

OPEN LETTER OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS TO THE CAMEROONIAN AUTHORITIES



The villager trying to access their banana fields and to stopp the replanting.

2 April 2025

Dear Senior Divisional Officer of Sanaga Maritime,

We are honoured to come before your high authority to inform you of the following:

On March 25, 2025, the people living in Apouh A Ngog village in the Littoral Region of Cameroon witnessed a brutal and traumatising act of intimidation : heavily armed government forces, including heavily armed soldiers and gendarmes arriving to supervise the replanting of oil palms by staff of SOCAPALM, part of the multinational corporation Socfin Bolloré. These operations of oil palm replanting led to the destruction of more than 6000 banana saplings that were planted by the community in January 2025. This presence of armed forces is a stark reminder of the historical injustices faced by communities living around agroindustries in Cameroun.

The land in question has been occupied by SOCAPALM for over 60 years, with the company taking over 98% of the village lands during the colonial period. The villagers have been left with virtually no land to grow food, cash crops, or even bury their loved ones. Despite numerous attempts to negotiate the return of land as vital living spaces around the villages with the company, the villagers have been met with intimidation, threats, arbitrary arrest and detention without trial.

The destruction of the banana plants has had a devastating impact on the women in the village, who rely on agriculture for their livelihood. The loss of their crops has destroyed a vital source of income, exacerbating poverty and hunger in the community.

Furthermore, SOCAPALM's replanting right behind houses and over grave sites has also erased their cultural heritage and traditional way of life.

SOCAPALM has been accused of land grabbing and human rights abuses in Cameroon. The company has been operating in the country for decades, taking over large tracts of land from rural communities. The Cameroon government has been complicit in these land grabs, providing military support to the company and ignoring the rights of rural communities.

The struggle for community control of ancestral lands is a matter of justice, equality, and human rights. It is of the utmost importance that we support rural communities in their struggle for access to their ancestral lands.

We demand that the Senior Divisional Officer of Sanaga Maritime and the government of Cameroon:

1. engage, urgently, in meaningful dialogue with the people of Apouh A Ngog to address their demands for access to the lands of their ancestors.
2. respect and restore the rights of the communities of Apouh, whose wellbeing it must ensure, and ensure that SOCAPALM stops the oil palm replanting operations on the disputed sites;
3. open an investigation on the rights violations suffered by the villagers of Apouh, on the destruction of the banana plants, and hold those responsible for this destruction accountable.

In solidarity with the people of Apouh A Ngog, particularly with the women who are defending their cause:

1. *AFERISE (Association des Femmes Riveraines de Socapalm Eseka), Cameroon*
2. *AFRISE (Association des Femmes Riveraines de Socapalm Edea), Cameroon*
3. *AFRISH CEA (Association des Femmes Riveraines de Sud Cam Hevea), Cameroon*
4. *AFRISKI (Association des Femmes riveraines Socapalm Kienke), Cameroon*
5. *AFRISO (Association des Femmes Riveraines Socapalm), Cameroon*
6. *Alliance for Rural Democracy, Liberia*
7. *APDDH Association Pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme, Cameroon*
8. *Association des Journalistes Camerounais pour l'Agriculture et le Développement (AJAD), Cameroon*
9. *Association Gulusenu du village Doubou, Gabon*
10. *Association les Rassembleurs du Village Mboukou, Gabon*
11. *Association pour la Solidarité et le Développement Durable (AS2D), Cameroon*

12. *Bunong Indigenous People Association (BIPA), Cambodia*
13. *CNOP, Congo-Brazzaville*
14. *COFERISO (Collectif des Femmes Riveraines Sosucam Mbandjock), Cameroon*
15. *COLLECTIF ADIAKE. Cote d'Ivoire*
16. *Collectif des Ressortissants et Écologistes des Plateaux Batéké, Gabon*
17. *COPACO, DR Congo*
18. *CPH, Côte d'Ivoire*
19. *CPPH, Côte d'Ivoire*
20. *Family Farm Defenders, USA*
21. *Femme actuelle de évolution de la culture Cameroun Nkolfoulou, Cameroon*
22. *FIAN Belgium, Belgium*
23. *FIAN International*
24. *FIAN Switzerland, Switzerland*
25. *GRAIN, International*
26. *INSPIRIT Creatives NGO, Germany*
27. *Institute of Sustainable Agriculture, Liberia*
28. *Inter Pares, Canada*
29. *Joegba United Women Empowerment and Development Organization (JUWEDO), Liberia*
30. *Justice ensemble, France*
31. *JVE, Côte d'Ivoire*
32. *JVE, Gabon*
33. *Kebekatche Women Development & Resource Centre, Nigeria*
34. *Komolo Agro Farmers Association Kiryandongo, Uganda*
35. *Les Soulèvements de la terre, France*
36. *Look Green Care Foundation, Nigeria*
37. *Malola, Sierra Leone*
38. *Milieudefensie, The Netherlands*
39. *Musiru Divag de Fougamou, Gabon*
40. *Muyissi Environnement, Gabon*
41. *Natural Resource Women Platform, Liberia*
42. *Nature Cameroon, Cameroon*
43. *Ndagize Julius, Uganda*

44. *Ndieme Ndong, Senegal*
45. *Oakland Institute, USA*
46. *Parti Révolutionnaire Communistes, France*
47. *Public Eye, Switzerland*
48. *RADD (Réseau des Acteurs du Développement Durable), Cameroon*
49. *RAJORNY (Rassemblement des jeunes originaires de Nye'été), Cameroon*
50. *ReAct Transnational, France*
51. *REFEB, Cote d'Ivoire*
52. *Solifonds, Switzerland*
53. *Struggle to Economize Future Environment (SEFE), Mundemba, Cameroon*
54. *Synaparcam, Cameroon*
55. *Tano Women Empowerment and Development Association (Tweda), Ghana*
56. *Union Locale des Femmes de Mar Lotie Region Fatick, Commune Fimela, Senegal*
57. *Union Locale des Femmes Transformatrice de Ndangane, Senegal*
58. *Witness Radio, Uganda*
59. *Women's Network Against Rural Plantations Injustice (WoNARPI), Sierra Leone*
60. *World Rainforest Movement (WRM), Uruguay*
61. *YVE, Ghana*

Copy to:

- Divisional Officer of Edéa
- Governor of the Littoral
- MINDCAF
- Prime Minister's Office
- Socapalm

For further information please contact:

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