



**EAGLE**

March 2017  
EAGLE Network

# Wildlife Law Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ *66 wildlife traffickers arrested in 8 countries – a record breaking for the EAGLE Network*
- ✓ *Abdoul Salam Sidibé, a major ape trafficker, has been arrested in Guinea in a continued crackdown on one of the biggest ape trafficking family in Africa.*
- ✓ *4 traffickers arrested in the biggest crocodiles operation in Senegal, 558 skins seized.*
- ✓ *36 traffickers were arrested in Uganda, 3 of them corrupt officials from army, police and prison authorities.*
- ✓ *11 traffickers arrested in Gabon*
- ✓ *6 ivory traffickers arrested with 14 kg of ivory in Benin*
- ✓ *3 ivory traffickers arrested with 11 tusks in Congo*
- ✓ *2 traffickers arrested with 218 African Grey Parrots in Cameroon*



*36 traffickers were arrested in Uganda*

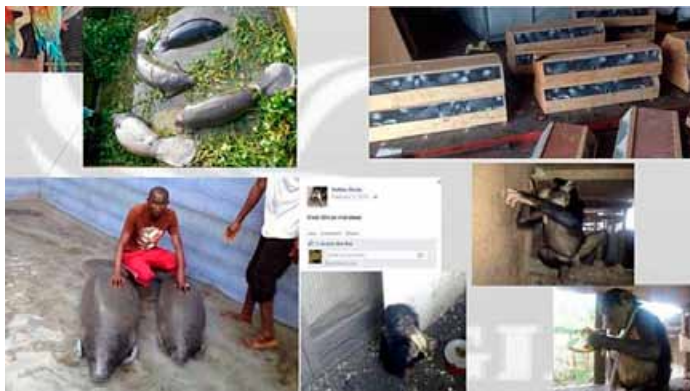


*4 traffickers arrested in the biggest crocodiles operation in Senegal*

# Summary

66 wildlife traffickers were arrested in 8 countries – a record breaking for the EAGLE Network in its entire history.

Abdoul Salam Sidibé, a major ape trafficker, was arrested in a continued crackdown on the infamous Sidibé crime family in Guinea. He is the son of Abdouramane Sidibé arrested 3 weeks ago. Abdoul Salam is a key element of the Sidibé network, one of the most important networks in international ape and live animals trafficking on the African continent. The Sidibé network has been active in international trafficking for 30 years, accumulating enormous illicit revenue. Unprecedented number of apes and other protected animals have been exported worldwide by them in violation of national laws and the CITES Convention. In July 2016, Abdoul Salam and his father were sentenced in absentia to five years in prison



*Abdoul Salam Sidibé, a major ape trafficker, was arrested in a continued crackdown on the famous crime family in Guinea. He is responsible for illegal export of thousands of wild animals*

at the same time as Anoumane Doumbouya, the former corrupt CITES head. Finally in March Abdoul Salam was arrested in Conakry and driven directly to the central prison. The arrest of the 2 most important members of the Sidibé network is a victory in the fight against international wildlife trafficking and corruption.

4 traffickers were arrested in SALF team's crackdown on reptile skin trade. 558 skins were seized in total in a professional transformation center during the biggest crocodile operation known. 91 crocodile skins, 354 Python skins and 101 Monitor Lizard skins were among the contraband seized as well as 5 pieces of a Springbok, an antelope found only in South Africa. This is a strong action against a professional illegal

trade in crocodiles that we were not able to hit in a meaningful way till now.

EAGLE Uganda brought about arrests of 36 wildlife traffickers in March, including 3 corrupt officials from army, police and prison authorities.

11 traffickers were arrested in Gabon, 7 of them ivory traffickers and 4 trafficking leopard skins.

3 ivory traffickers were arrested in Congo with 11 tusks, representing 6 massacred elephants including 2 very young ones .

6 ivory traffickers were arrested in Benin with 14 kg of ivory and a ring of criminals crushed. 3 of them were arrested in a hotel during an attempt to sell 14 kg of ivory, belonging to two different owners. The three others were arrested after being denounced by their accomplices.



