

SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL CHARITABLE TRUST

Complainant

v

THE WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE

Respondent

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**SPECIFIC INSTANCE**

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## I Introduction

1. Survival International has lodged this Specific Instance against the World Wide Fund for Nature (“WWF”) under the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. For the reasons set out below we submit that WWF has failed its duty under the Guidelines to respect the human rights of the Baka “Pygmies”<sup>1</sup> of southeast Cameroon, and that this failure has significantly contributed to the desperate predicament in which the Baka now find themselves.<sup>2</sup>
2. As the global movement for tribal peoples’ rights Survival International has tried to persuade WWF in correspondence that it must do far more to help the Baka, but has made very little progress. The Baka human rights NGO, Okani, has fared no better. Its requests for copies of the management plans that WWF has helped to devise, its partnership agreement with the Government of Cameroon and a number of other key documents have all been ignored.<sup>3</sup> A formal commitment to “ensure that all relevant information developed through [partnerships with governments] is shared with the appropriate representatives of indigenous peoples” appears to count for very little.<sup>4</sup> In early 2015 WWF did commission an investigation into some of our allegations of violent assaults against the Baka, but has failed to respond to our requests for a copy of the report.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a term that many Baka consider offensive and prefer to avoid.

<sup>2</sup> See Annex I.

<sup>3</sup> See page 60 of the Bundle.

<sup>4</sup> Article 32 of the WWF Statement of Principles [1997]

3. These and other factors have persuaded us that a more formal intervention is now required before WWF is likely to fully acknowledge its responsibilities to the Baka. We ask the NCP to use its good offices to bring this about
4. It should urge WWF to fund an independent consultation of the Baka in which they can express their own views on the way forward. It will be especially important to ensure that in future they have an effective say in decisions that affect them, and can protect themselves against physical and other forms of abuse. WWF procedures will also require reform so that it can “know and show,” as it cannot at present, that it respects the human rights of the Baka.
5. We have lodged the Specific Instance with the Swiss National Contact Point because Cameroon does not have an NCP, and because the legal responsibility for WWF operations in Cameroon rests with WWF in Switzerland.<sup>5</sup> We have lodged in Survival’s name because the Baka lack the resources to file a complaint of their own.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> WWF operates in Cameroon through its Central Africa Regional Programme Office (CARPO), which opened an office in Cameroon in 1990 and signed its first agreement with the Government in 1992. But CARPO is not a separate legal entity.

<sup>6</sup> We took a similar course against a British company named Vedanta Resources plc which had threatened to mine tribal land in India. See:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121205150610/http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/business-sectors/green-economy/sustainable-development/corporate-responsibility/uk-ncp-oecd-guidelines/cases/final-statements>

6. Our complaint is based upon field research in Cameroon and upon extensive discussions with Baka, local NGOs and anthropologists familiar with the area, as well as with other interested parties. For reasons of space, we have not identified all our sources and have omitted references to the statutory enactments and other documents from which we quote. We will provide these on request, but in the meantime attach a small bundle of core documents. We have anonymised some of the witnesses' statements included in the bundle, to avoid possible repercussions if their names are disclosed. If this is likely to cause difficulties, we are happy to discuss with the NCP how these might be overcome.
7. We also attach various annexes which we hope will introduce the NCP to areas with which it may not be familiar. These provide brief accounts of the Baka and of their rights under international law; of the network of protected areas in southeast Cameroon and of the national legislation which applies to it; and of the relevant provisions of the OECD Guidelines and their application to WWF.
8. We can elaborate on any or all of these issues if and when asked to do so.

## **II Summary**

9. The first limb of the complaint concerns the protected areas (or "PAs") that the Government has introduced to southeast Cameroon with the vital support of WWF, but without the free prior and informed consent (or "FPIC") of the Baka. These have denied or seriously curtailed Baka access to the traditional territories and natural resources on which they depend ("the Land Issue").<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See page 1 of the Bundle for a map of protected areas in southeast Cameroon, and page 2 for a map of Baka land in Cameroon.

10. The second limb is to do with the violent abuse to which Baka have been subjected by the ecoguards and other law enforcement officials who patrol the PAs, with WWF's equally crucial support ("the Ecoguard Issue").
11. The two limbs are closely connected, in that the PAs would not have been created and the ecoguard force could not have established without WWF's financial and logistical assistance. They are also linked by a common chain of events, in that:
  - (1) Since at least colonial times the Baka have depended for their subsistence on lands now incorporated into the PAs.
  - (2) The national laws under which the PAs were created made no allowance for this fact. On the contrary, they forbade the Baka any further access to their traditional lands and criminalised their use of the resources found there. Even traditional hunting is banned in PAs.
  - (3) These laws were enacted in violation of a host of international treaties by which Cameroon has agreed to respect Baka rights.
  - (4) The Baka were not asked for and did not give their FPIC to any of the PAs or to the curtailment of their customary rights.
  - (5) With no alternative means of subsistence, the Baka continued to depend upon the land and resources to which they had now been denied lawful access. For many Baka, the formal demarcation of their lands by park or reserve boundaries had little or no relevance anyway.
  - (6) The ecoguards who patrolled these boundaries regarded the Baka as inferior, and as an easier target than commercial poachers.
  - (7) The cumulative effect of these factors was to make violent conflict between Baka and ecoguards almost inevitable.

12. Although the Government of Cameroon is principally responsible for this state of affairs, WWF also bears a major responsibility because of the support it has provided the Government and because of its duty under the Guidelines to respect the human rights of indigenous peoples affected by its operations.
13. WWF itself spelled out the scope of this duty in a Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation which it first made in 1997 and reaffirmed in 2008.<sup>8</sup> This provides that:
  - (1) Prior to initiating conservation activities in an area, WWF will exercise due diligence to seek out information about the historic claims and current exercise of customary rights of indigenous peoples in that area [Principle 23]
  - (2) WWF will not promote or support ... interventions which have not received the prior free and informed consent of affected indigenous communities, and/or would adversely impact - directly or indirectly - on the environment of indigenous peoples' territories, and/or would affect their rights ... This includes activities such as... the creation of protected areas or imposition of restrictions on subsistence resource use" [Principle 30]
  - (3) In the context of its partnerships with... national governments ... WWF will ensure that such partnerships do not undermine ... the basic human rights and customary resource rights of indigenous peoples [Principle 32].<sup>9</sup>
14. If WWF had exercised "due diligence" it would have known or anticipated all of the matters summarised in Paragraph 10 above before the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF) formally demarcated the PAs. In accordance with both the Guidelines and its own Statement of Principles it should have made its support for the PAs conditional upon the FPIC of the Baka.

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<sup>8</sup> This Statement of Principles is included at page 61 of the Bundle.

<sup>9</sup> WWF is also a founding member of Conservation Initiative on Human Rights, through which it is committed to make "special efforts to avoid harm to those who are vulnerable to infringements of their rights and to support the protection and fulfilment of their rights within the scope of our conservation programmes."

