GABONESE REPUBLIC
Ministry of Water and Forests, the Environment and Climate, responsible for Human-Wildlife Conflict

CONSERVATION JUSTICE

Conservation Justice

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Conservation Justice and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

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Summary

The project to provide **Support for the Enforcement of Wildlife Legislation (AALF)** is the first initiative implemented by Conservation Justice (CJ) in Gabon. It has been running since 2010 as part of a partnership with the Ministry of Water and Forests. In 2012, an amendment to the initial agreement was signed between the two parties to extend the scope of the project to include the fight against illegal logging. Since 2019, CJ has also been implementing three projects to support wildlife enforcement teams, in collaboration with local authorities and four certified forestry companies.

This report details the results achieved at national level during 2025. The activities carried out focused in particular on:

1. Conducting investigations into wildlife and timber trafficking;
2. Organising arrest operations in coordination with the relevant authorities;
3. Support for the monitoring of legal proceedings and the enforcement of court rulings;
4. Information and awareness-raising initiatives for local communities on the sustainable management and protection of wildlife and forests;
5. The implementation of awareness-raising activities in schools and villages;
6. Monitoring of activities within and around forestry concessions;
7. Monitoring mobile electric fencing systems around agricultural plots as a means of mitigating human-wildlife conflicts;
8. Capacity building and enhanced collaboration with administrative and judicial authorities;
9. Media communications regarding arrests made, court rulings handed down, and awareness-raising and training activities carried out.

The following sections present in detail the results achieved in 2025, the main elements of which are summarised below.

AALF Project :

1. **55** investigative **missions** were organised across Gabon, totalling **189 days** in the field. These enabled the identification of and contact with **95 suspected wildlife traffickers** and major poachers;
2. **10 operations were carried out** as a result of investigations conducted by AALF, leading to the arrest of a total of **33 wildlife traffickers** in possession of 64 ivory tusks weighing 192.2 kg;
3. The legal department also monitored three further operations, initiated by the law enforcement agencies and the Ministry of Water and Forests. These cases concern 10 suspected traffickers involved in ivory trafficking, who were arrested in possession of 7 ivory tusks weighing a total of 16.9 kg;
4. All these operations resulted in the seizure of **a total of 71 ivory tusks, weighing a combined 209.1 kg**;
5. Of the 33 traffickers arrested as part of the AALF project in 2025, **22 were sentenced to prison sentences ranging from six months to two and a half years**. Three cases were dismissed. Five cases, four of which involve individuals in custody, are currently under investigation by the specialist court. Two individuals have been cleared of suspicion, whilst one remains at large. Furthermore, of the 10 people arrested during operations carried out without the direct support

of the AALF project, eight were convicted of the illegal trade in ivory and sentenced to prison terms going between 6 and 18 months, whilst two cases were dismissed;

6. **60 officer cadets from the Staff College and 63 customs cadets** were trained on wildlife trafficking, the relevant legislation and associated criminal procedures;
7. **214 media items relating to the results of CJ activities were published**, including 131 online publications, 33 in the print media, 32 on television and 18 on the radio.

ALEFI Project:

1. An investigative mission was organised during the year, leading to the identification of a suspected illegal logger;
2. The legal department monitored, at the public prosecutor's office, **six complaints lodged by village communities** in connection with the implementation of contractual specifications;
3. Three training sessions were organised, attended by **76 participants from communities, local authorities and local administrations,** with a view to strengthening their capacity in the field of social forestry;
4. **60 awareness-raising sessions** were held within the communities on the rules governing community forests and on benefit-sharing mechanisms within the context of the contractual terms of reference. These activities reached 536 people, including 382 men and 154 women.

Projects supporting wildlife brigades:

1. Thanks to the three CJ awareness-raising teams deployed in the areas covered by the wildlife brigades in Koumameyong (Rougier and SOMIVAB), Ndangui (Precious Woods–CEB) and Botosso (GAW and the Lékédi Biodiversity Foundation), **8,868** pupils from 31 schools were made aware of the importance of conserving wildlife and forests for future generations;
2. These same teams also carried out awareness-raising activities with **1,734** adults from local communities, focusing on wildlife legislation as well as the benefits and monitoring of Mobile Electric Fences (MEFs) as a tool for protecting food crops from elephants;
3. In partnership with the local association Scoops-Elabe and the NGO Space for Giants, **208 villages were visited,** of which **94 benefited from information sessions** dedicated to human-wildlife conflict;
4. Finally, in-depth surveys on human-elephant conflict were carried out in **58 villages**, covering **521 households**. Joint teams assessed potential damage across **84 agricultural plots**, **24** of which **were fitted with Mobile Electric Fences (MEFs)**.

Introduction

Conservation Justice (CJ) is a Belgian non-profit organisation, established in Gabon since 2010, whose mission is to protect elephants and other endangered species from poaching and wildlife trafficking. This protection involves strengthening wildlife law enforcement at national level, primarily through the AALF Project to provide Support for the Enforcement of Wildlife Legislation.

A similar component has been developed to combat illegal logging through the Support for the Fight against Illegal Logging (ALEFI) project.

Furthermore, CJ carries out environmental education, community awareness-raising and human-wildlife conflict reduction activities as part of three wildlife patrol projects, in partnership with four certified forestry companies.

The organisation has a partnership agreement with the Ministry of Water and Forests, reinforced by three Memorandums of Understanding specific to the wildlife brigade projects. CJ also collaborates with the judicial authorities, customs, law enforcement agencies, national parks and Interpol.

The objectives are as follows:

- To identify wildlife traffickers and illegal loggers operating on a large scale, by gathering evidence admissible in court;
- To facilitate their arrest;
- To support legal proceedings and ensure that court rulings are enforced;
- Publicise the results to raise public awareness of effective law enforcement, the risks involved and the penalties;
- To support local communities in preventing illegal logging and human-wildlife conflict;
- Promote environmental education in rural schools;
- Train staff from the Water and Forests Department, customs, the judiciary and law enforcement agencies in forestry legislation and criminal procedures.

CJ's activities are carried out by five departments: Investigations, Operations, Legal, Community and Media.

1 AALF Project: Support for the Enforcement of Wildlife Legislation

Investigations

In 2025, Conservation Justice worked with two informants, each with networks of ad hoc informants. In total, 55 investigative missions, representing 189 days in the field, were carried out across Gabon. These operations enabled the identification of and contact with 95 suspected wildlife traffickers and major poachers. Thanks to support from the AALF project, 33 ivory traffickers were apprehended by the Water and Forests Department and law enforcement agencies, including the Judicial Police and the National Gendarmerie.