*EAGLE Uganda arrested 36 wildlife traffickers in March,*

## Cameroon – LAGA

- 2 parrot traffickers, one of them Ghanaian, arrested with 218 African Grey Parrots, which they intended to export illegally from Cameroon. This large network of parrot traffickers operates in several West and Central Africa and connects it with Asia and Europe. The illegal trade in African Grey Parrots has always been a well organized international crime with high complicity. The UN CITES convention recently listed this bird in the Appendix I, giving it the highest level of protection from intense illegal trade endangering its population. The parrots are recovering now so they could be released back to the wild.
- The court handling the case against two Chinese nationals arrested with 5.4 tons of pangolin scales in January sentenced them to 3 months imprisonment with payment of fines and damages of close to \$430 000. The appeal opposing the low sentence was immediately issued.
- The Director arrived to the country for a week-long working visit and accompanied by the Deputy Director they held meetings with the US Ambassador, the Canadian High Commissioner and the Counselor at the German Embassy. Discussions



2 parrot traffickers, one of them Ghanaian, arrested with 218 African Grey Parrots,

focused on the evolution and challenges of wildlife law enforcement in Cameroon and Africa and what solutions could be applied to over them.

- A legal adviser from Madagascar arrived to Cameroon to be trained and tested within the EAGLE Network Exchange Programme.



## Congo – PALF

- 3 ivory traffickers arrested with 11 tusks, weighing 28 kg, representing 6 massacred elephants including 2 very young ones. The traffickers were hiding the ivory in a bag of cassava. Two of them are brothers, who have been trafficking ivory between DRC and Congo Brazzaville for years. To

cover their criminal activity, one of them pretended to be a pastor, but he is the owner of a trading company, that buys ivory from various sources. The other one creates more cross-border connections with the help of some corrupted wildlife officers.



- The coordinator met with the EU Ambassador and the Attaché in charge of international cooperation of the Sector of the Good Governance to discuss PALF activities and results.
- The Coordinator held several meetings with the officials of the Ministry of Environment, the Legal Advisor, the Wildlife Advisor and the Director of Forest and Protected Areas to continue preparation of the Memorandum of Understanding, which should be ready for signature next month.
- She also met with the Regional Director of the Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development in Brazzaville to discuss the preparation of the operation and legal follow-up of the cases at the high court of Brazzaville.

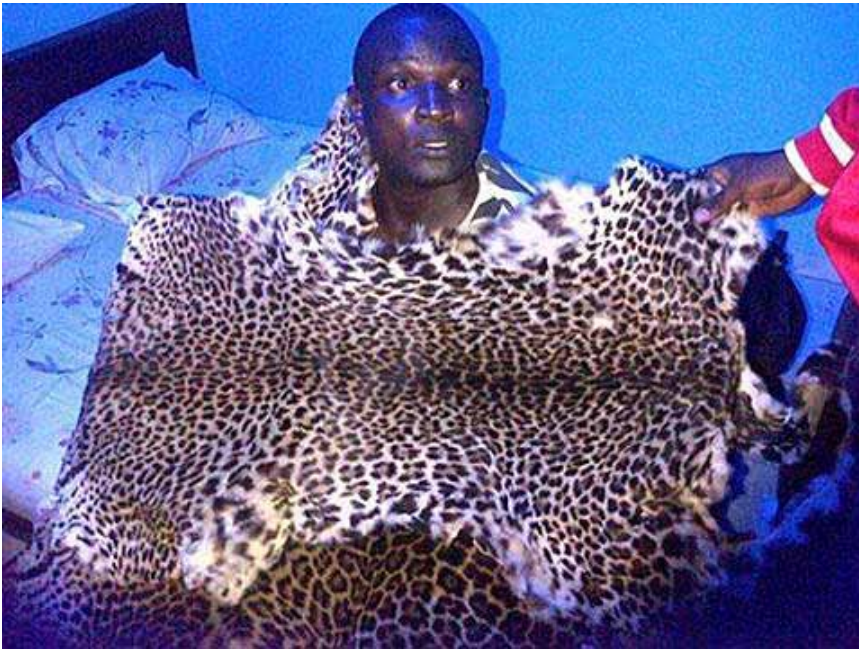
*3 ivory traffickers arrested with 11 tusks,*

