



EAGLE

September 2018
EAGLE Network

Wildlife Law Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ **18 traffickers and wildlife criminals arrested in 4 countries**
- ✓ **Carlos Corces Bustamante, a Spanish wildlife criminal, arrested in Guinea. He had illegally rented a hunting reserve in a remote area, abounding in wildlife, where he had organized hunting expeditions for trophy hunters from all around the world, with no respect to any rules, for years. The investigation revealed his illegal possession of guns and his involvement in drugs trafficking.**
- ✓ **4 traffickers including a corrupt policeman arrested with 270kg of pangolin scales in Cameroon, and charged on corruption as well.**
- ✓ **10 ivory traffickers arrested in Gabon in 4 operations**
- ✓ **2 ivory traffickers arrested in Benin**



Carlos Corces Bustamante, a Spanish wildlife criminal, arrested in Guinea

Summary

18 traffickers and wildlife criminals were arrested in 4 countries.

Carlos Corces Bustamante, a Spanish wildlife criminal, was arrested in Guinea. He had illegally rented a hunting reserve in a remote area, abounding in wildlife, where he had organized hunting expeditions for trophy hunters from all around the world, with no respect to any rules, for years. The hunting reserve was established with complicity and corruption of some officers, well hidden from the spotlight of the higher authorities, who did not even know that it existed. He and his clients were hunting elephants, bongos, hippos, leopards and other fully protected species, sometimes even using cruel methods, like bows and arrows. The operation started by arresting his accomplice with guns and wildlife trophies. Based on this evidence an arrest warrant was issued and Carlos was arrested in his house. The investigation revealed his illegal possession of guns and his involvement in drugs trafficking.

4 traffickers including a corrupt policeman arrested with 270kg of pangolin scales in the capital city of Cameroon. Well organized ring was activating the illegal trade in pangolin scales within a network of lower level traffickers and poachers in the south of the country. They brought the pangolin scales concealed in a car in hidden suitcases, knack sacks and

even stuffed in several spaces in the car, including under the carpets. On the way to the capital city, they were exposed by a control post composed of gendarmerie, police and wildlife officials but bribed them with 700 USD to be allowed to continue their journey. The bribing corruption charges were brought against them. The policeman, wearing his uniform at the moment of arrest, tried to use his position to avoid arrest, but he ended behind bars together with the other traffickers.



3 ivory traffickers were arrested with 2 large tusks in Gabon



4 traffickers including a corrupt policeman arrested with 270kg of pangolin scales in Cameroon.

10 ivory traffickers were arrested in Gabon in 4 operations. 3 ivory traffickers were arrested with 2 large tusks. The first two traffickers were arrested with the ivory in their vehicle at a car park. They quickly denounced a third trafficker, who was swiftly arrested the same day in his village. He is a repeat offender, already arrested and sentenced for 3 months last year for trafficking ivory. 3 ivory were traffickers arrested with two tusks at the South of the country. 2 traffickers were arrested in the South of the country. First trafficker, a Senegalese, was arrested in the act with 6 tusks. He bought the tusks at a coastal town from another trafficker, who was arrested two days later. 2 ivory traffickers, both Senegalese, arrested in North-East of the country with 2 ivory tusks, cut in 4 pieces.

A trafficker was arrested with two large pieces of ivory, in Benin. He denounced two other traffickers. One of them tried to escape the arrest, hiding in a church, but thanks to persistence of the operation team he was arrested four days later in a bar near the Nigerian border.

Cameroon – LAGA

■ 4 traffickers including a corrupt policeman arrested with 270kg of pangolin scales in the capital city. Well organized ring was activating the illegal trade in pangolin scales within a network of lower level traffickers and poachers in the south of the country. They brought the pangolin scales concealed in a car in hidden suitcases, knack

sacks and even stuffed in several spaces in the car, including under the carpets. On the way to the capital city, they were exposed by a control post composed of gendarmerie, police and wildlife officials but bribed them with 700 USD to be allowed to continue their journey. The bribing corruption charges were brought against them. The policeman, wearing his uniform at the moment of arrest, tried to use his position to avoid arrest, but he ended behind bars together with the other traffickers.

- The Deputy Director held two meetings at the US Embassy to discuss steps and actions needed to fight corruption and traffic of influence during the arrest and prosecution of wildlife crime defaulters. Two other diplomatic missions and three other international NGOs were present.
- He also held a meeting with a UN researcher to discuss issues related to the illegal pangolin scales trade.