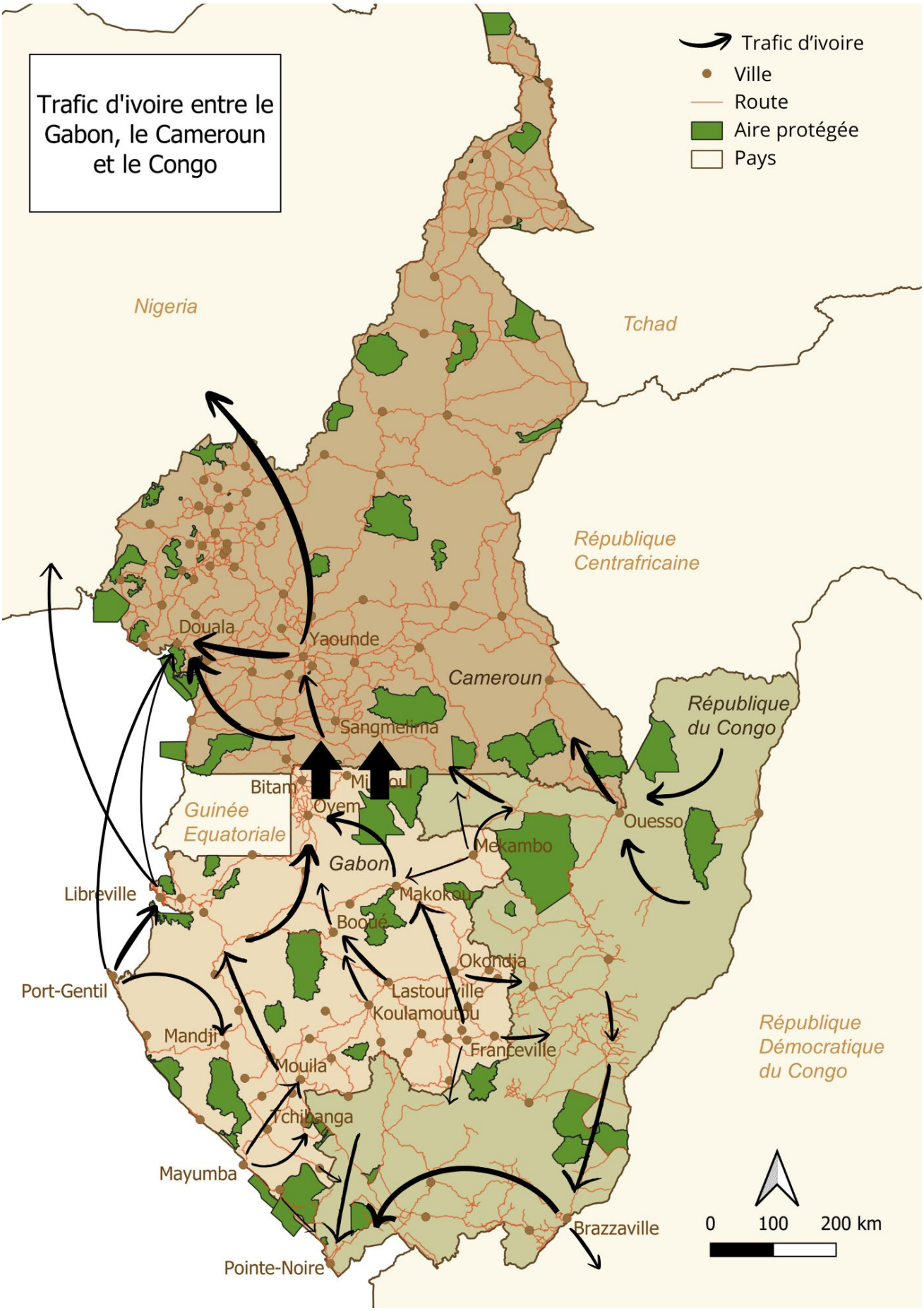
Table 1: Summary of AALF investigations

Investigations	55
Potential traffickers identified	95
Traffickers arrested by the judicial authorities	33

The information gathered enables trends to be analysed and provides a better understanding of the various dimensions and developments in the ivory trade. Gabon remains a major source country for ivory, with the bulk of it generally being exported to Cameroon from the north of the country.

Less frequently, ivory transits through the Congo from southern and eastern Gabon; these flows require in-depth analysis within the framework of transnational cooperation.

The main export points are the port of Douala and, to a lesser extent, Pointe-Noire. However, a significant proportion of Central African ivory is transported by land to Nigeria, from where it is then exported to Asia.



Map 1: Schematic representation of ivory trafficking within and around Gabon

Operations

Thirty-three suspected wildlife traffickers were arrested in 2025 with the support of AALF in six provinces of the country: Estuaire (3), Ogooué-Ivindo (6), Woleu-Ntem (3), Ogooué Maritime (6), Moyen-Ogooué (9) and Haut-Ogooué (6).

Figure 1 shows the number of traffickers arrested with support of AALF in 2025 in six provinces.

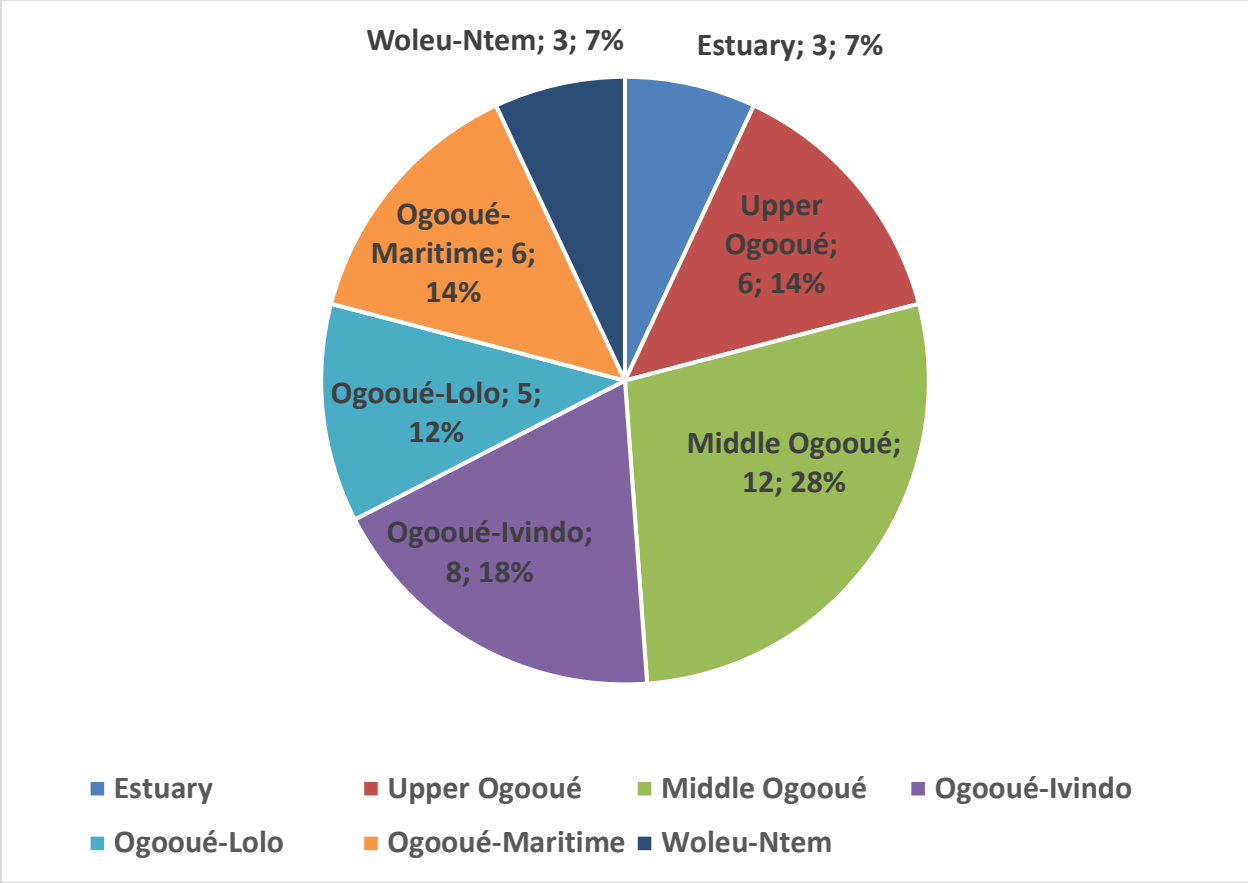


Figure 1: *Number of suspected traffickers arrested with the support of AALF by province in 2025*

The results presented do not fully reflect the scale of wildlife trafficking by province in Gabon, as they depend on the intensity of the operations carried out and are not statistically representative.