## Gabon – AALF

- 3 ivory traffickers were arrested following the operation from the end of February after being denounced by their accomplices, when AALF Gabon continued the crackdown of the ring of traffickers started the previous month.
- 2 traffickers arrested with 2 leopard skins in Libreville. The first one, a Nigerian, was arrested when he tried to sell the skins, and the police took him by surprise at the moment, when he was spreading the skins on the floor of a hotel room to have them ready to present them to a customer. During interrogations he revealed identity of the owner of the skins. He was then arrested at a market, where he wanted to pick up money for the transaction.
- 4 ivory traffickers arrested with 2 tusks. First a trafficker was arrested in a house during an attempt to sell the ivory. He revealed 2 other traffickers; they were swiftly arrested the same day. The 4th trafficker was denounced a day later and arrested the same day.
- A Nigerian trafficker arrested with 2 leopard skins in the capital city. He was arrested during an attempt to sell them in a hotel.
- Another trafficker arrested with 2 leopard skins in Libreville. He was concealing the skins in a hotel room, where he intended to sell them.



*2 traffickers arrested with 2 leopard skins in Libreville.*



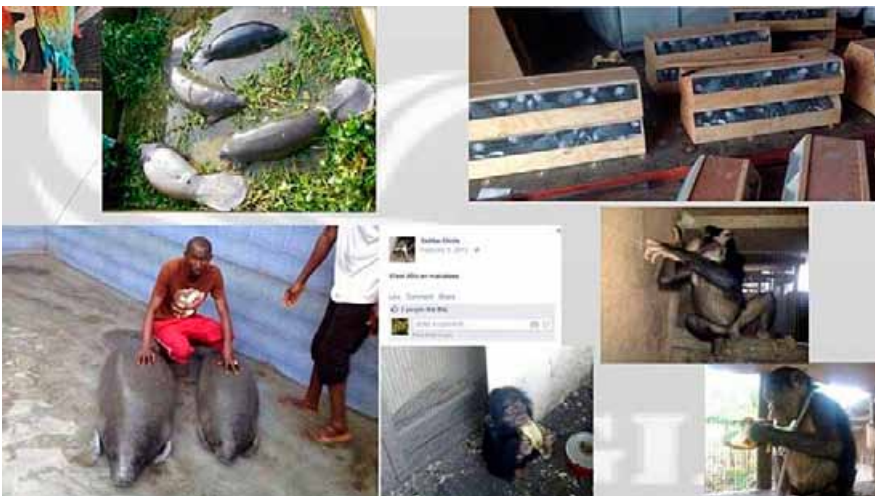
*A trafficker arrested with 2 leopard skins in Libreville.*

- 5 ivory traffickers, arrested in different operations between November 2016 and February 2017, were all sentenced to 6 months imprisonment, the highest possible sentence in Gabon, and to pay between 1,300 and 3,500 USD on fines and damages.
- The coordinator met with the President of the Court to discuss a preparation of a workshop on wildlife crime for the magistrates of the courts of the first instance.
- The Conservation Justice team participated at a three day working session with the CAF Coordinator to prepare an analysis of a case of a complaint against the Regional Director of Wildlife Authority, concerning contraband, which disappeared after being seized.
- The Coordinator held a meeting with the Executive Secretary and the Technical Director of ANPN and the General Director of Water and Forests to continue cooperation with the Ministry of Water and Forests and ANPN.
- A legal adviser from Madagascar arrived to Gabon to be trained and tested within the EAGLE Network Exchange programme.

## Republic of Guinea – GALF

■ Abdoul Salam Sidibé, a major ape trafficker, arrested in a continued crackdown on the famous crime family. He is the son of Abdouramane Sidibé arrested 3 weeks ago. Abdoul Salam is a key element of the Sidibé network, one of the most important networks in international ape and live

animals trafficking on the African continent. The Sidibé network has been active in international trafficking for 30 years, accumulating enormous illicit revenue. Unprecedented number of apes and other protected animals have been exported worldwide by them in violation of national laws and the CITES Convention.



*The Sidibé network has been active in international trafficking for 30 years. Unprecedented number of apes and other protected animals have been exported worldwide by them in violation of national laws and the CITES Convention.*

■ In July 2016, Abdoul Salam and his father were sentenced in absentia to five years in prison at the same time as Anoumane Doumbouya, the former corrupt CITES head. An international arrest warrant had been issued against them. Abdoul Salam had been living in Ghana for a few years and his father in Ivory Coast and both had traveled in many African, Arab and Asian countries. Following their conviction, they were on the run abroad as they were aware they were the subject of an arrest warrant.