15. MINFOF was heavily dependent on WWF to bring its plans for the PAs to fruition and might well have agreed to seek the Baka's FPIC. It could only have expected to obtain this FPIC if it had revised its plans to ensure that Baka rights over their traditional territories were preserved. This in turn would have removed a key source of the conflict with the ecoguards.
16. When the effects of this conflict began to make themselves felt, WWF should have told MINFOF that it would continue to support ecoguard patrols only if effective steps were taken to ensure that that the patrols focussed on commercial poachers rather than Baka hunting for subsistence, and that the ecoguards were held to account if they used or threatened violence against the Baka.
17. WWF did not do any of these things. It chose instead to press on with the establishment of the PAs and to place itself in the vanguard of the so-called "war" against the poachers. It took no effective steps to protect the Baka against this risks to which this war was likely to expose them.
18. The result has been a wholesale denial of Baka rights to their land and natural resources, and a head-on collision with the forces of "law and order."

### **III WWF's central role**

19. The development and management of PAs in southeast Cameroon has required significant expenditure, and field personnel equipped with the appropriate knowledge and expertise. WWF has access to both, but the Government of Cameroon has access to neither. WWF has not disputed in our correspondence that it has been the Government's most important source of funds and logistical support.

20. As a consequence the national parks, reserves and buffer zones established in southeast Cameroon have depended and continue to depend very heavily on WWF, which has been able to set the agenda and determine priorities. There is a clear “nexus” between WWF and the relevant acts and omissions of the Government of Cameroon.

Protected areas<sup>10</sup>

21. As a consequence the national parks, reserves and buffer zones established in southeast Cameroon have depended and continue to depend very heavily on WWF, which has been able to set the agenda and determine priorities; and as WWF Deutschland volunteered in a letter to one of our supporters in October 2015, WWF still “oversees” each of the national parks with which this complaint is concerned.<sup>11</sup> There is therefore a clear “nexus” between WWF and the relevant acts and omissions of the Government of Cameroon.<sup>12</sup>
22. Among the “key achievements” of its Jengi Program WWF has listed the establishment of all three national parks in the region; the development of management plans for each park; the creation of a management committee for the Lobéké NP and of the community use zone in Lobéké. MINFOF’s literature describes WWF as the “joint manager” of each of the parks.
23. WWF was also responsible for the creation of a “management and communications infrastructure” for each park; of at least 10 of the 15 *zones d’intérêt cynégétique* (or “ZICs”) which surround the parks; of all 14 *zones d’intérêt cynégétique à gestion communautaire* (“ZICGCs” or “community hunting zones”); and of the *Comités de Valorisation des Ressources Fauniques* (or “COVAREFs”) which administer the ZICGCs.

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<sup>10</sup> See Annex II

<sup>11</sup> See page 165 of the Bundle

<sup>12</sup> Clay N.J. 2011. ‘Management Schemes and Resource Access in Multiple-Use Forests in the Congo Basin.’ MSc Thesis. University of Michigan. p.17



24. WWF says it has “improved” the management plans for 23 forest management units, helped to set up two trans-boundary conservation initiatives, and been involved in a host of other conservation measures. WWF also developed a land-use plan for the Ngoyla-Mintom forest block which identified “a core conservation area” within the block. It was this plan which eventually led to the establishment of the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve.

#### Support for ecoguards

25. WWF has regarded ecoguards as crucial to its operations, worked closely with them, and established its own Wildlife Law Enforcement Programme in Cameroon. It has organised workshops to train ecoguards about wildlife law and criminal prosecution and has actively supported the deployment of a heavily armed military unit called the *Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide* (or “BIR”) on anti-poaching patrols.
26. Ecoguards are supported financially by WWF, and often transported in WWF vehicles driven by WWF personnel to the villages or other places in which they have abused Baka “suspects.” They have even interrogated suspects in WWF-built facilities.
27. We understand that until the mid-2000s WWF recruited and trained the ecoguards itself, and that it transferred them into the employ of MINFOP only after repeated allegations that guards had engaged in physical assault, racist conduct and corruption. Despite this the Baka continued to run away when WWF vehicles approach, and to refer to the ecoguards as “*dobidobi*” (which derives from the letters WW).
28. The Lobéké Management Plan 2004-2010 confirms that throughout this period WWF guaranteed guards’ wages at Lobéké. We are informed that similar arrangements remain in place in all three parks and the reserve. WWF continues to take credit for the training and recruitment of ecoguards and of other government staff “in various aspects related to monitoring, law enforcement etc.”; for the construction and equipping of

control posts “to support law enforcement and surveillance operations”; and for “technical assistance” in the development and implementation of “law enforcement and anti-poaching activities” generally.

#### **IV No land or resource rights**

##### Forest Code

29. The core of the problem is the Cameroonian Forest Code 1994, to which the Forest Decree 1995 and the Wildlife Decree 1995 are both subordinate. The Code classifies PAs as “permanent” “state” forests, which has resulted in the effective expropriation of the customary property of any individual, family or community in the classified land.<sup>13</sup>

30. This means that the Code and ancillary legislation violate at almost every turn Cameroon’s international obligations to respect the land rights and resources of the Baka.<sup>14</sup> The Code therefore also violates Cameroon’s own Constitution, which provides in Article 45 of that:

Duly approved or ratified treaties and international agreements shall, following their publication, override national laws, provided the other party implements the said treaty or agreement.

##### Management Plans

##### *National Parks*

31. It is by no means clear whether the law allows the Baka to exercise “usage rights” in a national park; but if it does, these rights will only arise if and to the extent that they are incorporated in a management plan for the relevant park.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See Annex II

<sup>14</sup> See Annex III

<sup>15</sup> It is occasionally suggested that the Baka may also derive benefit from the so-called Mambele Convention. But this conferred no legally enforceable rights on the Baka in the parks, buffer zones, or anywhere else. Its sole purpose appears to have been to try to reduce conflict between the various users of land in the buffer zones and to combat poaching.

32. So far as we are aware, only the management plan for Lobéké has yet made any provision at all for the Baka. According to WWF, this resulted from an agreement apparently reached between MINFOF officials and a “consultative committee” in or around 2000

to gazette a community use zone in the Lobéké National Park. This process came after a decision by national park authorities in Yaoundé whereby national wildlife laws prohibited human activities in national parks. Acceptance by the government to gazette a community use zone in the national park was an unprecedented decision in the history of protected area management in Cameroon. This decision demonstrated the government’s commitment to engage in a people-centred conservation approach.

33. There appear to have been few if any Baka, however, on the “consultative committee.” It is unclear whether or how the Baka are said to have approved the “community use zone,” or precisely what rights they are said to have in it. The zone is said to cover only 32,000 hectares, or less than 15% of the Park. It is uncertain how many Baka communities consider that they have rights in the zone. We do not know whether the zone appears in the current management plan for Lobéké, because we have been denied access to a copy of it.
34. Our research indicates that in practice the Baka derive little benefit from the zone.<sup>16</sup> They have told us that they can use it only with the prior written authority of the Conservateur, which is often difficult to obtain and is given only for a prescribed period. Only women are allowed to gather bush mangos, although they are vulnerable to attack by wild animals when they enter the Park unaccompanied.

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<sup>16</sup> The same study reported that “The community park zone [in Lobéké] was made with the Baka in mind. However it is uncertain who is using it and the WWF employee interviewed did not know where this zone is. It appears it is not very well defined” (Clay 2011: 63).