Table 2: Results of operations organised or monitored by AALF

Arrests resulting from AALF investigations	33 across 10 operations
Other arrests monitored by AALF	10 across 3 operations
Total	43

The AALF project, in collaboration with the Water and Forests Department, carried out 10 operations leading to the arrest of 33 suspected wildlife traffickers. In addition, three further operations initiated by the law enforcement agencies and the Water and Forests Department were supported by AALF, resulting in the arrest of a further 10 traffickers.

All these operations focused exclusively on ivory trafficking and elephant poaching, as other species appear to be less targeted by wildlife trafficking in Gabon. In total, these operations resulted in the seizure of 71 elephant tusks, representing 209.1 kg of ivory.

Since 2010, thanks to investigations by Conservation Justice and joint operations, 681 people have been arrested, of whom 629 (92 %) remained in custody.

As shown in Figure 2, this figure rose steadily from 2010 to 2017, then fell until 2022, when it levelled off. It should be noted that 80% of these cases relate to ivory trafficking.

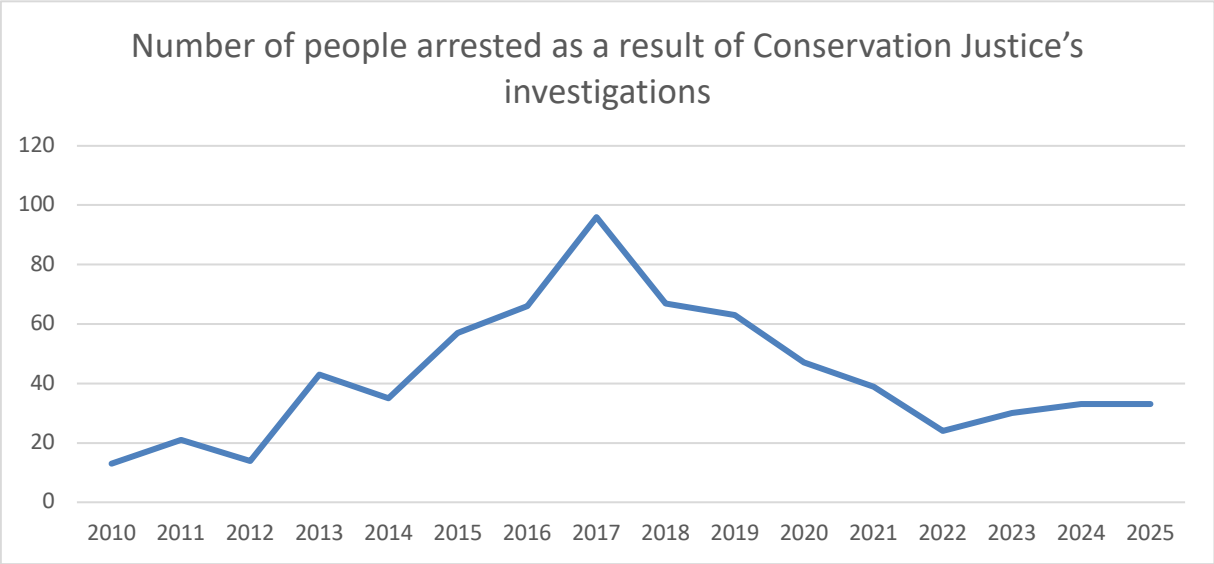


Figure 2: *Trend in the number of arrests supported by AALF since 2010*

Given that Conservation Justice's activities have remained relatively stable since 2010, the decrease in the number of suspected wildlife traffickers and major poachers arrested can be explained by several factors:

1. The dismantling of numerous trafficking networks, particularly those involved in ivory trafficking, made possible by the joint efforts of the Gabonese authorities and Conservation Justice since 2010;
2. Media coverage of the arrests and deterrent court rulings, with over 2,500 press articles relating to Conservation Justice's results;
3. The fall in the price of ivory following the closure of the legal market in China in 2017;
4. The strengthening of Gabonese legislation in 2019, increasing the maximum sentences for ivory trafficking from 6 months to 10 years' imprisonment.

Photos of some of the operations carried out in 2025:

A selection of images highlighting four of the 13 operations leading to the arrest of 43 suspected wildlife traffickers that took place during 2025.

Photo 1: *Six suspected traffickers arrested in Lambaréné on 14 January 2025 with 10 ivory tusks weighing 42.2 kg and a leopard skin.*

Photo 2: *Three suspected traffickers arrested – one in Lambaréné and the other two in Makouké – on 3 June 2025, in possession of six ivory tusks weighing 7.9kg and an elephant's tail.*

Photo 3: *Four suspected traffickers arrested in Makokou on 12 November 2025 with 14 ivory tusks weighing 37.9kg.*

Photo 4: *Three suspected traffickers arrested in Franceville on 22 December 2025 with 10 ivory tusks weighing 22.1kg.*

Legal Department

The Legal Department monitors legal proceedings with a view to securing deterrent sentences against suspected ivory traffickers. Arrests lead to the suspects being brought before the Public Prosecutor's Office, followed by the examination of the cases by judges in the specialised criminal division of the Libreville Court of First Instance, the sole court with jurisdiction over these offences.

Visits to detention centres are also carried out to monitor the health of those arrested and to verify that they are serving their sentences.

In 2025, the project's legal experts monitored 45 cases, 33 of which involved individuals arrested thanks to information provided by AALF to the Water and Forests Department and the law enforcement agencies.

The outcomes achieved in court, particularly before the Specialised Chamber of the Libreville Court of First Instance, are set out in the table below.

Table 3: Legal proceedings supported by AALF in 2025

Arrests	45
Acquitted	2
Wanted	1
Cases dropped	5
Prosecutions (including 5 under investigation)	37

Thanks to the legal support provided by Conservation Justice and the funding of lawyers representing the Water and Forests Administration, the rate of convictions resulting in custodial sentences remains particularly high in Gabon. In 2025, **22 of the 33 traffickers arrested through AALF were sentenced to six months to two and a half years' imprisonment.**

Among the other cases: five people, four of whom were already in custody, are currently undergoing specialised pre-trial proceedings pending trial; three individuals had their cases dismissed; two people were cleared of all charges; and one person is still wanted.

Furthermore, two traffickers arrested in 2024, in possession of two ivory tusks, were sentenced in 2025 to two years' imprisonment.

As for the 10 other people arrested without the support of AALF, eight were convicted of the illegal trade in ivory, with sentences ranging from 6 to 18 months' imprisonment, whilst two cases were dismissed. Dismissals generally concern drivers whose criminal liability could not be established.

Finally, where court rulings appear insufficiently dissuasive, an appeal is systematically lodged in agreement with the Ministry of Water and Forests.

Communication

With a view to informing the public about the effective enforcement of the law and strengthening the deterrent effect on potential traffickers, the results achieved in 2025 in terms of arrests were widely publicised in the national and international media, via print media, radio, television and online platforms, as shown in Table 4 and Figure 3 below.