Finally in March Abdoul Salam was arrested in Conakry and driven directly to the central prison. The arrest of the 2 most important members of the Sidibé network is a victory in the fight against international wildlife trafficking and corruption.

- A reptile trafficker was arrested with 40 fully protected sweet water turtles. He was kept behind bars and the turtles were released back to the wild.
- The coordinator was interviewed by BBC about an arrest of an international criminal ring of traf-

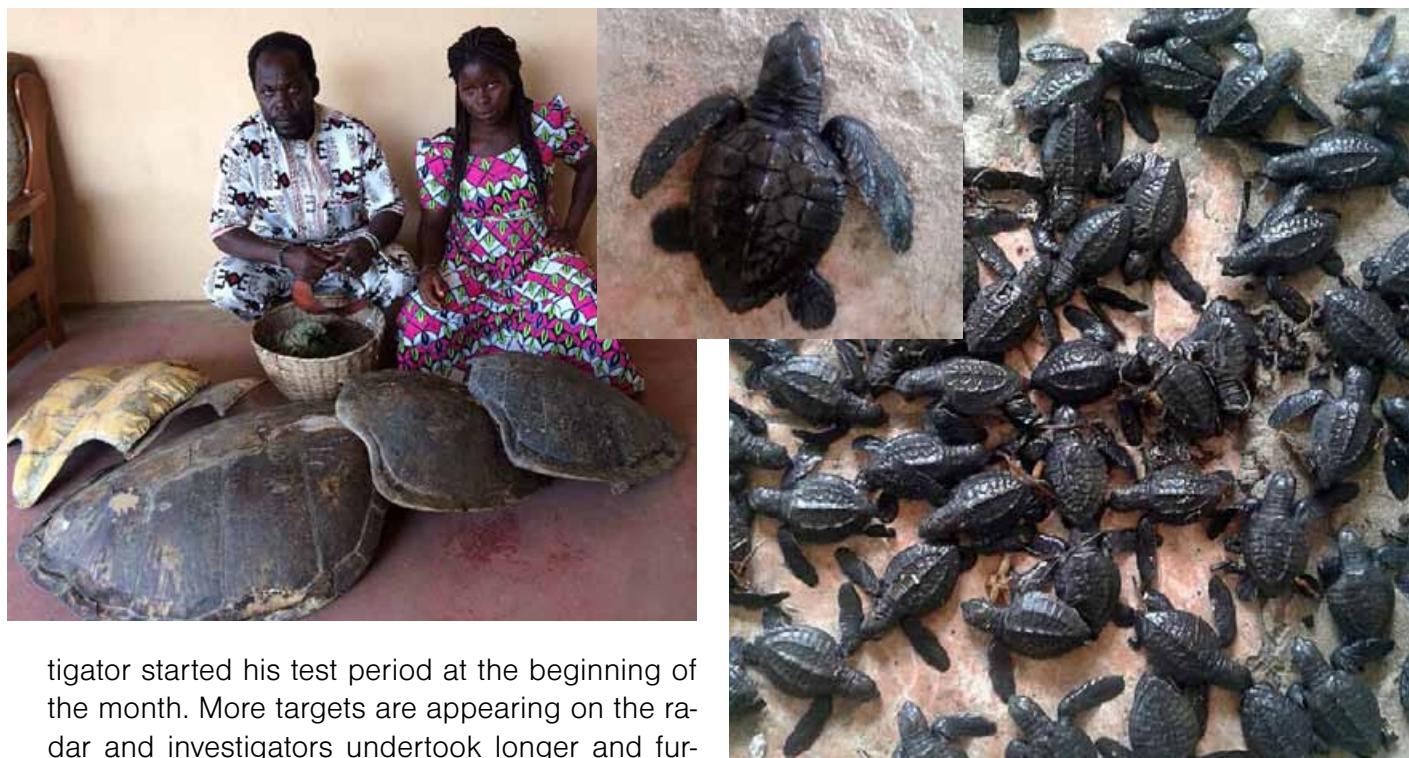
fickers, operating in the Ivory Coast and Guinea. The coordinator met in Ivory Coast with the British Foreign Office Minister for Africa to discuss the future of the wildlife and its protection in Africa.

- The coordinator held meetings with the representative of the British Embassy, the Political Advisor of the US Embassy, the Deputy Prosecutor of Kaloum, the National Director of Water and Forests, the Wildlife Crime Focal Point at the INTERPOL, the focal point of wildlife crime at the Ministry of Justice and others.