35. Other researchers have repeatedly confirmed that the demarcation of particular portions of the forest for specific uses is fundamentally at odds with Baka notions of territory and resources. They have also referred to the cultural and spiritual attachments which still bind the Baka to forest lands and traditional livelihoods, and to the lack of alternative economic opportunities available to them.
36. We have not seen the first management plans for Boumba Bek and Nki NPs because, remarkably, these are not public documents and WWF has said that we must ask the Government for copies of them. We have done so, without result.
37. It is clear, however, that the plans made no or no adequate provision for Baka rights inside either Park. On the contrary, a survey conducted by WWF in the Boumba Bek and Nki Parks between March 2006 and July 2007 (“the 2007 survey”)<sup>17</sup> demonstrated vividly that the management plan for Boumba-Bek and Nki NPs should be adjusted sufficiently to the actuality of traditional use of land and resources by the Baka, and their customary rights.
38. “Adjustments” are necessary because WWF chose to ignore Principle 23 of its own Statement of Principles when it prepared a first draft of the plan.<sup>18</sup> The unsurprising result, to quote again from the 2007 survey, was:

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<sup>17</sup> See page 86 of the Bundle.

<sup>18</sup> Principle 23 requires WWF to “seek out information about the historic claims and current exercise of customary rights of indigenous peoples” in the area “prior to initiating conservation activities”: see Annex IV.

the unsatisfactory involvement of the Baka hunter-gatherers in the zoning process. During the process, the recognition of “human occupation of territory” was limited only to clear indicators of human inhabitation such as settlements, farming fields and fallows that can be identified by aerial photographs and satellite images. This method can distinguish a village area where almost all agro-pastoral activities are permitted to some extent, the non-permanent forest domain and areas where access is restricted by regulation, such as national parks and sport hunting zones. But this procedure can only take into account the land used by sedentary farmers, and the mode of occupation and exploitation by the semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers were largely invisible and ignored.

Aerial reconnaissance would not have detected Baka hunting grounds, for example, or their graves, semi-permanent settlements, and other important areas which are not visible from high above the forest canopy.

39. In an effort to win back for the Baka the right to continue at least some of the practices which the 2007 survey had found “essential” to their wellbeing, attempts were later made to “adjust” the management plans for the Boumba Bek and Nki NPs. In particular, in 2011 MINFOF engaged a former WWF employee to revise a WWF draft plan and supposedly seek the Baka’s FPIC.
40. The Baka were in no position to give this, for at least two reasons:
  - (1) It was too late, because the Boumba Bek and Nki NPs had already been created and required management plans whether the Baka consented to them or not. They had nothing to negotiate, and could not give their “prior” consent to a project which was already in place.
  - (2) Since no study had been made of the social and cultural impact that the NPs were likely to have on the Baka, they could not give their “informed” consent either.
41. We understand that management plans for both Boumba Bek and Nki were formally approved in about May 2012. If either plan had made provision for the “usage rights” of the Baka it is difficult to understand why WWF should have been so reluctant to provide us with copies of them.

42. It is equally difficult to see why WWF should now claim only that it has “advocated” the inclusion of Baka rights in the management plans of the two Parks, if its advocacy had actually succeeded. We have been informed by a former WWF employee that the plans did not include any community zones for either Park, and none of the Baka to whom we have talked are aware of any zones.
43. Unless management plans are now produced and show the contrary, we invite the NCP to infer that neither plan makes any provision for the Baka, and that ten years after the creation of the two parks the Baka still have no or no adequate “usage rights” in either of them.
44. Subject to one qualification, there is unlikely to be any progress on this front until new management plans are adopted for Boumba Bek and Nki in 2017. It remains to be seen whether the new plans will refer to Baka rights, and if so in what terms.
45. The “qualification” is the draft Memorandum of Understanding which attempts to set out usage rights for the Baka in Boumba Bek.<sup>19</sup> The parties to the MoU, if and when it is ever signed, will be MINFOF and various Baka communities.
46. The formal status of the MoU is uncertain. Even if it is intended to have legal effect it is almost certainly unenforceable, because the current draft makes no attempt to define the “traditional rights” of the Baka to which it refers.

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<sup>19</sup> See page 77 of the Bundle for a draft version of the MoU, produced in 2013.

47. It is unclear whether and to what extent the Baka have been consulted about or consented to its terms, or whether they have given any mandate to the organisation that is said to act on their behalf. Since the MoU would last only as long as the relevant management plan remained in place, it offers the Baka no security. They could still lose their rights at a moment's notice, if MINFOF chooses to exercise its draconian powers under the Forest Code or the Wildlife Decree.
48. So far as we are aware, no management plan for the Ngoyla WR has yet been put in place.

### The ZICGCs

49. The various ZICGCs have usually been divided into subsistence and sports hunting zones in "simple" management plans under the Wildlife Decree negotiated by the COVAREFs. These have significantly reduced the areas left to the Baka for subsistence hunting.
50. The COVAREFs are supposed to act for the benefit of the community as a whole, but in practice act only for the benefit of the Bantu elites who control them. They have little interest in the prime hunting territory in their zones, other than as a source of revenue from safari operators. The Baka have been powerless to resist the grant of concessions to these companies, because they are rarely represented on the COVAREFs and have no one to protect their interests.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Several independent studies confirm this: see, e.g., Poverty, Equity and Rights in Conservation: Technical Papers and Case Studies Joint ICUN-IUED Project [2005] at page 88 et seq. According to USAID, COVAREF committees "have often been hijacked by special interests."

## V No Free Prior and Informed Consent

51. The incorporation of Baka lands in the PAs required their FPIC because, as we have explained, it meant that they would no longer have lawful access to land and resources on which they depended: see the Endorois decision. This was also a requisite, of course, of Principle 30 of the WWF Statement of Principles. But FPIC was not obtained for any of the parks or for the wildlife reserve.

### National Parks

52. WWF has claimed in correspondence that it “insisted on a high level of informed community consent for the creation of the three national parks in southeast Cameroon.”<sup>21</sup> This claim does not bear serious scrutiny, because the only other parties to the discussions with government and conservation officials were local Bantu chiefs. They may have purported to speak on behalf of their communities but had no mandate from the Baka, who played very little part in the process. Bantu chiefs that we have interviewed have themselves complained that promises from these consultations have not been kept.
53. Our own research and that of other NGOs shows that most Baka were not even aware of the Government’s plans until after the parks had been officially launched, and that many are still largely ignorant of the various zones into which their lands have been divided. WWF’s Regional Coordinator has himself admitted that the Baka still “recognize no meaning in the distinctions” introduced by these zones. Even if they had given their consent (which they did not), it could not have been an “informed” consent.
54. The same Coordinator has highlighted an even more fundamental difficulty. When WWF first surveyed the area, he has frankly conceded, “the mode of occupation and exploitation by the semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers were largely invisible and ignored.”

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<sup>21</sup> See page 158 of the Bundle.



55. The Coordinator went on to explain that:

Beyond this technical shortcoming, one has to raise concerns regarding the feasibility of carrying out zoning in an area like south-eastern Cameroon, where people live in the forest that is a continuum consisting of farmlands, and hunting, fishing and gathering fields connected by a network of trails.

In addition, considering dimensions beyond the zoning code that governs the actual classification of the fields ... we realize that the zoning process did not guarantee an optimal involvement of the Baka in the process.