In total, **214 publications** relating to CJ's results were recorded, of which **131 were online, 33 print media, 32 on television and 18 on the radio**.

Table 4: Press articles published in national media by AALF in 2025

Internet	131
Print media	33
Television	32
Radio	18
Total	214

A total of 214 media items were published, of which 131 (61 per cent) were online, 33 (15 per cent) in the print media, 32 (15 per cent) on television and 18 (8 per cent) on the radio.

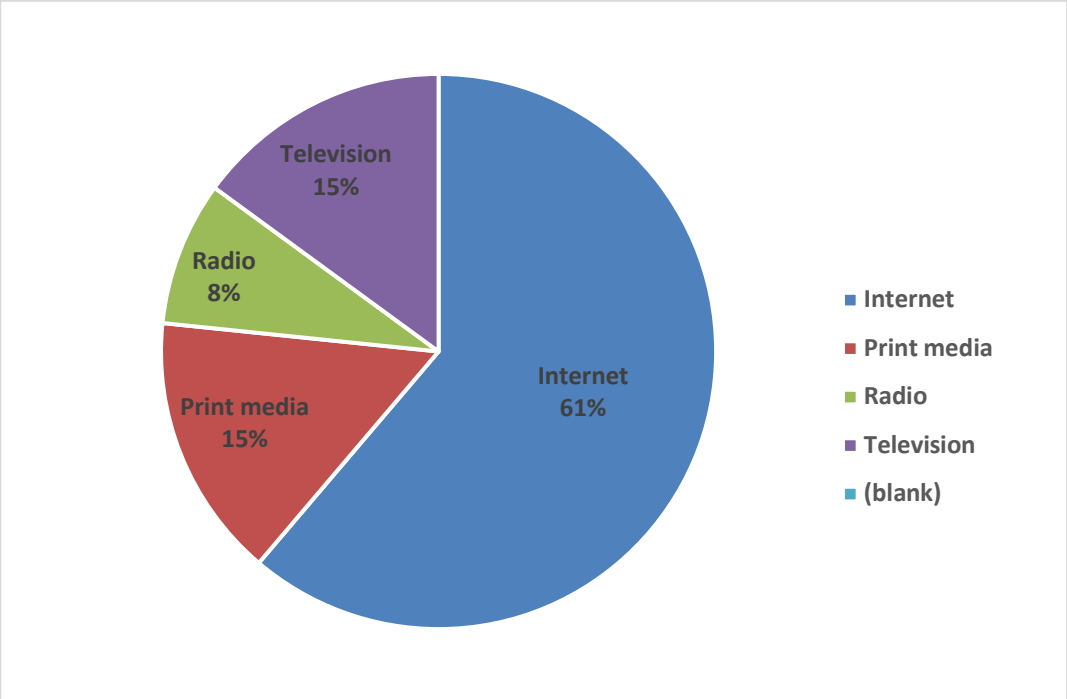


Figure 3: *Media items covering CJ activities in 2025*

The articles are available across various media outlets as well as on the project's website, Facebook page and YouTube channel.

Website: www.conservation-justice.org
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Bpsxns34L/
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/conservation-justice-asbl/
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX9BAGtEMOQ

2 Wildlife Brigade Projects

Three Memorandums of Understanding have been signed between Conservation Justice and the Water and Forests Administration, also involving forestry partners and the Lékédi Biodiversity Foundation. Following these agreements, three wildlife brigades have been established administratively, each with varying levels of operational capacity in the field:

- The Ndangui Wildlife Brigade;
- The Koumameyong Wildlife Brigade;
- The Botosso Wildlife Brigade.

As a partner organisation, CJ has committed to supporting these brigade projects in the following areas:

- Providing legal experts and supporting the monitoring of court cases, including those involving the referral of suspects to court;
- Supporting information and awareness-raising activities for local communities on wildlife protection, through environmental education sessions in schools and information sessions within communities;
- Organising investigations into wildlife trafficking to identify potential traffickers and facilitate their arrest by Water and Forestry officers;
- General support for the effective operation of state-run brigades and the projects that support them.

Monitoring of Mobile Electric Fences (MEFs) installed around village food crops to protect them from elephants has also been incorporated, in collaboration with the NGO *Space for Giants,* which specialises in this priority area.

Information/awareness-raising/environmental education

The community awareness-raising activities carried out by the three Conservation Justice teams are aimed both at adults in local communities, to inform them about wildlife legislation, wildlife management and the monitoring of mobile electric fences, and at school pupils, to raise their awareness of the importance of wildlife and forests.

School visits are carried out with the approval of the provincial authorities, including the provincial director of education and the provincial head of public administration (the provincial governor).

In total, **8,868 children from 31 schools** took part in awareness-raising activities in schools, highlighting the need to preserve wildlife and forests for future generations.

In addition, **1,734 adults from local communities were informed** about wildlife legislation and the benefits of mobile electric fences in protecting food crops from elephants, as well as how to monitor them.

Finally, **400 workers from the forestry companies** GAW, SOMIVAB and Rougier were made aware of the importance of wildlife protection and of minimising the impact of logging on animal populations.

The tables below present the results achieved by the brigade support projects in terms of environmental education and awareness-raising.

Table 5: Number of children made aware of the importance of wildlife in the various wildlife brigade projects.

Area of operation	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils	Number of teachers
Botosso	2	48	1,737	19
Koumameyong	16	88	2752	74
Ndangui	13	36	4,379	42
TOTAL	**31**	**172**	**8868**	**135**

Photo 5: *Awareness-raising session for 38 Year 4 and Year 5 pupils at Tsong-Bial State Primary School in Booué, including the presentation of the little book *Ada and Essi Tell the Story of Gorillas and Chimpanzees**

Table 6: Number of adults in the communities who have received awareness-raising on sustainable wildlife management and protection.

Area of operation	Number of people	Men	Women
Botosso	0	0	0
Koumameyong	1183	609	574
Ndangui	551	287	264
TOTAL	**1,734**	**896**	**838**

The number of people reached in the Botosso Brigade project's area of operation was lower, as activities had to be suspended in March 2025 due to a lack of funding.

Photo 6: *Awareness-raising session held on 28 May 2025 for 22 people in the village of Bakwaka on safety measures and how to behave when encountering forest elephants.*

Table 7: Number of staff who received awareness training

Area of operation	Number of staff
Botosso (GAW)	57
Koumameyong (Rougier and SOMIVAB) –	250
Ndangui (CEB)	0
TOTAL	**307**

Photo 7: *Awareness-raising session held on 5 December 2025 on the legislation governing hunting and the merits of the sustainable management of wildlife, for 29 employees of the Société de la Mise en Valeur du Bois (SOMIVAB)*

The Human-Elephant conflict has reached alarming proportions in recent years, particularly due to a decline in forest fruit production, leading to a shortage of food for wildlife at certain times of the year.

The Gabonese Government has identified the installation of Mobile Electric Fences (MEFs) around village food crops as a means of protecting them from elephants. CJ has signed a partnership agreement with the NGO *Space for Giants,* which specialises in this priority area. *Space for Giants* has an agreement with the Government to install Mobile Electric Fences (MEFs) throughout Gabon. Monitoring the installed fences is clearly important to ensure their durability and assess their effectiveness, despite significant logistical challenges given that they are being installed on a large scale across the country (over 1,000 have already been installed).

