

17 February 2025

Dear Directors General of Socapalm, Socfinaf and Socfin,
Dear Members of the Boards of Directors (*)

The Socfin Group controls, via its subsidiaries, over 58,000 hectares of oil palm plantations belonging to Socapalm (Cameroon), which it bought when it was privatised in 2000. Since 2021, Socapalm – majority-owned by Socfinaf, a Luxembourg holding itself part owned by the Bolloré Group – has been replanting palms to rejuvenate its plantation at Edéa, in the Sanaga-Maritime province. This is creating tremendous difficulty for neighbouring villagers. They lack sufficient space to live and to farm for their subsistence needs. Even their sacred sites have been ruined. Women in particular are demanding access to land to feed their families, but find themselves lacking freedom of movement. This has led to an open conflict between the villagers and Socapalm that is negatively affecting people's lives and social peace, and must be resolved.

As we understand it:

- The replanting is occurring near people's homes in the village of Apouh à Ngog. Socapalm's land rights in the area are complex and under dispute since long. Villagers of Apouh expected that when the old palms were cut, they would get land back – a sufficient “living space”, as foreseen in particular under the long term lease concluded in 2000 between the State of Cameroon and Socapalm. But this has not happened.
- Women of Apouh have organised themselves as the Association of Women Neighbouring Socapalm Edéa (AFRISE), which is leading the advocacy effort. AFRISE has submitted documentary evidence, testimonies and demands to Socapalm, local authorities and government agencies, such as the Ministry of Land (2022) and the Commission on Human Rights (2024). They have even appealed for justice to the President of the Republic, H.E. Paul Biya.
- In response, Socapalm has taken several measures – offers to dialogue, calls for appeasement – but they have not resolved the situation. As no one is sufficiently responding to their legitimate demands, the women of AFRISE recently took the courage to enter land occupied by Socapalm and planted banana suckers for their subsistence needs. In response, they received a sommation to stop their action or else face penalties or imprisonment.

What is happening around Socapalm in Edéa is also happening – in different ways and under different forms – around other Socfin plantations such as in Nigeria, Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana and other parts of Cameroon. This has been documented most recently by your hired consultants, the [Earthworm Foundation](#), and therefore known to you. In most cases (58%), Earthworm Foundation determined that community complaints about land grabs, lack of access to land, polluted water sources, violence against women, labour rights violations and more were either “founded” or “partially founded”.

The pension funds of [Switzerland](#) and [Norway](#) have been warned and advised by their associates to divest from Bolloré SE because of its involvement in Socfin and connection to these injustices. UK-based investors are currently exploring similar actions for the same reason.

The land conflict in Apouh is urgent and needs resolution. Peace and respect for the rights of local communities affected by your activities must be guaranteed.

As concerned citizens and organisations, we hold you to account to provide justice to the villagers of Apouh and to other communities affected by Socfin's operations across Africa and Asia. Specifically, and as a matter of urgency, you are asked to give the communities of Apouh free access to the customary land bordering their village, and to put an end to any current or future action likely to criminalise the villagers.

Sincerely,

Action Justice Climat Paris, France
Alliance for Rural Democracy (ARD), Liberia
Association des Jeunes Agriculteurs de Casamance, Senegal
Association Française d'Amitié et de Solidarité avec les Peuples d'Afrique, France
Attac France, France
Bunong Indigenous People Association (BIPA), Cambodia
Collectif des Promoteurs Engagés du MADE In Cameroun (COPEMIC) , Cameroon
Collectif pour la défense des terres malgaches - TANY, Madagascar/France
Comité pour l'abolition des dettes illégitimes (CADTM), international
EPER (Entraide Protestante Suisse), Switzerland
Fauçheurs volontaires d'OGM Bretagne, France
Federasi Serbuk Indonesia West Kalimantan, Indonesia
FIAN Belgium, Belgium
FIAN Switzerland, Switzerland
Gabriela Southern Mindanao Region, Philippines
GRAIN, international
Institute of Research and Advocacy (Link-AR Borneo), Indonesia
Jaringan Jaga Deca, Indonesia
JVE Côte d'Ivoire, Côte d'Ivoire
Les Soulèvements de la terre, France
Milieudefensie, The Netherlands
North Africa Food Sovereignty Network (Siyada), MENA/Morocco
Nous Sommes la Solution, Senegal
Nurhanudin Achmad Sawit Watch, Indonesia
OnEstEnsemble, Cameroon
Perempuan Mahardika, Indonesia
Ponlok Khmer Organization, Cambodia
Public Eye, Switzerland
ReAct Transnational, France
Réseau des Acteurs du Développement Durable (RADD), Cameroon
Rettet den Regenwald, Germany
Sawit Women Educational Group, Indonesia
Serikat Buruh Migran Indonesia Nusa Tenggara Timur, Indonesia
Serikat Pekerja Sawit Indonesia, Indonesia
SOLIFONDS, Switzerland
SYNAPARCAM, Cameroon
The Oakland Institute, USA
Towards Organic Asia, Thailand
Transnational Palm Oil Labour Solidarity (TPOLS) Network, Indonesia
Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (UMA), Philippines

Individuals : Michèle Decaster, France ; Alexandre Duparc, France ; Emmanuel Elong, Cameroon ; Prudence Aimée Evina Zéh, Cameroon ; Océane Foix, France ; Afifah Golda, Indonesi ; Trisna Harahap, Indonesia : Salma Rizkya Kinasih, Indonesia ; Kokom Komalawati, Indonesia ; Indro Laksono, Indonesia ; André Evina Ndengue, Cameroon ; Sylvie Ndong, Cameroon ; Félix-Marcel Obam, Cameroon ; Mrudula P, India ; Fahmi ; Panimbang, Indonesia ; Hariati Sinaga, Indonesia ; Marie Henriette Tabi F. née Zobo, Cameroon ; Aisha Utami, Indonesia

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(*) Cyrille Bolloré, Vincent Bolloré, Dominique Cornet, Eric de Foresta, Olivier Dontsop, François Fabri, Hubert Fabri, Philippe Fabri, Daniel Haas, Abdoulaye Hayatou Well, Régis Helsmoortel, Frédéric Lemaire, Joseph Owona Kono, Gbenga Oyebode, George Quarteng-Mensah and the companies AFICO, SOCFIN and SOCFINAF

CC: Earthworm Foundation