Your support is needed: Cameroon activists on trial for peaceful protest against Wall Street land grabber

Herakles Farms is engaged in the development of a controversial 20,000 ha oil palm plantation in the South-West Region of Cameroon that faces strong opposition from affected communities.

Nasako Besingi and his NGO, Struggle to Economise Future Environment (SEFE), have been working alongside other activists and local organisations to protect people's rights and preserve forests in the area where Herakles is operating. They have been subjected to intimidation, lawsuits, arrests, and violent attacks.

On December 31, 2013 Nasako was summoned, at the request of Herakles Farms, for "publication of false news via the internet". **Nasako's court case begins on March and he could face up to 6 months imprisonment and thousands of US dollars in fines**. Herakles' lawsuit is based on an email that Nasako sent in August 2012 in which he explained how he was ambushed by a group of men that he identified as junior managers of Herakles Farms. Luckily a team of French journalists from France24 happened to be trailing Nasako that day. When their truck appeared, the men let Nasako go and fled. Herakles Farms admits that the men who attacked Nasako were "local service providers". Nasako and 4 colleagues are also facing other charges for organising "an undeclared public meeting" while distributing anti-Herakles t-shirts to locals.

Nasako is not the only target of intimidation by Herakles and the Government of Cameroon. Another local NGO, Nature Cameroon, has in effect been barred by a government official from informing residents of the threats posed by the Herakles Farms project to their livelihoods and environment since last September.

International support is urgently needed to help Nasako with his court cases and to pressure Herakles to stop its intimidation of Nasako and Nature Cameroon.

Supporters can email the company directly to demand that it withdraw its defamation case against Nasako and stop intimidating activists and organisations. Emails can be sent to the current head of the project in Cameroon, Patrick Jones (see below).

Those wishing to make donations toward Nasako's legal fees and support local community struggle against Herakles Farms can do so here:

https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=8UYAVJTM9C8A4 (100% of all contributions will go to Nasako).

Nasako can also be contacted directly at nasako.bondoko@gmail.com

On 29 January 2014, **a letter was sent by several NGOs to relevant UN Special Rapporteurs requesting they investigate and intervene in these cases of acts of repression and**

criminalisation of local organisations and activists in Cameroon.

For more information about the destructive Herakles Farms' project in Cameroon, please see:

SEFE - SEFE calls President of Cameroon's land deal with US company Herakles Farms a grave injustice and hindrance to conventional values

Greenpeace and Oakland Institute - Herakles exposed: The truth behind Herakles Farms false promises in Cameroon (2013) Massive Deforestation Portrayed as Sustainable Development: the Deceit of Herakles Farms in Cameroon (2012)

GRAIN - Cameroon activist takes on land grabber from Wall Street, now faces imprisonment (2013)

Email **to Herakles Farms and tell the company to stop its intimidation of Nasako Besingi and other defenders of local communities and forests**

> **Email form letter**
>
> to: jones@heraklesfarms.com
>
> subject: Stop intimidating Nasako Besingi
>
> Dear Patrick Jones,
>
> I am writing to demand your company, Herakles Farms, withdraw its charges against Nasako Besingi of SEFE, withdraw Herakles's complaint that caused the suspension of Nature Cameroon, and to immediately stop any other forms of intimidation directed at all organisations in Cameroon that have been peacefully defending people's rights and protecting forests in the area where Herakles is operating.
>
> Thank you for your urgent attention.
>
> (name)