Table 8 sets out the efforts and results achieved by the CJ teams in terms of raising awareness amongst local communities about human-wildlife conflict. Over 89 villages were involved, representing 1,724 people who received awareness-raising. Furthermore, 136 Mobile Electric Fences (MEFs) were monitored by CJ in 2025

Table 8: Results of activities supporting Human Wildlife Conflict mitigation in the brigades' areas of operation

Area of operation	Number of villages visited	Number of men reached	Number of women reached	Number of CEMs monitored
Koumameyong Brigade area	49	605	568	81
Ndangui Brigade Zone	37	287	264	50
Botosso Brigade Zone	03	0	0	05
TOTAL	**89**	**892**	**832**	**136**

Photo 8: *Checking the proper functioning and maintenance requirements of mobile electric fences (CME) on 17 May 2025 in the village of Bakoussou.*

Study on Human-Wildlife Conflict in Northern and North-Eastern Gabon.

Furthermore, Conservation Justice has collaborated with the Gabonese association Scoops-Elabe to carry out two studies on human-wildlife conflict. This conflict manifests itself primarily through the destruction of crops, mainly by elephants.

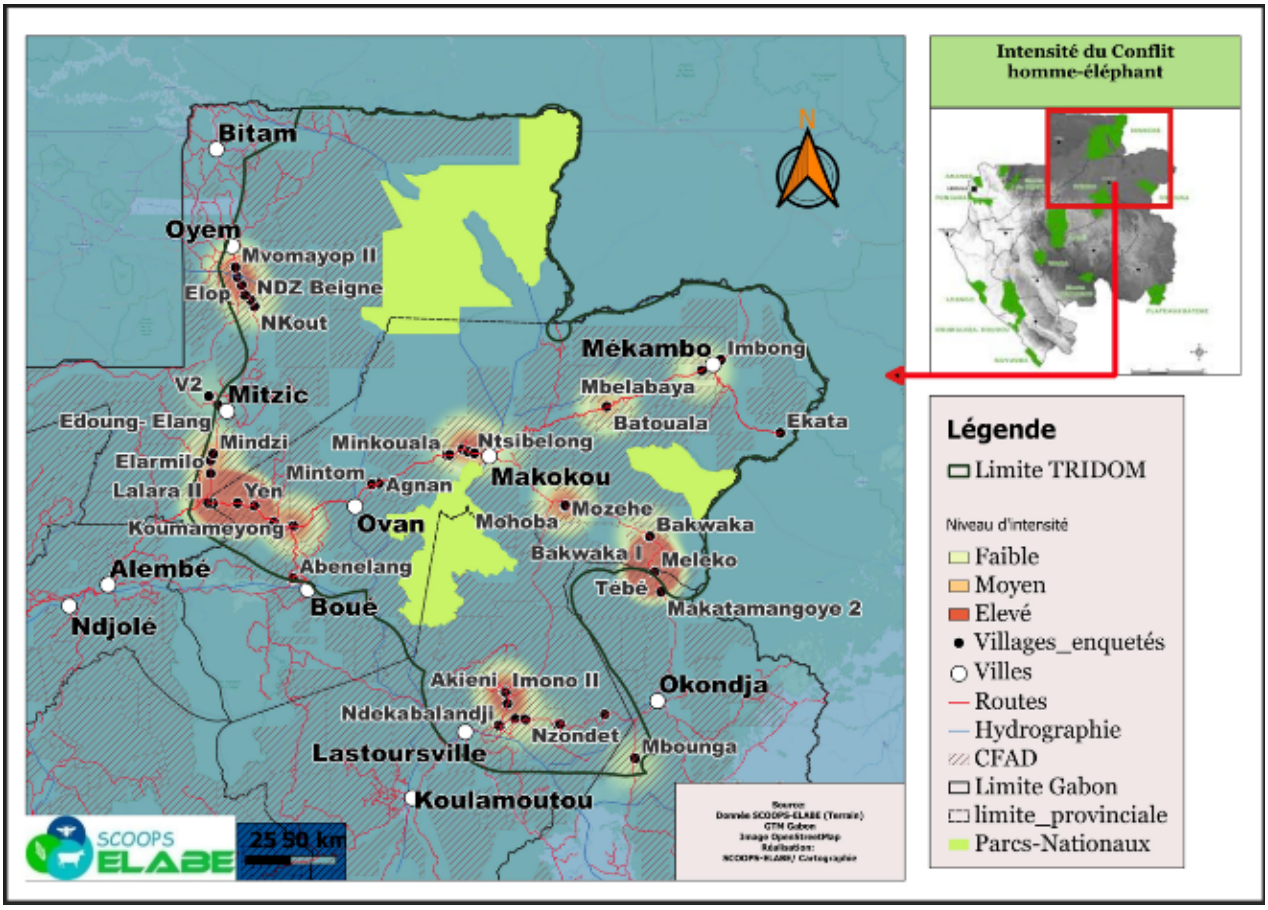
The first study focused on identifying hotspots, whilst the second examined the effectiveness of the methods implemented to protect agricultural plots from wildlife, particularly elephants. The study area covered three main roads along which the CJ and Scoops-Elabe teams were able to carry out their work. In total, 208 villages were visited, including 94 where information sessions on human-wildlife conflict were held. More in-depth surveys were carried out in 58 villages, involving 521 households. The joint teams analysed potential damage across 84 agricultural plots, 24 of which were fitted with Mobile Electric Fences (MEFs).

Table 9: Number of villages and plantations covered in the two studies conducted by Scoops-Elabe in collaboration with CJ

Routes	Villages traversed	Villages where awareness-raising took place	Villages surveyed	Households surveyed	Agricultural plots analysed	Plots with EMFs	Plots without CEM
Lastourville-Okondja-Makokou	86	30	25	122	42	14	28
Lalara Makokou-Ekata	90	49	22	311	31	8	23
Lalara-Mitzic-Oyem	32	15	11	113	11	2	9
TOTAL	**208**	**94**	**58**	**546**	**84**	**24**	**60**

Analyses indicate that the Lalara–Makokou–Mékambo corridor is the area of greatest conflict intensity, with a high number of cases of field destruction as well as incidents involving human casualties and significant agricultural losses.
The Lastourville–Okondja–Makokou corridor also appears to be a heavily affected area. The mapping carried out highlights several conflict hotspots, particularly around the villages of Lalara, Meleko and Elope, reflecting a high level of tension between communities and wildlife.

These findings, based on reported incidents, field observations and community perceptions, underscore the need to step up investigations and mitigation measures in these priority areas.



***Map 2**: Areas of high CHE intensity in the TRIDOM (Scoops-Elabe)*

Across all the agricultural plots visited, several protection methods were observed.

Three techniques appear to be the most frequently used, with more than 15 observations each: sheet metal fences or barriers, electric fences and the use of fires.
Five other methods were recorded, with a frequency of between 5 and 15 observations. In this category, the strategies implemented in the villages, in descending order of frequency of use, are: crop guarding, scarecrows, the use of empty metal drums to produce noise, barriers or fences made of empty cans, and simple wire fences.

All 244 farmers surveyed consider electric fencing to be the most effective method for preventing elephant intrusions onto agricultural plots. According to their statements, this system provides almost total protection for crops, estimated at nearly 100 per cent.
Conversely, the other protection methods were not perceived as offering a comparable level of effectiveness.