It was difficult for the zoning operation to take into account the specificities of the Baka who hardly understand French, rarely frequent public places, and are less inclined to frankly express their points of view in the presence of their Bantu brethren. Public notices must be written in French and published in the press, posted at the Senior Divisional and Sub-divisional offices, town halls and delegation in charge of forests in the region concerned. Letters that convened awareness raising meetings with the local people must be addressed to village chiefs, who are the Bantu or other farmers. Despite efforts of the field teams to involve Baka people in the zoning process, given the above procedure of regulatory framework, the participation of Baka in the zoning process was very small

56. These are the words of WWF's most senior officer on the ground. They entirely refute the notion that the parks attracted a "high level of consent" from the Baka community. On the contrary the report of the 2007 survey makes clear that there was no "level of consent" at all, and that the Akwe: Kon Guidelines were simply ignored. Although the report related only the Boumba Bek and Nki NPs, there is no reason to suppose that different considerations apply to the Lobéké NP.

57. In any event, the Baka could only have given their FPIC to the creation of any of the parks if they had first been informed that:

(1) any customary rights that they had or thought they had over land within the boundaries of the proposed park or reserve would be automatically extinguished

(2) those rights would be replaced by "usage rights" in a management plan only if and to the extent that the Government chose to include them in the plan

- (3) whatever the plan might say, MINFOF would have the power to “suspend” their usage rights temporarily or permanently
- (4) appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, the Baka would receive no compensation for the extinguishment of their rights
- (5) the Government had ratified human rights treaties which required or apparently required it to obtain their consent to its proposals
- (6) WWF itself had made formal commitments
  - (i) to find out how the Baka currently used the lands that were to be included in the Parks, and about their historic claims to these areas; and
  - (ii) not to support the creation of PAs, or restrictions on subsistence resource use, which had not received the FPIC of the affected communities.

There is no evidence that the Baka were given any of this information.

#### Wildlife Reserve

58. By the time work began on the Ngoyla WR, there was a greater awareness of the need at least to be seen to have consulted the Baka. As a result WWF was made responsible for “specific consultations with Indigenous Peoples to ensure their free, prior and informed consent” to the creation of the reserve.

59. WWF held some 16 meetings with the Baka in August and September 2013, in which two Baka organizations were also involved.<sup>22</sup> At those meetings the Baka asked that their usage rights, sacred sites and fields inside the proposed reserve should be protected, and that they should have a right to share in any profits that the reserve might generate.
60. Official committees met very shortly after these consultations had taken place and resolved that the reserve should proceed as originally planned, but that the “agro forestry band” that was to run on either side of the roads that skirt the reserve should be widened. They also said that the Baka’s customary rights inside the reserve should be “taken into consideration.”
61. Only time will tell whether and to what extent they are taken into consideration, because under Article 6 of the Decree the Baka can exercise only those usage rights as may eventually be “given” to them in a management plan. The Decree makes no provision for the Baka to share in reserve income.
62. It is difficult to conceive that the Baka would have given their FPIC to the Ngoyla WR if they had been told that that they would have rights in the reserve only when a plan was adopted, and then only to the extent that MINFOF considered it appropriate. There is no evidence that the Baka were told this, or about any of the other factors listed in paragraph 109. Any consent they gave cannot have been an informed one.

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<sup>22</sup> These meetings followed hot on the heels of meetings held in July/August 2013 in about half of the 60 villages and hamlets in the Ngoyla-Mintom massif involving local Bantu and an unknown number of Baka.

## VI Ecoguard abuse

63. If the formal demarcation of PAs for particular uses bears no relation to Baka notions of land use and occupation, takes no account of their cultural and spiritual attachments to the land, and offers them no alternative economic opportunities, it is hardly surprising that the Baka should have come into frequent conflict with the ecoguards and BIR personnel whose job it is to police zonal boundaries.
64. The ecoguards' brief is to oppose the large-scale, commercial poachers who threaten the integrity of the PAs. They regard this as a thankless task, however, because the poachers are often better resourced than they are; and because even if they are caught, they are likely to have powerful friends to protect them. In an attempt to be seen at least to do something, ecoguards have often searched for an easier target. As the most economically and politically marginalized group in the country, the Baka have fitted the bill admirably.
65. Baka rarely have the means to record dates or names, and only a few incidents of ecoguard abuse are properly documented. Virtually every NGO which has had dealings with the Baka, however, has reported the ecoguards' regular use of force against them, and a clear pattern has emerged.
66. Ecoguards are frequently said to raze to the ground any Baka camps they come upon in a PA, and to destroy or confiscate any property they are able to seize. They are said to often assault those Baka that they can catch, and to even threaten to kill them if they return.
67. In the villages outside the PAs there are regular complaints that ecoguards and Baka huts have been unlawfully searched and property seized. Baka have also claimed that they have been assaulted under interrogation, and several are even said to have died from their injuries.

68. We have ourselves received many accounts of violent abuse, and have included in the Bundle a chronology which identifies some of the better-known incidents.<sup>23</sup> We also attach the statements of some eyewitnesses, one of whom has worked as a WWF consultant; reports from the Cameroonian press;<sup>24</sup> the video testimony of Baka whom we interviewed in 2013 and 2014<sup>25</sup>; and the accounts of others whom we interviewed during the same period and in 2015.<sup>26</sup> Another video filmed by the Baka themselves speaks of the hardship they have suffered and describes incidents in which the “*dobidobi*” beat them and burned down their homes. At one stage a group of Baka act out a scene in which two hunters are caught and beaten with sticks”<sup>27</sup>
69. The use or threat of force against Baka hunters is by no means confined to the national parks. In the huge ZICs close to the parks, safari companies to which the Government has granted hunting rights have been more than ready to use or threaten violence to protect their interests. Difficulties arise particularly where the Baka have not been made aware of ZIC boundaries or when concessions are in force. Confrontations with “professional” hunters have led many communities to live in a climate of fear. Safari operators have been known to evict Baka even from the ZICGCs on which they depend for subsistence, because they have acquired hunting rights there too.

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<sup>23</sup> See page 3 of the Bundle.

<sup>24</sup> See page 50 et seq. of the Bundle.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.survivalinternational.org/films/baka-conservation>  
<http://www.survivalinternational.org/films/baka-wwf>  
<http://www.survivalinternational.org/films/baka>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.survivalinternational.org/news/10456>  
<http://www.survivalinternational.org/news/10564>  
<http://www.survivalinternational.org/news/10708>  
<http://www.survivalinternational.org/news/10943>

<sup>27</sup> *The Baka - hunters or poachers? - the film WWF doesn't want you to see.* The video was initially withdrawn under pressure from WWF, which claimed to have evidence to refute the criticisms made of it. This evidence has never been produced, despite several requests. See page 11 of the Bundle.

70. It was on the basis of this and similar material that we stated in a letter to WWF in March 2014 that

In and around the Boumba Bek, Nki and Lobéké National Parks, the Baka people are a routine target of violence and intimidation, and sometimes of murder. They are victims of extortion. Their forest camps are regularly demolished and their belongings seized. Many live in constant fear, especially in the forest. They expect no help from the forces of law and order because their oppressors are often members of these forces – and especially of the Park ecoguards, aided and abetted by the BIR.

71. WWF has not challenged this account. On the contrary, it has explicitly accepted that:

There have undoubtedly been incidents of utterly unacceptable behaviour towards Baka and others by ecoguards and/or police and military – some appear to relate to underlying discrimination being taken to extremes, and some to the more militarised dynamic intruding into the area.<sup>28</sup>

72. The “more militarised dynamic” to which WWF referred is apparently the BIR, whose involvement in the PAs WWF has actively encouraged. This has taken Cameroon’s “guns and guards” approach to conservation to a new level, because the BIR is a heavily armed military unit and is almost wholly unaccountable for its actions.