## Togo – EAGLE Togo

- 2 traffickers arrested with 66 live baby sea turtles and 3 large sea turtle shells in the first operation after restarting the project with a new team. The traffickers were arrested in the act while attempting to sell the turtles. The baby turtles have been released to the ocean. While they are swimming towards an uncertain future, the traffickers are awaiting their first hearing in jail.
- In March the focus of the project shifted more to investigations and practical aspects. Testing of new team members continued and a new inves-

- The coordinator and deputy coordinator met with the Regional Security Officer of the US Embassy to discuss collaboration during investigations and after arrests.
- Several meetings were held with representatives of USFWS on mission in Togo, mainly focused on collaboration on investigations.
- Several meetings were held with the head of INTERPOL in Togo before and after the arrest in order to ensure EAGLE procedures were being followed.



2 traffickers arrested with 66 live baby sea turtles and 3 large sea turtle shells

tigator started his test period at the beginning of the month. More targets are appearing on the radar and investigators undertook longer and further missions.

# Senegal - SALF



SALF project, which will be handed over to the Ministers of Justice, the Environment and the Interior. Parliament also committed to call for zero tolerance and an immediate increase of the sentences to wildlife crime to be communicated to magistrates.

- 4 traffickers arrested in SALF team's crackdown on reptile skin trade. 558 skins were seized in total in a professional transformation center during the biggest crocodile operation known. 91 crocodile skins, 354 Python skins and 101 Monitor Lizard skins, but also 5 pieces of a Springbok, an antelope living in South Africa, was among the contraband. Two of the 4 arrested are from Mali. The operation started by arresting 3 traffickers with most of the contraband. Another man caused a riot, and he was arrested for violence. One of the traffickers used the chaos to run away only to voluntarily come to the police station later with more contraband. The operation then continued by a search in the illegal transformation centre, where more contraband was seized. This is a strong action against a professional illegal trade that we were not able to hit in a meaningful way till now.
- Cecile Bloch became the Coordinator of SALF project after receiving training in Cameroon and Gabon.
- The coordinator trained Gendarmerie officers about wildlife crime on a seminar organized by French Embassy, its Interior Security Service and the Department of Water and Forest.
- SALF organized a training course for 12 Members of Parliament and 12 locally elected representatives, raising awareness on wildlife crime and corruption with a goal to get stronger penalties. The Members of Parliament and elected officials signed a letter with a commitment to support the



## Benin – AALF-B

■ 6 ivory traffickers arrested with 14 kg of ivory and a ring of criminals crushed in the centre of the country. 3 of them were arrested in a hotel during an attempt to sell 14 kg of ivory, belonging to two different owners. They arrived with 4 kg and when believed that the transaction could have happened, one of them returned to his village to bring 2 more tusks, weighting 10 kg. But they were caught by surprise by police forces and AALF-B team. After arriving at the police station they revealed a fourth trafficker, who was immediately arrested too after he arrived to a bar, where he was supposed to pick up his share for the transaction. The owner of 4 kg arrived to the town and was also arrested by police next day. He later denounced two more accomplices in the capital city, who were also waiting for their share. One of them was arrested two days later.

■ A series of meetings were held with authorities in Parakou to support the operation, namely with the State Counsel of Parakou, the Forestry Inspectorate, the Commander of the Anti-Criminal Bri-

gade, with the Commissioner of the Police station and others.

■ The coordinator met with the Deputy Director of Cabinet of the Ministers of the Interior and Security to discuss signing of a letter of recommendation to support activities of AALF-Benin.

■ Recruitment process continued to strengthen the team, one investigator continued his test period this month.



*6 ivory traffickers arrested with 14 kg of ivory*

## Uganda - EAGLE Uganda

■ 4 traffickers arrested with 16kg of ivory. A serious security risk was dodged. One of the traffickers concealed in the sponge of the seat of his bike an AK47 assault rifle with a bullet already loaded in the chamber, ready to shoot. The trafficker, reportedly a former LRA rebel who was granted

amnesty by the Government of the republic of Uganda, came to the deal ready to quickly use the semi-automatic weapon against anyone coming to arrest him. The head of the operation did not underestimate threats, endured police surveillance beforehand and put strong emphasis on swift and strong action. His rigor in operations may have saved lives.