Finally, the results indicate that certain methods, notably sheet metal barriers and plant barriers, are mainly used to limit damage caused by rodents and other small animals, rather than to deter elephants.

Support for monitoring

Only the Ndangui wildlife brigade is currently operational, following the appointment of a brigade commander by the Water and Forests Administration. Between January and August 2025, he carried out various activities. The CJ's legal adviser provides support for most of his missions.

Table 10: Summary of surveillance missions carried out by the brigade

Assignements	14
Fixed checkpoints on main roads	03
Records of patrols	3
Weapons seized	04
Ivory tusks seized	02

Several types of mission are organised: awareness-raising, forest policing with or without the establishment of checkpoints, providing information on human-wildlife conflict, and monitoring electric fences installed to protect agricultural plots from elephants.

3 ALEFI Project (Support for the Fight against Illegal Logging)

The Support for the Fight against Illegal Logging (ALEFI) project is based on a partnership established with the Ministry of Water and Forests, formalised in 2012. Its implementation is organised around five departments: investigations, operations, legal affairs, media and social (or community) affairs. Since its launch, the project has been funded primarily by the European Union.

ALEFI aims to inform, raise awareness and build the capacity of local communities regarding their rights and responsibilities in relation to logging. The field team comprises an assistant coordinator for the southern zone and a lawyer from CJ, who also supports communities in their legal proceedings, particularly in relation to complaints against logging companies. This work is carried out in collaboration with the partner organisation Brainforest, which supports communities by facilitating the flow of information, notably through training in independent forest monitoring techniques.

Community Missions

Regarding community missions, social activities are now concentrated in Ngounié Province, in southern Gabon, where CJ collaborates with the Muyissi Environnement association, focusing exclusively on aspects related to social forestry. Since 2020, a partnership with Brainforest has enabled monthly community missions to be carried out in support of the work of CJ and Muyissi Environnement.

During 2025, the ALEFI project carried out 11 missions, totalling 63 days in the field. These interventions enabled the organisation of 60 awareness-raising sessions on the rules governing community forest management and the sharing of benefits within the framework of the contractual terms of reference. In total, 536 people were reached, including 382 men and 154 women.

The number of missions fell significantly, as shown in Figure 4, from 22 in 2024 to 11 in 2025. At the same time, the number of mission days also fell, from 188 to 63 over the same period. This sharp decline in activities is due to the completion of the ALEFI and RALFF projects, both funded by the European Union.

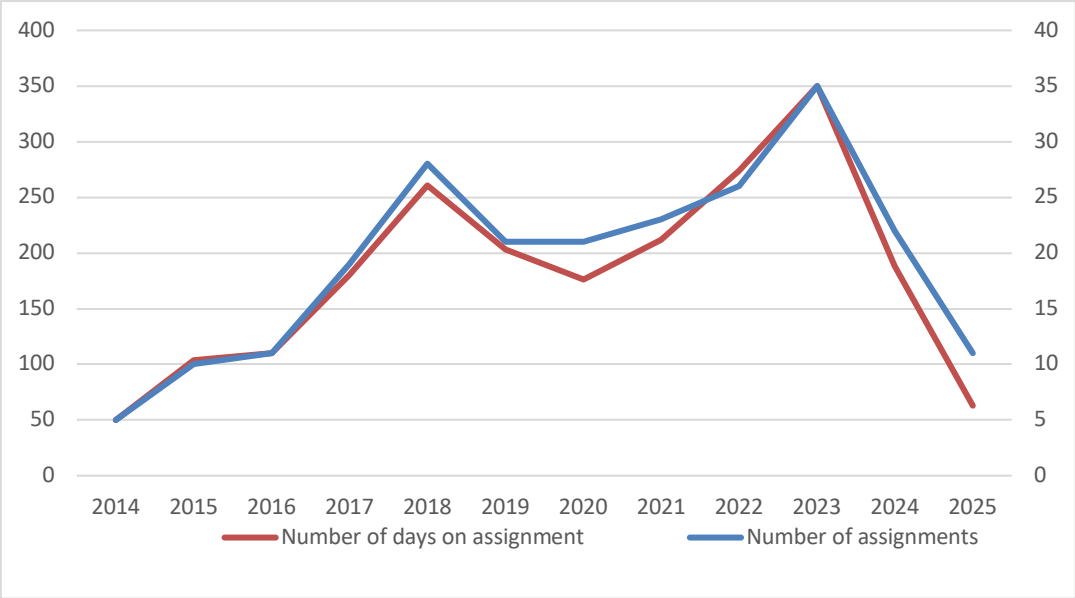


Figure 4: *Trend in the number of mission days since 2014*

Monitoring of Contractual Specifications (CCC)

The ALEFI project teams continued their monitoring activities regarding the implementation of the Contractual Terms of Reference (CTRs) in Ngounié Province. In this regard, they ensured compliance with the commitments formalised at the time of signing, whilst continuously strengthening the village communities' understanding of how the terms work and of their rights. They also helped to resolve bottlenecks and reported any non-compliant practices observed to the relevant authorities.

During each mission, the teams provided support to members of the Project Management and Monitoring Committees (CGSPs) in the relevant departments. They kept local authorities informed about the status of CCC implementation in the villages visited and acted as mediators to facilitate the resolution of any difficulties encountered. In this respect, the project fulfils a vital facilitating role in the functioning of the CGSPs.

During the 11 missions carried out in 2025 – representing a total of 63 days in the field across 28 communities in Ngounié Province and conducted in partnership with the organisations Muyissi Environnement and Brainforest – monitoring was carried out in 20 communities that had signed CCCs with forestry companies. The ALEFI project was thus able to analyse the progress made in their implementation.

The implementation of the CCCs follows five successive stages after they are signed: the community's selection of the project, validation by the CGSP, payment of the Local Development Fund (FDL) by the operator, implementation of the project, and finally the closure of the CCC.

Conservation Justice considers a CCC to be closed once the FDL has been fully utilised and all projects funded under it have been completed and delivered.

Figure 5 shows the breakdown of the CCCs monitored by the project according to the different stages of implementation, by province, since 2014.

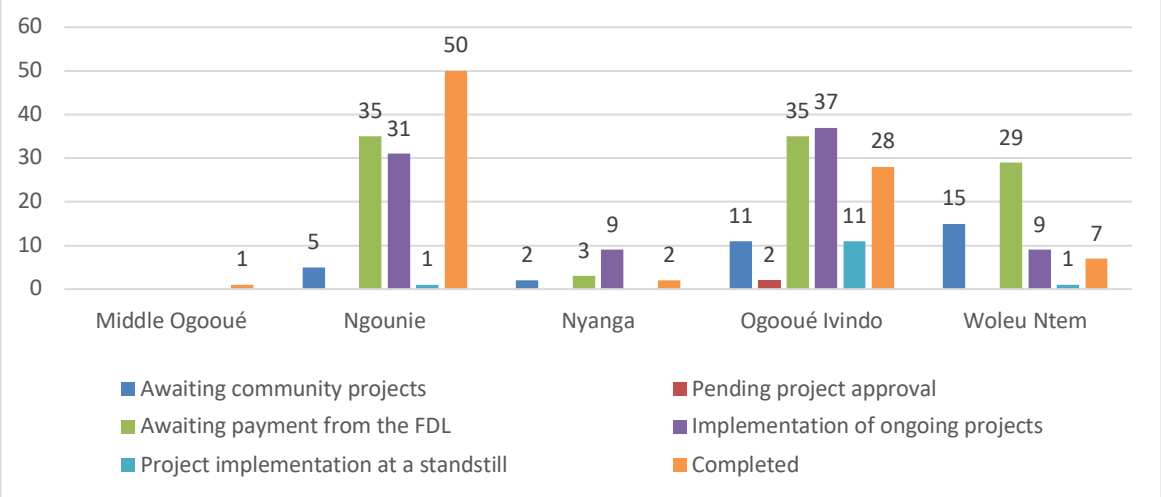


Figure 5: *Number of CCCs at each stage of implementation, by province*

Of the 324 CCCs monitored since the start of the project, 164 present implementation problems, representing almost 50%.