73. It has joined the ecoguards in a series of “punch” operations which frequently target Baka villages. These are typically launched during the hours of darkness and without consulting the local authorities, and on both counts appear to fall foul of the Forest Code. Our enquiries confirm earlier reports that many Baka have been traumatised by the raids, and that in an attempt to escape them some have abandoned their villages altogether.<sup>29</sup>

74. The risk of a further escalation of violence is likely to have increased with the issue of assault rifles in September 2015 to ecoguards at both Boumba Bek and Lobéké NPs.

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<sup>28</sup> Email to Survival supporter, 9 July 2015 [see page 158 of the Bundle]

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, page 46 of the Bundle.

75. The Baka lack the means to seek relief through the courts. Complaints to the COVAREFs achieve nothing, because they are powerless to intervene. Repeated reports of the torture and false imprisonment of Baka have passed largely unnoticed. Another mechanism is urgently required if ecoguards and BIR personnel are to be held to account when they misconduct themselves.

## **VII Breach of the Guidelines<sup>30</sup>**

### Principles

76. Until 2011 WWF was expected to comply with the 2000 edition of the Guidelines, which did not spell out the duty to respect human rights in the detail now found in the 2011 edition. But the duty to respect human rights first introduced in 2000 has not fundamentally altered.<sup>31</sup> We submit that the requirements explicitly set out in the current guidelines were necessarily implicit in the 2000 guidelines.
77. For example, an MNE could no more respect the human rights of a community in 2000 than it can now unless it first conducted human rights due diligence. WWF has itself recognised the need for due diligence since the adoption of its Statement of Principles in 1997.
78. It is also implicit in the 2000 Guidelines and explicit in the 2011 Guidelines that enterprises should conduct due diligence “as appropriate to their size, the nature and context of their operations and the severity of the risks of adverse human rights impacts.” MNEs can only discharge this duty if they have a system in place which triggers the exercise of due diligence whenever there is a potential risk to local communities.

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<sup>30</sup> See Annex IV

<sup>31</sup>It has not altered at all the duty “to engage in adequate and timely communication and consultation with the communities directly affected by the environmental, health and safety policies of the enterprise and by their implementation”: see Chapter VI(2)(b) of both the 2000 and 2011 Guidelines.

79. An enterprise which fails to conduct the “appropriate” due diligence must be taken to have constructive knowledge of the matters of which it would have had actual knowledge if it had conducted due diligence. It cannot rely upon its ignorance of facts of which it should have informed itself.
80. The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights make clear that the measures that can reasonably be expected of an enterprise to demonstrate its “respect” for human rights will depend partly on its “leverage” over the government or other entity which threatens those rights, and partly on the level of the threat.<sup>32</sup>
81. The Guiding Principles also confirm that activities undertaken to support or promote some human rights cannot be offset against a failure to respect other human rights. Although WWF has told us in correspondence that it has assisted the Baka in a variety of ways, this is no answer to the complaints we summarise below.

## The Land Issue

### *Failure to conduct due diligence [Chap IV(5)]*

82. A prime purpose of WWF’s activities in southeast Cameroon has been to establish and maintain a network of PAs. These activities created not a “risk” but the certainty of adverse human rights impacts for the Baka unless adequate steps were taken to avoid them. Proper due diligence was plainly required to identify those steps.
83. In order to perform this due diligence WWF should have:

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<sup>32</sup> See also Commentary §42: “Where an enterprise contributes or may contribute to [an adverse human right] impact, it should take the necessary steps to cease or prevent its contribution and use its leverage to mitigate any remaining impact to the greatest extent possible. Leverage is considered to exist where the enterprise has the ability to effect change in the practices of an entity that cause adverse human rights impacts.”



- (1) collated “information about the Baka’s historic claims and current exercise of customary rights” in the areas that WWF now wanted to “protect,” as it had already committed to do under Principle 23
- (2) enquired whether the Baka had given their FPIC to the PAs, given in particular that WWF knew or should have known that:
  - (i) it could not otherwise comply with Principle 30;
  - (ii) although FPIC was a central component in the international human rights law that it had ratified, Cameroon had not adopted any national law or policy to give effect to this commitment
  - (iii) on the contrary, the Forest Code and the Wildlife Decree would extinguish all Baka rights in the PAs as soon as they came into effect, unless in the meantime the Government had entered an agreement with the Baka to avoid this result; and
  - (iv) WWF had no reason to suppose that any such agreement had been made.

84. WWF failed to carry out due diligence under head (1). It ignored the warning we gave as long ago as 1991, that unless it took active steps to safeguard the Baka the creation of the protection areas would almost certainly lead to the “expropriation” of their traditional rights. This was not the only warning that WWF received, as we explain below.

85. It was only when its Regional Co-coordinator completed the 2007 survey, some two years after the Boumba Bek and Nki Parks had been formally declared, that WWF “discovered” that the Baka conducted “essential” activities over large parts of both Parks. WWF claims to have previously been unaware of this, because its previous surveys had relied on methods which could “only take into account the land used by sedentary farmers.” As a result, “the mode of occupation and exploitation by the semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers were largely invisible and ignored.”<sup>33</sup>
86. WWF also failed to carry out due diligence under head (2). We have seen no evidence that the Baka gave their FPIC to any of the PAs, and it is difficult to see what reason they might have had for doing so. Given the importance that it has attached to FPIC in its Statement of Principles, WWF could reasonably be expected to have made and preserved a record of any discussions in which the Baka had given their FPIC. Our requests for copies of any such records have been ignored.<sup>34</sup>

*Failure to engage in adequate and timely communications [Chap V (2)(b)]*

87. The Regional Coordinator has explained how the 2007 survey involved “focal group discussions and interviews” as well as direct observations. It is implicit in his report that WWF had not previously deployed any of these techniques. The failure to do so before the Parks were created or became operational was a failure to “engage in adequate and timely communication and consultation with the communities directly affected by the environmental policies” under Chapter V(2)(b) of the 2000 Guidelines.

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<sup>33</sup> Supra, note 14

<sup>34</sup> For a summary of our correspondence with WWF, see the Bundle at page 331 et seq. We also rely on the matters set out below in our discussion of FPIC

88. It was left to the 2007 survey to “vividly demonstrate” the need to “adjust” management plans so as to reflect “the actuality” of Baka use of land and resources. Even then WWF does not appear to have “communicated” to the Baka the fact that they could acquire “rights” under these plans only if and to the extent that the Government was prepared to grant them, and that the plans could be revoked or amended at any time. The Akwe: Kon Guidelines have not been applied even now.

*Failure to avoid adverse impacts and/or to address them when they occur  
[Chap IV(2)]*

89. WWF’s failure to exercise due diligence or to conduct timely consultations also led to its failure to avoid “adverse impacts” that could and should have been avoided, and/or adequately to address these impacts after they had occurred.
90. Even in the absence of due diligence and timely consultations, WWF knew that its operations would have adverse impacts on the Baka unless it took measures to avoid them. It knew this from reports that it commissioned from two anthropologists. One of them, Daou Joiris, specifically warned WWF in 2001 that the Baka depended on the land that was to be incorporated in the PAs, and that although monetary compensation could never be an adequate remedy it was the least that should be done. No compensation has ever been paid. We have spoken with another anthropologist who worked in a village north of the Nki National Park, who has informed us that she too repeatedly warned WWF officials on the ground that their plans for the PAs would have a disastrous impact on the Baka.
91. The most important adverse impact, obviously, was the loss of their customary rights in the PAs. As we have said, WWF knew this could only be justified if the Baka gave their FPIC, and should have helped the Baka to use their ability to give or withhold this so as to negotiate a sensible accommodation with the Government.