■ The traffickers were all found guilty and swiftly prosecuted. The owner of the assault rifle was sentenced to 2 years for possession of the ivory and 3 years for possession of the weapon, 5 years in jail in total. The three accomplices were each sentenced to 1.5 years in prison.



*4 traffickers arrested with 16kg of ivory and an AK47 assault rifle*





*They are all officers – the first of the Army, the second of Police and the third from the Prison Services.*

- 3 traffickers arrested with 30 kg ivory. They are all officers – the first of the Army, the second of Police and the third from the Prison Services. The “best of the best” from the 3 forces were violent during the arrest and one was even biting an arresting officer and wounded him with deep bloody cuts with his teeth.
- 2 traffickers with a cheetah skin arrested and a corruption attempt combated as 2 more criminals, arrested for bribe in one operation. A circle of poachers supply wildlife trophies to them at their store whenever animals have been killed and they have many loyal buyers for the wild cat skins. They were arrested in a swift operation during an attempt to sell one cheetah and 2 civet skins. After they were taken to the police station, two brothers of the arrested trafficker arrived there and offered a bribe of about 300 USD to release them. They were arrested as well. There are less than 30 cheetahs left in Uganda, making this a very meaningful arrest operation.
- 3 traffickers arrested with a live pangolin and 3 skinned pangolins in the north of the country. One of them was pretending to be a military officer holding a fake military ID, uniforms and ranks. He admitted false pretence and will be charged for this while investigations continue on other crimes he may have committed while pretending to be a military officer, like robbing and harassing people in his region. The other trafficker is a retired military officer.
- 4 ivory traffickers arrested in the North of the country with one tusk, weighting 15 kg. One of the traffickers, the owner of the ivory, brought it from South Sudan.

- 3 ivory traffickers arrested with 5 very fresh tusks, weighting 58 kg in the West of the country. They have been trafficking ivory from DRC to Uganda for years, but also getting it from poachers in Queen Elizabeth National Park. They were arrested in the act during an attempt to sell the ivory in a private house.
- 2 traffickers arrested in the West of the country with 3 elephant tusks (14.5 kg) and 6 hippo teeth. They were concealing the contraband in their home and brought it to a restaurant where they intended to sell it. The husband is a counselor for person with disability in a local Government.
- 2 ivory traffickers arrested with 18 kg of ivory, one of them a South Sudan national, a student at Kampala International University, the other one a trader at Kampala market. They resisted arrest violently, but they remain behind bars.
- 4 traffickers arrested with 147 pairs of horns and 11 skins of Bushbuck and Duiker, both fully protected species in Uganda. They were concealing the contraband in several bags, carried them on a motorbike to a hotel, where they intended to sell them. A leopard skin trafficker connected to this group was later arrested when trying to sell the skin.
- 4 Karamojong rebels arrested with 5 tusks weighting 22.5 kg in the North of the country. They have been trafficking ivory together for long time, get-



*2 ivory traffickers arrested with 18 kg of ivory*



4 ivory traffickers arrested in the North of the country with one tusk

ting it from elephants massacred in Turkana in Kenya and trading ivory for maize. They intended to sell the ivory in a private house of their relative, where they brought it concealed in three bags. They were resisting arrest violently but remain behind bars.

- 2 ivory traffickers arrested in the capital city with 2 pieces of ivory weighting 12 kg. They intended to sell the ivory in a vehicle, while driving around the town, but were swiftly arrested after they entered a car with the ivory concealed in a blanket and carried in a laundry basket. Police agents ready to handcuff them were already waiting for them in the car. They have been trafficking ivory together for several times, the 2 pieces originating from Congo were brought by their accomplice.
- Besides 5 years in jail for the ivory trafficker arrested this month, several more good deterring sentences were reached in Uganda courts in March. 2 traffickers, arrested in December 2016 with 136 pieces of hippo ivory and 2 elephant tusks were sentenced 3 years behind bars. 2 ivory traffickers arrested in March this year with 3 tusks and 6 hippo teeth were convinced and sentenced to 2 years imprisonment. 2 traffickers arrested in Octo-



4 Karamojong rebels arrested with 5 tusks weighting 22.5 kg

ber 2016 with 13 kg of ivory and 17 kg of pangolin scales were sentenced to 6 month in jail.

