
Cameroon: Resistance against SOCAPALM replanting operations is fertile!

SOCAPALM is the name of a company that controls nearly 60,000 hectares of industrial oil palm plantations in Cameroon. It was a state-owned company until the year 2000, when it was privatized and acquired by the agro-industrial SOCFIN company, owned mainly by the French group Bolloré, controlled by the Bolloré family, and the Huber Fabri family of Luxembourg. The World Bank played a key role in the story of how the SOCFIN conglomerate, and the handful of European billionaire families that control this company, has profited from purchasing SOCAPALM. (1).

Nowadays, the company is in the process of renewing part of its oil palm plantations in Edéa in order to maintain and further increase their productivity and thus, their profits.

At the end of last year, communities in Edéa, started to mobilize against this process. In particular, the women of one of the villages who organized in the Association of (Women) Neighbors of Socapalm in Edéa, Afrise, by its French acronym.

They launched a petition (2) to raise international solidarity to their demand to stop SOCAPALM from replanting and to alert that they were ready to do whatever was needed to stop SOCAPALM's operation in Edéa saying "we will not accept spending the next 50 years in this misery. We are determined to fight to free our lands and obtain living spaces for our children, who are the current and future generations."

Alerted by the fact that the replanting operation already started in some villages, early this month, the Informal Alliance against Industrial oil palm plantations in West and Central Africa, a collective of communities and activists, fighting against the expansion of plantations in Africa, released a statement in support of the communities.

In the statement (3), the Informal Alliance says we "urge Socapalm to immediately stop replanting oil palm plantations in the vicinity of the houses and graves of the communities living in Apouh à Ngog, which has been going on since Wednesday 08 August 2024. The planting of tens of thousands of hectares of palm trees in front of the yards of these local residents is a serious attack on the food sovereignty of the families in the village and on the dignity of the women of Apouh à Ngog, in the Edéa 1 district of Cameroon."

The community resistance and their determination to stop the company has led the sub-prefect to request Socapalm to stop its activities.

This is a first victory of the community and the organized women from Edéa, but the struggle will continue until SOCAPALM returns the lands to the communities!

(1)

<https://www.wrm.org.uy/bulletin-articles/the-enduring-legacy-of-a-little-known-world-bank-project-to-secure-african-plantations-for-european>

(2)

<https://www.wrm.org.uy/action-alerts/your-support-is-needed-sign-this-petition-by-women-in-cameroon-resisting-industrial-oil-palm-plantations>

(3) <https://www.wrm.org.uy/action-alerts/stop-socapalms-replanting-operations>