

# The First Secure Anonymous Platform for Wildlife Crime Whistleblowers

## First 3-month Pilot Development, Results, Challenges & Lessons Learned



**WildLeaks**  
WILDLIFE

Washington, DC – June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014



CONSERVATION  
INTERNATIONAL



Africa Biodiversity  
Collaborative Group

# About the Elephant Action League (EAL)



A small start-up based where is needed  
No official presence in 'hot' Target Countries





# What EAL Does



- Wildlife Crime - Field Projects
- Special Projects
- Investigations
- Awareness activities
- CITES related
- Human-Elephant Conflict



# What EAL Does



## Wildlife Crime – Field Projects

**Tanzania:** support PAMS Foundation in anti-poaching, training to TANAPA’s rangers, Intelligence

**Gabon:** support Conservation Justice (EAGLE)

**Guinea C.:** support WARA-GALFF (EAGLE)

**Togo:** support TALFF (EAGLE)



## Investigations

**Ivory & al-Shabaab** (in coll. with Maisha Consulting)

**Thailand** in collaboration with another NGO

**Sri Lanka** (about to begin - partner is confidential)

**WildLeaks:** 3 in preparation

# WildLeaks Launch & Mission

- Launched by EAL in February 2014 with zero communication investment
- First leak received within 24 hours from the launch

**Mission:** to receive and evaluate anonymous information/tips regarding wildlife and forest crimes and transform them into actionable items.

## The possible actions are:

- Begin or continue an investigation (also in collaboration with the partners)
- Share the information with selected and trusted contacts within the relevant law enforcement agencies (before/after an investigation)
- Share the information with the media partners
- Do nothing if the information is not useful enough or if any use of the leak is considered dangerous for the source

## Priorities

**Priorities:** to **prevent** wildlife crimes and to facilitate the **identification, arrest and prosecution** of criminals, traffickers, businessmen and corrupt governmental officials behind the poaching of endangered species and the trafficking of wildlife and forest products.



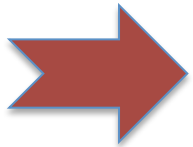
### Why WildLeaks?

- They are often ahead of us
- Need of new, innovative, disrupting approaches
- The role of the Civil Society
- More pressure on criminals but ALSO on corrupt government/security officials
- Target the upper layers of wildlife crime.



# The Technology

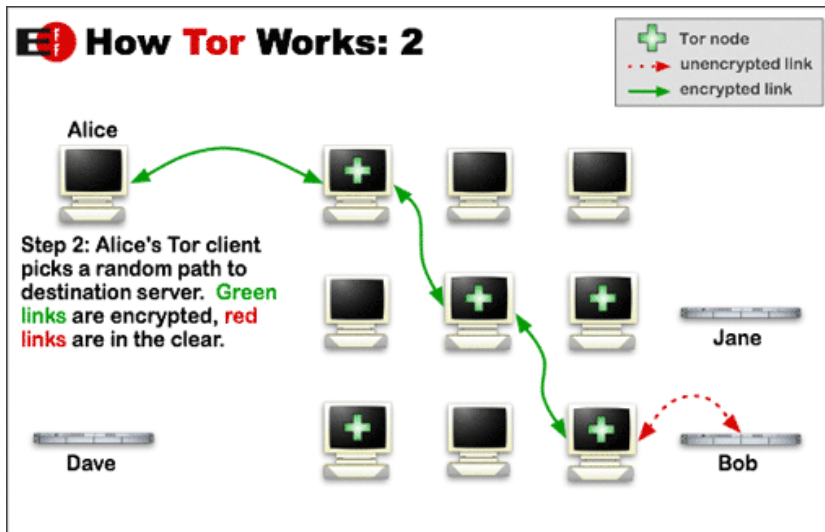
**Need:** To allow the sources to stay anonymous (if they wish) and to submit information in a secure way, always strongly encrypted.



**Very secured platform built on the Tor technology**



Tor is free software and an open network that helps users defend against traffic analysis.