The main problems encountered during the monitoring of CCCs are:

- Failure by the forestry company to disburse funds (29%);
- Mismanagement of funds (23%);
- Slow project implementation (14%);
- Failure by villagers to submit community projects (12%).

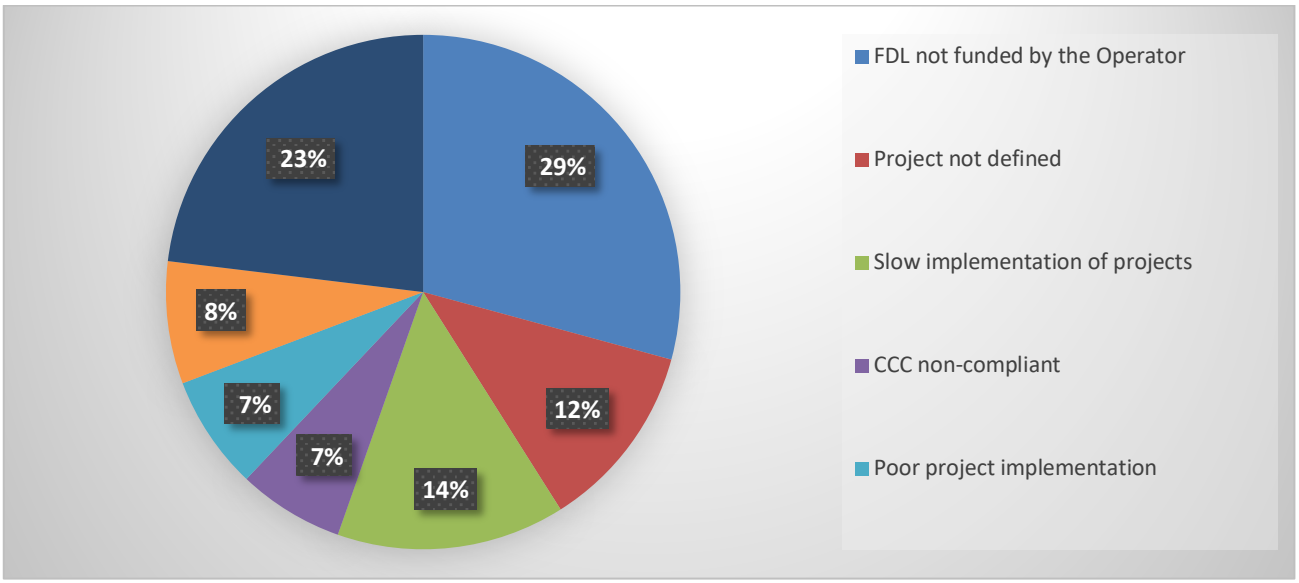


Figure 6: *Breakdown of the types of problems encountered across all CCCs monitored by ALEFI*

The teams work closely with the Project Management and Monitoring Committees (CGSPs) and the communities to resolve the difficulties encountered, particularly regarding the selection of community

projects or the disbursement of Local Development Funds (FDL). When faced with cases of misappropriation of funds, they support the communities in their efforts, including in filing complaints.

Community forests

Furthermore, the ALEFI project is not limited to monitoring CCCs, but also provides advisory support to communities on the management of community forests. In 2025, ten villages with a community forest were visited in Ngounié province: Mamiengue, Oyénano, Kouagna Ndougo, Moulandoufouala, Guidouma, Memba/Mouyamba, Bemboudié, Nzemba/Grand Odavo, Petit-Odavo and Mouyamba.

However, the management of these community forests remains a cause for concern, due to frequent breaches of the Forestry Code and the simplified management plans. The use of industrial-scale logging practices appears unsuitable for this model, and the leasehold system tends to encourage illegal logging as well as the emergence of conflicts within communities. In many cases, operators treat these forests as annual felling quotas to be exploited intensively, contrary to the management plans which provide for exploitation spread over a twenty-year period. Recurring instances of mismanagement, embezzlement and overexploitation have thus been observed.

These findings are not new, and the situation appears, in certain areas, to be deteriorating further. Tensions between communities and forestry operators – often referred to as 'farmers' – appear to be on the rise, as evidenced by the numerous disputes and complaints on record.

Legal Department

The project has legal advisers responsible for monitoring disputes and legal proceedings, particularly in support of local communities.

In 2025, the ALEFI project's legal department monitored six cases, three of which related to the misappropriation of Local Development Funds (LDF) under the Contractual Specifications (CS), and three of which concerned disputes over community forests (CF). No cases of illegal logging were brought before the courts during the year.

Of these six cases, five are currently with the public prosecutor's office, whilst one is under investigation at the Mouila investigating magistrate's office. At the request of the newly appointed public prosecutor, and to restart the processing of these cases, acknowledgements of receipt were resubmitted in 2025, accompanied by a follow-up to ensure progress. These are the following cases:

Misappropriation of Local Development Funds

1/ Mouyamba Community v two contractors

On 15 March 2024, the Mouyamba Community lodged a complaint against two contractors for breach of trust and misappropriation of Local Development Funds intended for the construction of a water tower and a waystation, the works on which were never completed. Conservation Justice has been

regularly monitoring these proceedings since 2024. The cases had to be reopened on two occasions, having been misplaced and left unresolved by the public prosecutor's office.

2/ *Memba Community v Cédric TONDA*

The Memba community had also lodged a complaint on 15 March 2024 against a contractor for breach of trust and embezzlement, following the payment of 12,550,000 FCFA intended for the construction of a water tower, the work on which was never completed. As in the previous case, the complaints were followed up, but there has been no progress in the cases to date.

3/ The Mabanga community v SIG

As for the Mabanga community, it lodged a complaint on 31 January 2024 against the Société Industrielle Gabonaise (SIG) for breach of trust and embezzlement of 14,459,089 CFA francs intended for the construction of a solar power station. As with the other two complaints relating to the misappropriation of Local Development Funds, the proceedings have made no progress at the Mouila Public Prosecutor's Office.

Community forests

1/ TOKANO Association v Société des Bois de la Ngounié (SBN)

With regard to community forests, the TOKANO Association, which brings together the villages of Kouagna-Ndougou and manages the local community forest, lodged a complaint on 15 July 2022 against its former concessionaire, the Société des Bois de la Ngounié (SBN), for theft of timber and forgery of documents. Following an investigation by the Ngounié Judicial Police Branch, the case was referred on 26 August 2022 to the Deputy Public Prosecutor, who opened a judicial inquiry. The investigating judge heard the parties and granted the accused provisional release. In April 2023, Conservation Justice prepared a legal analysis of the case, which was submitted to the investigating judge; the investigation is ongoing, and the next steps in the proceedings are awaited.