- NRCN team received an award of the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities for outstanding contribution to wildlife conservation in Uganda in the year 2017. The award was handed over to Vincent Opyene by General Moses Ali, the 2nd Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda on the International Wildlife Day at the Uganda Museum Kampala.
- Multi-agency investigation team including EAGLE Uganda legal advisors, INTERPOL, Uganda Wildlife Authority and Uganda Police Force was established to continue investigation of the case of 1.3 tons of ivory. The team met with the Director of Public Prosecution, who recognized the contribution of EAGLE Uganda to prosecution of wildlife cases. He committed to work closely with the team. He also helped to sign and release the file in respect of the case against the presidential advisor arrested for hippo ivory trafficking, which had taken long without clearance.
- New media officer started his test period with the EAGLE Uganda team.



4 traffickers arrested with 147 pairs of horns and 11 skins of Bushbuck and Duiker



Vincent Opyene, the director of Natural Resources Conservation network and the Coordinator of EAGLE Uganda on behalf of the whole team of EAGLE Uganda was awarded by the General Moses Ali, the 2nd Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda at the opportunity of the International Wildlife Day for an outstanding contribution to wildlife conservation in Uganda.

Indeed, EAGLE Uganda contributes to fighting wildlife crime in a way not comparable with any other organization. Just looking at the results of last year, in 2016 EAGLE Uganda brought in 104 arrests of wildlife traffickers, and doubled the target of the EAGLE Network, which is one trafficker arrested a week. But their results get even bigger in 2017. While in January and February they managed to arrest 11 and 12 traffickers, three times more than the target is, in March the number of arrested traffickers in Uganda reached 36, meaning that within 3 months, EAGLE Uganda has reached the yearly target in arrests.

But it is not only about the numbers, the level of traffickers and combating the corruption is a huge part of the fight against wildlife crime. In February 3 ivory and rhino horn traffickers connected to the largest rings of organized wildlife criminals, dealing in multi millions dollars illicit profits were arrested and 1.3 tons of ivory seized from them. A Senior Presidential Adviser and two other traffickers were arrested with 183 kg of hippo teeth the same month. A police constable was arrested for wildlife trafficking in January, and three other officials - one of them from Uganda Peoples Defense Forces, the other one from Uganda Police Force and the third one from Uganda Prison Services were arrested in March.

The speed, in which EAGLE Uganda is cleaning the country from the wildlife criminals and corrupt officials, is unprecedented!



## Madagascar - ALARM

- 4 reptile traffickers with 8 young Angonoka tortoises, critically endangered species, were arrested by customs at the Ivato Airport, the ALARM legal advisers were asked to support the interrogation and to do a legal follow up of the case.
- The coordinator met with the new General Director of Public Security, who agreed on collaboration with ALARM on arrest operations and investigations and sharing information in combating wildlife crime.
- Recruitment process continued to strengthen the team.
- One legal advisor travelled to Cameroon to be tested, the other one travelled to Gabon for the same purpose.

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# Headquarters

- Ofir Drori arrived to Cameroon for a week-long working visit to hold meetings with the US Ambassador, the Canadian High Commissioner and the Counselor at the German Embassy. Discussions focused on the evolution and challenges of wildlife law enforcement in Cameroon and Africa and what solutions could be applied to overcome them.
- Ofir Drori travelled to Holland to participate in Future for Nature 2017, a ceremony of giving Future for Nature Awards to new winners. Ofir won this

award in 2011 and since then actively promoted the idea of creating a community of the award winners. This vision was fulfilled this year, when most of the winners participated at the event and they drafted and signed a manifesto laying the groundwork for a young generation to contribute to a paradigm shift shaking up the old ineffective conservation machine. The Guest of Honor, His Majesty the King of Holland was present at the event and addressed the forum, and briefly discussed with Ofir and the other winners.

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# International Media Coverage

- Article in Reuters on arrest of Abdoul Salam Sidibé “Guinea arrests chimpanzee trafficker as part of crackdown”:

[Link to the article](#)

- International Business Times reporting on the arrest of Sidibé: “Guinea arrests wildlife trafficker who smuggled endangered chimpanzees for 30 years”:

[Link to the article](#)

- BBC article on arrest of Sidibé: “Arrests ‘big step’ in chimp trade battle”:

[Link to the article](#)

- BBC video about Nemley Junior, a chimpanzee rescued in Ivory Coast, includes an interview of Saidou, GALF coordinator, about the fight against wildlife crime:

[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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