**What Do I need? Just the Tor Browser**

<https://www.torproject.org/download/download-easy.html.en>

(NOT A MUST, I CAN DO WITHOUT IT)

In collaboration with **The Hermes Center for Transparency and Digital Human Rights**





# The Technology – Tor Browser

About Tor

about:tor

Startpage

Tor Browser  
3.6.1-MacOS

## Congratulations!

This browser is configured to use Tor.  
*You are now free to browse the Internet anonymously.*

[Test Tor Network Settings](#)

Search securely with Startpage.

### What Next?

Tor is NOT all you need to browse anonymously!  
You may need to change some of your browsing habits to ensure your identity stays safe.

[Tips On Staying Anonymous »](#)

### You Can Help!

There are many ways you can help make the Tor Network faster and stronger:

- [Run a Tor Relay Node »](#)
- [Volunteer Your Services »](#)
- [Make a Donation »](#)

The Tor Project is a US 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to the research, development, and education of online anonymity and privacy. [Learn more about The Tor Project »](#)



# How It Works – Very Simple! 1<sup>st</sup> Step

## 3 Simple Steps

**1<sup>st</sup> Step:** Click on the Red Submission Button on our homepage

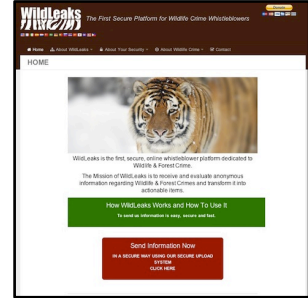
(but only after reading the information on our website – Green Button!)

The screenshot shows the WildLeaks website homepage. At the top, the WildLeaks logo is displayed with the tagline "The First Secure Platform for Wildlife Crime Whistleblowers". Below the logo is a navigation menu with links for Home, About WildLeaks, About Your Security, About Wildlife Crime, and Contact. A "Donate" button is visible in the top right corner. The main content area features a large image of a tiger. Below the image, there is a paragraph of text: "WildLeaks is the first, secure, online whistleblower platform dedicated to Wildlife & Forest Crime. The Mission of WildLeaks is to receive and evaluate anonymous information regarding Wildlife & Forest Crimes and transform it into actionable items." Below this text is a green button with the text "How WildLeaks Works and How To Use It" and "To send us information is easy, secure and fast." Below the green button is a red button with the text "Send Information Now" and "IN A SECURE WAY USING OUR SECURE UPLOAD SYSTEM CLICK HERE". A blue arrow points from the text "(but only after reading the information on our website – Green Button!)" to the green button. Another blue arrow points from the right side of the image to the red button.

# How It Works – Very Simple! 2<sup>nd</sup> Step

**2<sup>nd</sup> Step:** You are taken to a simple secure platform where you can submit information and files.

Our Tor address? <http://ppdz5djzpo3w5k2z.onion>



**WildLeaks** The First Secure Platform for Wildlife Crime Whistleblowers

Welcome to WildLeaks™  
The First Secure Platform for Wildlife Crime Whistleblowers

[Blow the Whistle](#)

Are you a whistleblower?

Enter your receipt

[View Tip](#)

Are you a receiver?

This is the Login page.

Through this platform you are participating in a secure whistleblowing process. This platform is running the GlobalLeaks software, that is specifically designed to protect the identity of the submitter and of the organization running the platform.  
This software is developed by the non-profit organization Hermes Center for Transparency and Digital Human Rights. We are supported also by your donations. Visit our donation page to help us further support the development of GlobalLeaks.

# How It Works – Very Simple! 2<sup>nd</sup> Step

**4 Categories  
of Leaks**

**I can upload  
all kind of  
files**

## How It Works – Very Simple! 3<sup>rd</sup> Step

**3<sup>rd</sup> Step:** After the submission you will be given a Receipt Number **9333538708223368**

This number is very important because it allows the user to connect to us again, in a secure and anonymous way, and to do the following:

- Add more information
- Send us a message
- Interact with us in an anonymous way

**REMINDER:**  
The Installation of the Tor Browser  
is Not a Must

### Submission Created!

This receipt will allow you to login as the whistleblower for this Tip. Through this system receivers will be able to ask you questions on the Tip and you will be able to write a reply. You will also be able to keep track of who has viewed your submission and downloaded the files. Moreover, it will allow you to add other files to your submission.