2/ The Mamiengué community v Alpha Production

Furthermore, on 3 August 2022, with the support of CJ, the Mamiengué community lodged a complaint with the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Mouila Court against its tenant farmer, Alpha Production, for breach of trust. Despite CJ's follow-up, as the case had not been dealt with, the community re-submitted the complaint in 2025.

3/ Mamiengué community v PRADEL

On 3 August 2022, the village community of Mamiengué, represented by the DIAMBU-GAMANGU association, lodged a complaint with the Public Prosecutor's Office against Groupe Pradel for theft of documents. The complaint was forwarded to the Fougamou Gendarmerie Brigade, but the accused company was not summoned, as the person in charge could not be located. Since then, the Mouila Public Prosecutor's Office has asked the community to resubmit the complaint.

4 Training

In terms of training, Conservation Justice organised capacity-building workshops for those responsible for enforcing water and forestry laws. Participants included both provincial government officials and representatives of local communities. The latter were trained on the sharing of benefits derived from forestry operations, offences relating to water and forests, and the rules governing the management of community forests. These workshops, conducted in partnership with an association of leading figures from the conservation sector, fostered the sharing of experience and collective learning. In total, 199 people benefited from this capacity-building initiative.

Table 11: Training courses delivered in 2025

Date	Location	Trainer	Organisation trained	Number of participants	Days
25 and 26 January 2025	Mékambo	CJ, ACOSAH	Community leaders from the village communities of Zoula, EKATA, Imbong and Etsela-Endouga	**20**	2
10 and 13 February 2025	Libreville	CJ	Armed Forces General Staff (Officers of all branches)	**60**	2
15 July 2025	Libreville	CJ, WCS and ANPN	CEMAC customs trainees	**63**	1
23 and 24 October 2025	Mouila	CJ, Water and Forests, Brainforest NGO and Muyissi Environment	Local communities Decentralised administrations; Representatives of legal entities managing community forests	**26**	2
29 and 30 October 2025	Fougamou	CJ, Water and Forests, Brainforest and Muyissi Environment	Local communities; Decentralised administrations; Representatives of legal entities managing community forests	**30**	2
TOTAL				**199**	

5 External relations

In 2025, Conservation Justice organised at least 239 external meetings.

These exchanges were characterised by close collaboration with the Gabonese authorities in Libreville and across the provinces, as well as with diplomatic missions based in Gabon.

Several meetings were organised with the following bodies, whom we would like to thank for their commitment:

1. **The Judiciary**: The Deputy Director-General for Criminal Affairs, the Public Prosecutors and their deputies, the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the courts, the Chief Clerks of the courts and the Court of Appeal, the sitting judges, the investigating judges, and the Chief Secretaries of the public prosecutors' offices;
2. **Water and Forests**: the Minister for Water and Forests, the Chief of Staff, the Director-General for Wildlife and Protected Areas, the Deputy Director-General for Forests, the Director of Wildlife Management and Hunting, the Director of Anti-Poaching Operations, the Provincial Directors and Heads of Water and Forests Districts, the heads of wildlife brigades, the heads of provincial hunting and human-wildlife conflict mitigation brigades, and the Inspector-General of Services;
3. **National Parks Agency**: The Park Managers of Minkebe and Ivindo National Parks and the Head of the Minkebe East Wildlife Brigade.
4. **Law enforcement agencies**: Gendarmerie Brigade Commanders, Heads of Judicial Police branches, Heads of branches of the Gendarmerie's General Directorate of Investigations, the Heads of the Counter-Interference and Military Security Units and the Heads of the General Directorate of Documentation and Immigration, the Head of the Customs Investigation Brigade and heads of the Customs Intelligence Service, the heads of Afripol, Interpol officers, and the coordinator of the provincial branches of the Judicial Police;
5. **Administration**: Provincial Governors; Special Delegates of the Departments; Special Delegates of the Departmental Councils; Special Delegates to the Town Hall and their deputies; the Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of National Education; Provincial Directors of National Education; Heads of Educational Centres; Heads of Educational Districts; the Departmental Prefects;
6. **Others**: Heads of non-governmental organisations, the railway company (SETRAG), community representatives, directors of partner forestry companies, wildlife and social affairs officers, the project's legal advisers, and heads of the Staff College in Libreville.

6 Conclusions

In 2025, Conservation Justice carried out **55 investigative missions** across Gabon, leading to the identification of **95 suspects** involved in wildlife trafficking. On this basis, ten operations were carried out, resulting in the arrest of **33 suspected ivory traffickers** by the Water and Forests Department and the police, caught in the act of possessing **64 ivory tusks, with a total weight of 192.2 kg**.

In addition, **three operations were initiated by the police and the Ministry of Water and Forests** without CJ's support, leading to the arrest of **10 suspected traffickers** involved in ivory trafficking, with the seizure of **7 ivory tusks** weighing **16.9 kg**. The legal department followed up on these cases.

In total, these operations resulted in the seizure of **71 ivory tusks**, with a combined weight of **209.1 kg**, and the arrest of 43 individuals. Ivory remains the wildlife product most sought after by criminals in Gabon.

CJ supported the Water and Forests Administration in the legal proceedings against 35 suspected ivory traffickers. Of the 33 individuals arrested as part of the AALF project in 2025, **22 were sentenced to prison terms of between 6 and 30 months**, whilst two individuals arrested in 2024 in possession of two ivory tusks were sentenced to two years' imprisonment, six months of which were suspended, and three years' imprisonment, one year of which was suspended, respectively. Three people had their cases dismissed, five are undergoing specialised investigations (four of whom are in custody), two have been cleared of all charges and one remains at large. Of the ten other people arrested without the support of AALF, eight were convicted of the illegal trade in ivory and sentenced to prison terms of between 6 and 18 months, whilst the cases against the other two were dismissed.

In terms of communications, CJ issued **193 media releases**, of which **119 were published online** (62 per cent), **27 in the print media** (14 per cent), **31 on television** (16 per cent) and **16 on the radio** (8 per cent). CJ also held at least **239 meetings** with the authorities and partners, an average of 19 per month.

With regard to environmental awareness and education, **8,868 children from 31 schools were made aware** of the importance of conserving wildlife and forests for future generations. In addition, **1,734 adults from local communities were informed** about wildlife legislation and the usefulness of mobile electric fences in protecting crops from elephants, whilst **400 workers from GAW, SOMIVAB and Rougier were trained** in wildlife protection and minimising the impact of logging on animal populations.

The political will to manage wildlife sustainably remains strong in Gabon, the main refuge for forest elephants and many other species. Nevertheless, human-elephant conflict is reaching worrying proportions, justifying the scaling up of CJ's activities in this area to support the Gabonese authorities.

The outlook **for 2026** is encouraging, despite the financial difficulties faced by many NGOs in 2025.

CJ will participate in the **GUARD Wildlife** project developed by UNODC, with the recruitment of a regional coordinator responsible for activities in Gabon and the Republic of Congo. A collaboration initiated in 2025 with Global Conservation and Noé in Cameroon is expected to be strengthened in 2026.

Finally, **a major agreement is expected in early 2026** between the Ministry of Water, Forests, Environment and Climate – responsible for human-wildlife conflict – Conservation Justice and the Société d'Exploitation du Transgabonais. This partnership will aim to combat the illegal trade in wildlife products along the 648 km railway line on a sustainable basis, by mobilising human, technical and logistical resources to step up controls and dismantle illegal trafficking networks.