92. It would have been for the Baka to decide what this accommodation should be but, like the Endorois, there is every reason to suppose that they would have been “willing to work with the Government in a way that respected their property rights even if a [protected area] was being created.”<sup>35</sup> They might well have granted their FPIC in exchange for a secure right to continue to use the resources of their traditional lands.<sup>36</sup>
93. This would have required the replacement of a nonsensical distinction between “traditional” and non-traditional forms of hunting with the only distinction that matters: that between local subsistence hunting and commercial poaching for export. Baka rights would have to have been incorporated in a legally binding instrument, and not simply consigned to a management plan which the Government could revoke or amend as and when it chose.
94. WWF could not have imposed any agreement on Ministers against their will. But it could have informed them that it could only support proposals which complied with its Statement of Principles. This would have been an entirely realistic stance to adopt, because WWF’s enormous contribution to conservation in southeast Cameroon has given it very considerable leverage. Without WWF, the Government lacked both the financial and human resources required to bring its plans to fruition.

### The Ecoguards Issue

#### *Failure to conduct due diligence [Chap IV(5)]*

95. For the reasons we have already given, the deployment of ecoguards to police the PAs and their peripheries posed an obvious risk to the human rights of the Baka from the outset.

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<sup>35</sup> See the discussion of the Endorois decision in Annex III

<sup>36</sup> It might or might not have been necessary to make a proviso to ensure that this did not jeopardise the legitimate interests of conservation. The Baka are likely to have accepted any arrangement shown to be necessary to combat poachers, who are as much a threat to the Baka as they are to the wider population.

96. Most Baka would continue to use the forest for subsistence hunting as they had always done, regardless of its legal classification. For their part the ecoguards would regard it as part of their job to “persuade” the Baka that they were no longer free to come and go as they pleased. There was a clear risk that they would regard the use of violence against Baka as a legitimate means of “law enforcement,” for which they were unlikely to be held to account even if they were caught.<sup>37</sup>
97. WWF ought properly to have assessed this risk at the start, and considered whether and how it could be either eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level. It should have satisfied itself by enquiries at MINFOF that ecoguards would be properly vetted and trained before they joined the force, would be subject to an adequate and properly monitored disciplinary code, and would be dismissed from the service if they were found guilty of gross misconduct.
98. WWF does not appear to have taken any of these steps, or to have carried out any risk assessment at all before it assumed an active role in southeast Cameroon. It appears to have made no attempt either to assess the increased risk of violence that was likely to accompany the deployment of the BIR.
99. WWF seems to have preferred to hope for the best, in the belief that it can respond to particular problems on an ad hoc basis. This has been a recipe for disaster.

*Failure to avoid contributing to adverse human rights impacts or to address such impacts when they occur [Chap IV(2)]*

100. WWF has directly contributed to the adverse impacts that ecoguards have had on Baka human rights, because it has supported a more militarised approach to law enforcement and provided the logistical and financial support we have detailed.

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<sup>37</sup> See, for example, the attitude of the former head of the Protected Areas Division, still active in MINFOF, quoted at page 17 of the Bundle.

101. WWF could have avoided continuing to contribute to these adverse impacts by withdrawing its financial and logistical support to ecoguard patrols until MINFOF had put measures in place to reduce the risk of further abuse and/or by taking the other steps mentioned below. It appears to have done little or nothing.

*Failure to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to its own operations [Chap IV(3)]*

102. If WWF has not directly contributed to the adverse human rights impacts we have described, there is at least a “direct link” between these impacts and WWF operations. The ecoguards and BIR seek to “protect” conservation assets which are largely WWF’s creation, and often do so in conjunction with WWF personnel. Indeed, most Baka do not distinguish between WWF officers and ecoguards.

103. We recognise that WWF could only have taken steps to “prevent or mitigate” the adverse impacts if it knew about them. It would have known at an early stage if it had conducted due diligence, and was told anyway by others:

(1) In 2001 WWF personnel attended a conference in Kigali at which the propensity of ecoguards to focus their attention on the Baka was discussed

(2) In 2003 WWF started to receive letters of concern, and Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) reported that

indigenous communities continue to rely on forest resources in the protected areas to fulfil at least part of their subsistence needs [and] have therefore become easy targets in the enforcement of measures which park guards are unable to impose on more powerful groups who are usually those causing the greatest harm to long-term biodiversity – a fact readily recognised by many protected area managers and wildlife specialists across Africa.

(3) In 2004 the World Rainforest Movement referred to:

... the persecution of indigenous communities by government ecoguards, contrasted against the unmolested traffic of bushmeat out of their areas by commercial operators.

- (4) In 2005 FPP specifically raised the issue in discussions with WWF
- (5) In a joint submission to CERD in 2010, FPP and nine other NGOs collated evidence to the effect that  
  
Game wardens hired by the State are violently beating up and terrorising indigenous peoples in protected areas ... In some cases, indigenous peoples have been forcibly expelled from these areas; and some continue to be denied access, in some cases through violent acts by State agents.
- (6) In 2012 a former WWF consultant witnessed a violent raid to the north of Nki which she reported to the WWF office in Yaoundé.
- (7) FPP staff in Cameroon have also reported incidents to WWF; so have other NGOs in Cameroon, including in particular CEFAID and Okani. In 2014 we ourselves wrote to WWF about ecoguard violence.
- (8) In 2014 and 2015 Baka communities wrote to WWF on at least three occasions, requesting recognition of their customary rights and the suspension of funding for ecoguards.<sup>38</sup>

104. In recent correspondence WWF has said that:

When unacceptable behaviour has come to WWF's attention and can be verified to some extent, WWF has taken the issue up directly and emphatically with [MINFOF] and improved behaviour has seemed to follow.<sup>39</sup>

105. But the duty to prevent adverse impacts does not permit WWF to take steps only if and when unacceptable behaviour" is "brought to its attention." It should have a system in place to ensure that it actively

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<sup>38</sup> See page 58 et seq. of the Bundle. One letter uses the term, "ECOFAC" which, like "dobidobi," is often used by the Baka to refer to ecoguards and WWF personnel alike.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, the letter from WWF to a Survival supporter at page 389 of the Bundle.

monitors the situation itself, and that it takes appropriate steps to verify or refute any apparent wrongdoing that this may uncover. As we have said, there is no such system.

106. Nor is it enough simply to “take up” incidents with MINFOF on an ad hoc basis, however “emphatically.” This leaves it entirely to MINFOF to decide what steps (if any) it is prepared to take to investigate an incident; and what sanctions, if any, it is prepared to apply to any ecoguard who has misconducted himself. There are no hard data, but we are aware of only one case in which an ecoguard may have been disciplined for his mistreatment of individual Baka or their property.

107. In 2014 WWF offered to “co-operate” with a government-led investigation into our allegations. When Survival pointed out that the Baka were most unlikely to trust such an investigation it appointed a member of an NGO in the DRC to conduct an enquiry on its behalf. We understand that he has now reported but our request for copy of his report has been ignored. We do not know why.