Beware of the fact that this receipt, if fallen into the wrong hands, will lead to identifying you as the whistleblower for this Tip.

If you are interested in keeping it, please save it in a secure place and make sure it does not fall into the wrong hands

## 9333538708223368

Please copy in the box below your receipt to access the tip interface.

[View Tip](#)



Example of a Leak  
(as received -  
back office)

### Human Toll of Wildlife Crime <sup>1</sup>

**Submission date**  
30-04-2014 19:19

**Expiration Date**  
07-06-2014 18:37

**1) Short title <sup>1</sup>**  
Destruction of forest in central Mexico

**2) Full description <sup>1</sup>**  
Illegal parcelling of forest in Tenango de Doria, Hidalgo, Mexico leads to loss of habitat for many endemic species, and affects the population of the town and region nearby

**3) Files description <sup>1</sup>**  
1. Description of the problem (Para la gente de WildLeaks.docx). 2. Audiovisual material. All information is in spanish. We can work on a translation if needed.

### Options

- Postpone Tip expiration date
- Delete Tip

### Receiver List

Name	Description	Access counter
Project Leader & Project Managers	Your leak/information will be sent ONLY to the Project Leader and the Project Managers of WildLekas. See on our website under Who We Are.	15

### Files

download all files

show only files not yet downloaded

Filename	Download	Upload Date	Content Type	File Size
Para%20la%20gente%20de%20WildLeaks.docx	download (2/3)	30-04-2014	application/vnd.openxmlformats-officedocument.wordprocessingml.document	177025 Bytes
Campa%C3%B1a%20Bosque.rar	download (2/3)	30-04-2014	application/octet-stream	8495733 Bytes