Congo – PALF

- PALF team supported the Wildlife Officers in seizure of an adult chimpanzee, who was kept illegally in a house of a Colonel for more than 14 years. The animal was quickly transported to the Chim-



pounga Sanctuary, run by Jane Goodall Institute, for a lifetime care. As the Colonel was absent at the time of the seizure, PALF Legal team assisted in preparation of a complaint against him, which was sent to the Departmental Director of the Police, to the Commander of the regional department of the National Gendarmerie and to the Colonel Commander of Defense Military Zone No. 2

- The Coordinator held a meeting with several high authorities including the Wildlife Adviser of the Minister of Forest Economy to discuss the pending signature of the Memorandum of Understanding, the Legal Adviser of the Ministry of Justice, the General Director of Water and Forests and several State Counsels and departmental directors of the ministry of Forest Economy.

The chimp male, named Benjalmin, was transported to Chimpounga Sanctuary

Gabon – AALF

- 3 ivory traffickers arrested with 2 large tusks, cut to 3 pieces each, in South-East of the country. The first two traffickers were arrested with the ivory in their vehicle at a car park. They quickly denounced a third trafficker, who was swiftly arrested the same day in his village, 100 km away from the place of the first arrest. A rifle with ammunition, belonging to the first trafficker, was sized in his house. He is a repeat offender, already arrested and sentenced for 3 months last year for trafficking ivory. It is another flagrant example showing that the weak law in Gabon doesn't serve the purpose of deterrent.



the South of the country. 2 of them were arrested during the attempt to sell the contraband and shortly after they denounced a third trafficker, a father of one of them. He was arrested a day later.

- 2 traffickers arrested in the South of the country. First trafficker, a Senegalese, was arrested in the



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A rifle with ammunition was sized in the trafficker's house.

act with 6 tusks. He bought the tusks at a coastal town from another trafficker, who was arrested two days later.

- 2 ivory traffickers, both Senegalese, arrested in North-East of the country with 2 ivory tusks, cut in



2 traffickers arrested in the South of the country with 6 tusks.

4 pieces. The first one was arrested in the act and he quickly denounced the other trafficker, who was arrested in his house few hours later. They were prosecuted the same month and sentenced to 5 months in jail.

- 11 wildlife traffickers were prosecuted and sentenced to jail this month, two of them for the maximum penalty of six months.
- The coordinator held a series of meetings with high Gabonese authorities and diplomats including EU officers, the Director of the Cabinet of the Ministry of Environment, the General Inspector of the Ministry of Environment, the General Director of Forests, UNODC officers and others.

- The coordinator travelled to Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, where he held a series of meetings to support the opening of EAGLE Burkina Faso. He met with the Belgian Ambassador, the Environment Officers of EU, the Director of the Cabinet of the Minister of Justice, the Director of Judicial Police, the General Director of OFINAP (Office nationale des aires protégées), the Head of INTERPOL and the General Director of Criminal Policy. He introduced them to the project, its goals and activities, the need of support from international community and the way of cooperation with the authorities.



3 ivory traffickers arrested with two tusks at the South of the country.



2 ivory traffickers, both Senegalese, arrested in North-East of the country with 2 ivory tusks

Guinea – GALF

■ Carlos Corces Bustamante, a Spanish wildlife criminal, arrested. He had illegally rented a hunting reserve in a remote area, abounding in wildlife, where he had organized hunting expeditions for trophy hunters from all around the world, with no respect to any rules, for years. The hunting reserve was established with complicity and corruption of some officers, well hidden from the spotlight



of the higher authorities, who did not even know that it existed. He and his clients were repeatedly hunting elephants, bongos, hippos, leopards and other species, fully protected by Guinean law, sometimes even using cruel methods, like bows and arrows. The operation started by arresting his accomplice with guns and wildlife trophies. Based on this evidence an arrest warrant was issued and Carlos was arrested in his house. The investigation revealed his illegal possession of guns and his involvement in drugs trafficking.

■ Charlotte Houpline, the WARA Director arrived to Guinea to coordinate the arrest operation.



■ The Coordinator and the WARA Director held a series of meetings with various authorities and diplomats to inform them about the arrest operation, including the UK Ambassador, the Head of Cooperation and Environmental Programme of

EU, the Political Advisor of the US Ambassador, the National Director of Judicial Police, the focal points for Wildlife Crime at the Ministries of Environment, Justice and Security and Civil Protection, the CITES Focal Point and others.