108. Even if WWF personnel have not themselves directly participated in acts of abuse, given the “direct link” to which we have referred WWF should have done significantly more than it has. We discuss below the ways in which it should positively seek “to prevent or mitigate adverse impacts” in accordance with Chapter IV (3).

*Failure to provide for the remediation of adverse human rights impacts [Chap IV(6)]*

109. WWF could and should have put into effect some or all of the remedial measures we also list below. It has had ample time to do so, but has not carried out any of them.



## VIII Remedial Action

### General

110. The apparently wilful disregard of its Statement of Principles is one of the most remarkable aspects of WWF operations in Cameroon to date. Further breaches of the Guidelines are inevitable unless WWF now puts in place a mechanism to monitor future compliance with these Principles. This should involve persons who do not work exclusively for WWF.
111. This mechanism will especially need to ensure that any future project likely to have a major impact on the Baka proceeds only with their genuine FPIC. There is now a wealth of material on how FPIC should be sought. We would be more than ready to provide appropriate references, but the Akwe: Kon Guidelines are an obvious place to start.
112. WWF should also place far more emphasis on the development of community conservation zones which can be managed by the Baka themselves, and push for legal recognition of their rights to this land.

### Land Issue

113. The first priority is to establish whether and on what terms the Baka might be now prepared to give their free and informed if not their prior consent to some or all of the PAs that already exist. This ought also to be WWF's priority, if it wants donors to take seriously its protestation that it "will not promote or support...interventions which have not received the prior free and informed consent of affected indigenous communities."
114. If the Baka are prepared to give their FPIC on suitable terms (and it is hardly conceivable that they would give it unconditionally), WWF should provide the Baka with such financial and other assistance as they may reasonably require to negotiate these terms with the Government. It should be prepared to withdraw further support for the PAs if the Government unreasonably rejects the proposed terms.

115. If it is to be credible the process should be conducted by an independent body, and not by WWF. This body should be supplied with the participatory maps already prepared by the Baka and WWF, and should be given the resources to commission any further mapping that may be required.

#### Ecoguard Issue

116. Here the first priority should be to consult the Baka about how to prevent or reduce the risk of continued abuse by ecoguards or the BIR. This could be undertaken as part of an FPIC exercise.

117. We anticipate that many Baka will repeat a request they have already made, that WWF should withhold further funds from MINFOF until it has taken steps to exercise proper control over its employees. WWF has previously rejected this approach because it “would be highly likely to weaken, not improve, the position of the Baka,” but has given mutually inconsistent reasons in support of this claim.

118. One is that the withdrawal of financial support would bring an end to forest protection, and that this in turn would deny the Baka “access to forest resources.” It is unclear what “access” they are thought to enjoy at present. The other argument is that forest protection would not be lost, because WWF is only a “part funder of this service,” which would “most likely continue with less emphasis on observance of human rights.”

119. The Baka must be allowed to express their views on these contentions, neither of which appears to be based on any empirical evidence. It is difficult to see that they could be in any worse off than they are now, whether the forests remain “protected” or not.

120. The only inference that could reasonably be drawn from the Government’s refusal to introduce effective safeguards against ecoguard abuse would be that it is indifferent to the problem – and therefore to its duties under international human rights law. If that is the case, WWF ought not to

require the NCP or anyone else to tell it that it should terminate its operations in southeast Cameroon. Only then could WWF hold true to Principle 32, and avoid allegations of complicity in future violations of Baka human rights.

121. We are ready to discuss what safeguards should be put in place, but they might for example include the adoption of

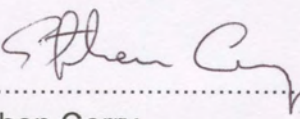
- (1) the UN's Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials. These require that steps are taken to ensure that damage and injury are kept to a minimum, that assistance and medical aid are rendered to any injured or affected persons at the earliest opportunity, and that relatives are notified at the earliest possible moment
- (2) a code of conduct which would result in the dismissal from the force of any ecoguard who participated in the abuse of Baka or who failed to report their alleged abuse by others
- (3) a mechanism which would enable Baka to identify individual ecoguards and report apparent violations of the code, and to ensure that these reports were properly investigated

122. Unless and until these measures have been put in place and have demonstrated their effectiveness, WWF should itself monitor ecoguard conduct. It too will need a system to record the date and place of particular incidents and of the persons involved in them. Smart phone technology offers one way in which this might be done.

123. WWF should appoint an independent person to receive and analyse the information which this system generates. S/he should have the resources to investigate serious incidents and to compensate victims. S/he should, of course, offer those against whom complaints are made an opportunity to be heard. S/he should copy her or his reports to MINFOF and if

appropriate recommend the steps it should take to avoid similar problems in the future. S/he should have the power to discipline WWF employees who abuse Baka or to fail to report their alleged abuse by others.

124. WWF should organise workshops with the Baka to explain ecoguards' powers of arrest, entry and seizure under the Forest Code, and how it proposes to monitor observance of the Statement of Principles.

Signed:  .....  
Stephen Corry

Dated: 10 February 2016  
Survival International  
London

SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL CHARITABLE TRUST

Complainant

v

THE WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE

Respondent

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**ANNEXES**

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## **Annex I: The Baka**

1. The Baka are one of several hunter-gatherer peoples formerly known as “Pygmies.” They have lived in the rainforests of southeast Cameroon since at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and although exact figures are not available probably number between 40,000 and as many as 70,000.
2. Traditionally they depended entirely on the forest for food, medicinal plants and building materials. Each clan or alliance of families had customary rights over a particular area of forest in which its members hunted a wide variety of game, caught shrimp and fish and collected yams, wild fruit, honey and other forest produce. They made their dwellings from tree branches and leaves and moved frequently within the forest. They bartered meat and skins with the Bantu for salt and other staples they could not provide for themselves.
3. All of this started to change in the 1960s, as the newly independent State began to sedentarise the Baka and great swathes of their territory were gradually taken over by logging, mining and agro-forestry interests. An economic downturn in the late 1980s attracted many newcomers into the region. Logging trails allowed these people access to forests which had previously been impenetrable, and led to the rapid development of a trade in bushmeat.
4. It was in an effort to combat this trade that the Government with the help of WWF and others began to plan a network of “protected areas.” This network has now engulfed almost all of the ancestral territory that the Baka had not already lost to the loggers, miners and farmers.

5. Today, the Baka spend much of their time in semi-sedentary settlements on the periphery of Bantu villages. Their relations with the Bantu are usually characterised as that of patron and client. The Baka effectively “squat” on village land in exchange for services rendered, and are often dependent on the Bantu for even their most basic needs. They are largely non-literate. The US Human Rights Report on Cameroon for 2013 noted that:

While no legal discrimination existed other groups often treated the Baka as inferior and sometimes subjected them to exploitative and unfair labour practices

6. Notwithstanding the changes to their way of life, hunting and gathering remain the most important means of subsistence for almost all Baka, and are crucial to their sense of identity and self worth.
7. In the rainy season small groups will spend a few days or weeks in forest camps collecting nuts and other produce and hunting game with spears, crossbows and wire snares. In the rainy and sometimes also the dry seasons, larger groups may spend several months in more remote parts of the forest. Few conservationists argue that in themselves these activities pose a significant threat to the region’s biodiversity.
8. Although the Bakwele, Bangando, Konabembe, Mvomvom, Mpiemo and Njem peoples that the Baka live among face very similar problems to the Baka, their inclusion in this Brief would have made it even longer than it already is.