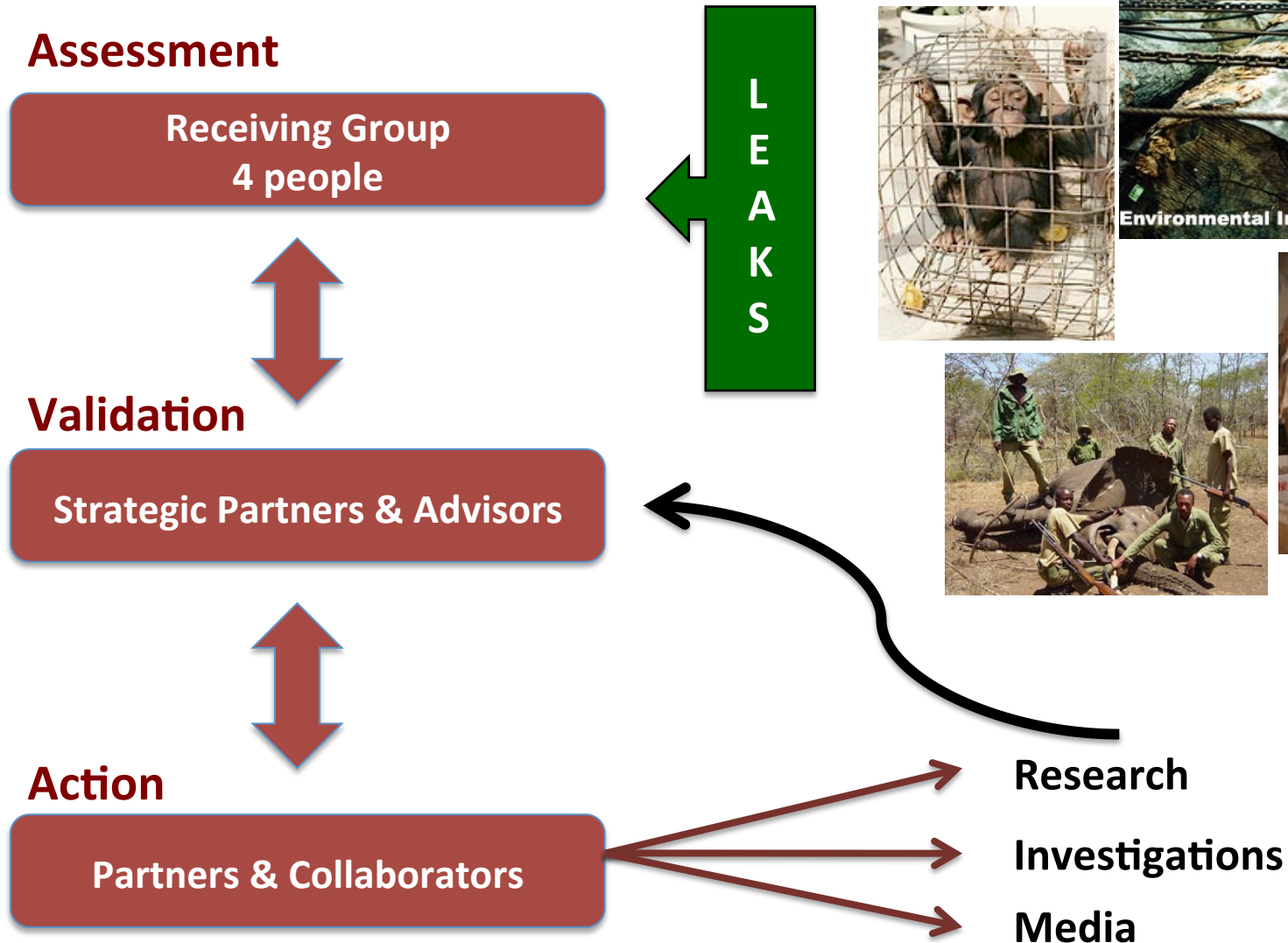
### Comments

Add Comment

### Private Messages with the Whistleblower

Send Private Message

# Not Just Technology! *The Modus Operandi*



## First 3 months – Most Relevant Leaks/Info



## First 3 months – Most Relevant Topics

- Tiger poaching in Sumatra (Indonesia) – **Shared**
- Illegal trade of an African wildlife product into the U.S. – **Shared**
- Illegal trade of ivory (Hong Kong, Kenya, Mozambique)



**Prep for 3 investigations**

- Illegal hunting of lions & leopards in S. Africa

**Shared**

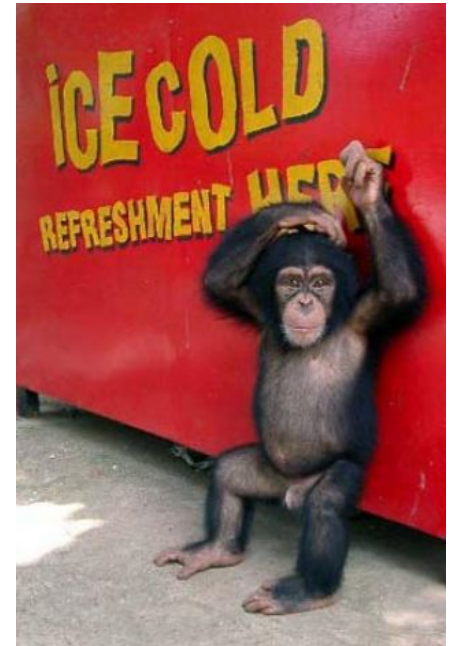
- Forest destruction in central Mexico





## First 3 months – Most Relevant Topics

- Illegal trade of chimps in Liberia – **Shared**
- Illegal logging in Malawi (Mulanje cedar)
- Illegal fishing in Alaska
- Illegal logging/trade in Russia – **Shared**



Credit: Gregg Zachary



Credit: EIA

## The Role of the Media

Like law enforcement/Gov agencies, the media **are potential partners** and can play an important role. But it's just one of the options we have.

In some cases, WildLeaks may determine that **releasing information** to the **media** may be the most effective means of addressing a particular issue.

This is normally done **only after** the investigative phase or **after** a determination has been made that an investigation is either unnecessary, not feasible, or may result in information reaching those involved in the criminal activity.



