Cameroon: 'Pygmy' leader to visit London

Jacques Ngoun is one of the 'Pygmies' of Cameroon. His people, the Bagyeli, are in danger; their forest is being invaded, and the hunting and gathering on which they depend ruined, by logging companies and settlers.

On 23 May the World Bank will decide whether to continue to back a controversial oil pipeline from Chad to Cameroon. This pipeline will go through the Bagyeli's territory, and will not only destroy the crops and trees that they depend on, but also drive away the animals that they hunt. The pipeline plan is widely attacked for damaging the environment and local development and benefiting only the elite. Oil companies involved include Exxon and Chevron. Jacques says: 'The Pygmies were not informed; many only heard of the pipeline when they saw the machines.'

Jacques is Coordinator of CODEBABIK, an organisation formed by the Bagyeli to fight for their survival. He will be in London on 21-23 May as part of a tour to seek international support; with him is Didier Amougou of Planet Survey, a Camerounian organisation for the protection of the environment and of marginalised peoples.
Jacques and Didier will be meeting journalists and NGO representatives at Survival International's Office in London on Monday 22 May, at 2.30pm. If you wish to attend or make an appointment at another time contact Virginia Luling or Sara Watson .

'The logging companies destroy the forest... Our children have no future. We ask the government not to forget us, to do something so that our life today and tomorrow will not be as black as a night without stars.' Jeanne Silpen, of the Bagyeli.