Carlos Corces Bustamante, a Spanish wildlife criminal, was arrested in Guinea.

He had illegally rented a hunting reserve in a remote area, abounding in wildlife, where he had organized hunting expeditions for trophy hunters from all around the world, with no respect to any rules, for many years.

The operation started by arresting his accomplice Mohamed Camara with guns and wildlife trophies, heads of Bongo, buffalo and other fully protected animals, in Carlos hunting camp. During interrogation he denounced the activities of his boss. Based on this evidence an arrest warrant was issued and Carlos was arrested in his hotel in Conakry two days later.

The hunting reserve of 25,000 ha in a remote area near the Sierra Leone border was established at least 13 years ago by an Austrian hunter. After the previous holder died, Carlos leased the reserve with complicity and corruption of some officers, well hidden from the spotlight of the higher authorities, who did not even know that it existed. He and his clients were repeatedly hunting elephants, bongos, hippos, leopards and other species, fully protected by Guinean law, sometimes even using cruel methods, like bows and arrows. He was offering hunting safaris on internet in USA as well as in Europe, without obtaining any permit. The trophies were also exported out of the country without proper documents.

The investigation revealed that he possessed guns illegally and he seems to have been involved in drugs trafficking as well.



Togo – EAGLE Togo

- Jean-Claude Vignoli continued his mission in Togo to support the management of the team.
- Rens Ilgen, the coordinator, traveled to Togo and met with the Director of Forestry Resources to discuss the MoU, with OFFAP to discuss collaboration, and with the Chief of Economic and Political Section to discuss the registration of EAGLE Togo.
- The recruitment process continued and one investigator started his test period.

Senegal – SALF

- The transition of the project from WARA to EAGLE – Senegal started, and the Coordinator held several meetings concerning this topic.
- She met with the Director of National Parks, Water and Forests and Hunting to explain this transition and obtain various documents needed for its execution, as well as the general Director of OCRTIS.
- She also held a meeting with Homeland Security representatives from the US Embassy in Dakar to strengthen collaboration in the fight against wildlife crime.

Benin – AALF-B

- A trafficker arrested with two large pieces of ivory, weighing 14 kg, in the capital city. He denounced two other traffickers. One of them tried to escape the arrest, hiding in a church, but thanks to persistence of the operation team he was arrested four days later in a bar near the Nigerian border. The third one was arrested at the beginning of the next month. The seized ivory has been stolen from a government storage on Benin-Nigeria border.
- The coordinator trained 15 officers of the central Commissariat of the Republican Police in Calavi on the methods of combating wildlife crime. He also trained the officers of the Custom Brigade at Hilacondji on Benin - Togo border on wildlife crime.
- The Coordinator held a series of meetings with Beninese authorities, including the Director of the Judicial Police to strengthen collaboration and training; the commander of the Special Border Surveillance Units (USSF) and his Deputy to schedule the training of their units; the State Counsel at the First Instance Court of Cotonou; the Commander of the Calavi Central Police Station and his Deputy; the Commander of the Criminal Brigade to strengthen collaboration and discuss ongoing cases, and others.



Côte d'Ivoire – EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire

- The investigation of the case of ivory traffickers arrested in January continued. The case needs a lot of further investigation of the underlying networks and different kinds of trafficking. The Côte d'Ivoire team focused on money laundering investigations and the procedures for money laundering charges in Côte d'Ivoire. A money laundering expert arrived to Côte d'Ivoire to support the investigation.
- The Coordinator held many meetings with the UCT and the bankers' association in order to support the investigation.
- The coordinator participated at a reception held at the US Ambassador's residence where he met several high officials and introduced them to the project.
- The recruitment process continued and two investigators started their test period this month.
- The coordinator travelled to Togo to support the Togo team and management.

Headquarters

- Luc Mathot, the Founding Director, travelled to Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, where he held a series of meetings to support the opening of EAGLE Burkina Faso. He met with the Belgian Ambassador, the Environment Offices of EU, the Director of the Cabinet of the Minister of Justice, the Director of Judicial Police, the Head of INTERPOL and the General Director of Criminal Policy. He introduced them to the project, its goals and activities, the need of support from international community and the way of cooperation with the authorities.
- Ofir Drori, the Founding Director, conducted a short mission to Uganda to support establishing the new project, to meet authorities and to train the Coordinator.
- Antoinette Mackenzie, the Organization development Officer conducted a mission to Cameroon to get familiar with the LAGA project, to observe its functioning and management.

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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