# First Partnerships

## Strategic/Managers



The Oxpeckers Center for  
Investigative Environmental  
Journalism



## Advisors



## Media



## Operational/Field



Conservation Group  
Max Planck Institute for  
Evolutionary Anthropology



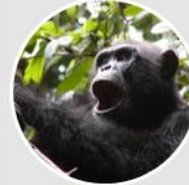
Finnish Association for Nature  
Conservation (FANC)  
Predators Group



# Les chimpanzés ne sont pas des animaux de compagnie



Les chimpanzés sont une espèce protégée par la loi.  
La vente de chimpanzés est interdite par la loi.  
Acheter des chimpanzés incite les vendeurs à capturer  
davantage d'animaux.



Les chimpanzés peuvent devenir incontrôlables  
en captivité et représenter un grave danger  
pour vous et votre famille. En plus, ils peuvent  
transmettre des maladies mortelles comme Ebola.



Les chimpanzés souffrent mentalement et  
physiquement lorsqu'ils sont gardés dans des  
espaces clos et loin de leur milieu naturel.

**N'achetez jamais de chimpanzé pour en faire un animal de compagnie. Signalez les personnes qui en possèdent à la maison ou qui en font le commerce:**

Conservation group: [orphan.apes@eva.mpg.de](mailto:orphan.apes@eva.mpg.de)

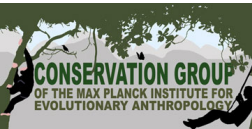
Office Guinéen de la Diversité Biologique et des Aires Protégées, BP 761 Conakry

Ou faire une dénonciation anonyme à: [www.wildleaks.org](http://www.wildleaks.org)



La chasse, la capture, la vente ou  
l'achat de chimpanzés est

# ILLÉGAL



Guinea C.  
Cameroon  
Liberia  
Ivory C.  
Congo

Posters in 3  
languages  
at airports,  
int. schools,  
embassies,  
hotels.







# Operating methods overview



- Wildlife / forest products
- Application of professional intelligence methodologies (US Intel Standards)
- Specialisation in HUMINT
- COMINT capability
- 4-stage intelligence cycle
  - Snapshot
  - Geospatial node mapping
  - Infiltration
  - Interdiction / disruption
- **Analysis & Verification**



# Operating scale



## Pilot's Achievements

The first 3-month pilot phase of WildLeaks had the following **5 objectives**:

- 1) POC (Proof of Concept) ✓
- 2) Test the platform, the technology and the sharing systems ✓
- 3) Introduce WildLeaks to the professional community and to the public ✓
- 4) Begin/prepare the first investigation/s based on selected leaks ✓
- 5) Develop first strategic and operational partnerships ✓



## Lessons Learnt

- There is a lot of people out there **willing to help**. And apparently they like us!
- They needed a reliable and **independent** tool, and the choice of full anonymity
- WildLeaks is becoming a recipient for confidential info **not only through the site**
- In addition to passively receiving information, WildLeaks can use its network to **actively seek information** regarding specific criminal activity
- WildLeaks could also be a **mapping tool** for certain issues/phenomenon
- The submission phase could be made simpler
- App for **mobile phones** ? Issue with real anonymity

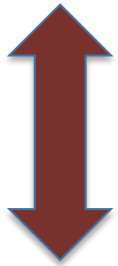
# Challenges

- WildLeaks **needs to be known and trusted** > More leaks
- We need to reach people in the **cities** AND in the **field**
- Specific **countries penetration**
- **Extraction, Protection and Management** of information from specific countries
- We deal **only with wildlife and forest crimes**, not animal welfare
- Law enforcement agencies are potential **partners**, not competitors
- Potential **large amount of info** to process > need to grow organically but fast
- **Assessment & investigative capabilities** > more partners in the field
- **Tutoring/managing** of potential whistleblowers

# What We Are Working On - The Future



**New project** that will enhance the intelligence and investigative capabilities of our teams AND partners



**More Strategic and Operational Partnerships**



**More investigations** done by WL, AND more investigations done by others, not necessarily our partners



More presence in the field and more assessment/investigative capabilities



## Citizens Referees

Who blow the whistle when  
they see something wrong

But we need to inspire  
people to help!





# Thank You



Andrea Crosta  
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