant.
- Luc Mathot arrived to Congo and Madagascar to support the teams, the management and external relations of the projects.

# International Media Coverage

- An article in National Geographic on newly adopted ban on pangolin trade, quoting Ofir Drori: In Africa, pangolin dealers supplying the Asian market have started expanding their businesses to other forms of wildlife trade. "Dealing back to traffickers in China has exposed them to new people, allowing them to build the necessary networks to move up and start trafficking ivory," Ofir Drori, director of the wildlife law enforcement network EAGLE, told Vice in September.

[Link to National Geographic](#)

- An article in Chinese media about the 6 reptile traffickers arrested in Madagascar

[Link to the article](#)

## 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: investi-*

*gations, 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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