## **Annex II: Protected Areas<sup>1</sup>**

### Physical extent

1. Lobéké National Park was formally established in 2001 and Boumba Bek and Nki National Parks in 2005, in each case by prime ministerial decree. The Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve was established by decree in 2014.<sup>2</sup> These decrees have incorporated over 750,000 hectares of Baka forest into one or other of the national parks, and another 157,000 hectares into the reserve.
2. In all, some 9,200 square kilometres – an area a little less than a quarter the size of Switzerland – has become the “private property of the State” under Article 25 of the Forest Code 1994. The boundaries of these huge areas are identified in map at page 1 of the Bundle.
3. The buffer zones that surround the parks and reserve are themselves protected areas and are also shown on the map. These too belong exclusively to the State, and are of two types. There are 14 “zones d’intérêt cynégétique,” or “ZICs,” in areas which were previously occupied under logging concessions. Since 2000 they have been operated by safari companies under concession from the State. They cover an area of more than 1.3 million hectares from which the Baka are completely excluded by law.

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<sup>1</sup> Under section 2(1) of the Wildlife Decree, a “protected area” is any area that is geographically limited and managed for the purposes of conservation and sustainable development.

<sup>2</sup> The decrees are numbered 2001/107/PM, 2005/3284/PM, 2005/3283/PM and 2014/2383/PM respectively.



4. Since 2000 the Government has also created 15 “zones d’intérêt cynégétique à gestion communautaire” (“ZICGCs” or community hunting zones). These vary in size between about 30,000 and 130,000 hectares and straddle an unlisted “agroforestry” zone and the permanent forest estate. They cover an area of more than one million hectares, in only parts of which the Baka in principle have “usage rights.”
5. The roads along which the Baka now live are situated in these ZICGCs and can be seen on the map on page 1 of the Bundle. The ZICGCs are supposed to be participatory, but are seen by many as part of a “conservation landscape” which MINFOF has imposed in close collaboration with WWF.

#### National legal regime

6. The key instrument is the Forest Code 1994, to which the Forest Decree 1995 and the Wildlife Decree 1995 are both subordinate. Sections 21 and 24 of the Code classify national parks, wildlife reserves and buffer zones as “permanent” “state” forests. The effect of this classification under section 25 is to expropriate the customary property of any individual, family or community in the classified land. Section 20 stipulates that the “permanent forests” can be used only “for forestry or as a wildlife habitat.” This appears to prohibit any human settlement, permanent or temporary, in any national park or wildlife reserve.<sup>3</sup> The contravention of this and other provisions in the Code constitutes a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment.
7. Section 29 requires the adoption of a management plan for each park, reserve and zone, prohibits any activity within them that does not comply with the plan, and requires the customary rights of the Baka to be recognised in the plan only to that extent and subject to those conditions that the Government thinks fit.

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<sup>3</sup> A revised Forest Code has been under discussion for several years, but still does not recognise the right of the Baka to use and control their own lands and resources.

8. Even if a management plan was to recognise Baka rights in full section 8 of the Code still empowers Ministers, if and when they deem this “necessary,” to suspend the exercise of all or any of those rights “temporarily or permanently.” Section 26 goes still further, in that it confers on the State an unfettered power to prevent anyone from entering any state forest in the first place: “Public access to State forests,” it roundly declares, “may be regulated or forbidden.”
9. Under section 86 of the Code hunting of any sort is banned in national parks and wildlife reserves, ZICGCs and ZICs. Outside these protected areas hunting by “traditional” methods is allowed, but hunting with “modern” techniques is permitted only to those in possession of a valid permit. Any contravention of this or the other provisions of the Code is punishable by a fine or imprisonment. Section 86 appears to be subject to section 104, which also forbids hunting of any sort in any buffer zone around a protected area.
10. The prohibition by section 86 of the Code of “traditional” hunting in protected areas appears to contradict section 24 of the Wildlife Decree, which purports to permit traditional hunting in these areas “subject to special regulations defined in accordance with the management plan of the area” (sic).
11. The Decree makes detailed provision for the administration of ZICs and ZICGCs. More generally the Decree:
  - (1) can be used to criminalise almost any human activity in a national park, which is to be protected against “any human interference likely to alter its outlook, composition and evolution” [section 2(8)]
  - (2) allows “human activities” in buffer zones only to the extent that they are permitted in a management plan approved by the Minister of Wildlife [section 2(13)]
  - (3) prohibits hunting in ZICs other than on payment of fee, whether by “traditional” means or otherwise [section 3(1)]

(4) defines user rights as “the exploitation of forestry, wildlife and fishery produce by the local population for personal use” but states that “except for wildlife reserves, sanctuaries and buffer zones where they may be authorized, such rights shall apply neither to integral ecological reserves, national parks, zoological gardens nor to game-ranches.” [section 4]<sup>4</sup>

12. Section 4 of the Wildlife Decree contradicts and takes precedence over Article 4 of each of the decrees by which the national parks was created, which purports to allow the exercise of “user rights” inside the park if and to the extent that they are permitted by the relevant management plan. It is difficult to see that user rights included in a management plan in accordance with Article 4 could have any legal effect.

13. As if all this was not enough, each of the decrees by which the parks were established prohibits “any intervention that can alter the appearance, composition, and evolution [of the parks] including, hunting, farming, and logging.” Under the Ngoyla decree “all human activity likely to undermine the objectives of [the reserve] may only be undertaken after carrying out environmental impact studies duly approved by the competent authority.” It is for MINFOF alone to decide whether an “intervention” is prohibited, or an activity is “likely to undermine” the objectives of the reserve.

14. The only restraints imposed upon the exercise of the enormous array of powers conferred on the State by the Forest Code and the Wildlife Decree are provisions in the Decree to the effect that:

(1) before a project is implemented the public must be “informed of [it] through a notice published in the Official Gazette ... and posted up for 30 consecutive days in the chief towns of the administrative units, the council offices and traditional chiefdoms whose territories are included in the zone concerned” [section 6];

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<sup>4</sup> Section 4 makes it possible to “authorise” the exploitation of forest resources for personal use in a national park but not in a reserve. This appears to be the sole distinction between the two types of protected area.

(2) an unidentified “commission” should consider and “give its opinion” on any objections or claims that the official notice might elicit [section 7].

(3) national parks and wildlife reserves may only be established after persons whose rights are affected by the project have been compensated in accordance with the legislation in force” [section 5]

None of these provisions have afforded any protection to the Baka, for the reasons we give below.

### Practical effect

15. The Forest Code and Wildlife Decree swung into effect as each of the national parks and the wildlife reserve was formally established. In each of these areas hunting even by traditional methods became a criminal offence overnight. The summary removal of the Baka’s customary rights also to camp, fish and gather forest produce in the newly “protected” areas put the Baka on a collision course with law enforcement agencies generally, and with the ecoguards in particular.

16. This was the inevitable corollary of the fact that, even if the Baka had been made aware of the Code or the Decree and the effect they would have on their ability to continue their daily lives (which they were not), this would have done nothing to alter their continued dependence on the resources they find in the National Parks.

17. If anything, the zonations introduced under the Code increased their dependence. Both Baka and Bantu were now permitted to farm and hunt only on areas immediately adjacent to principal roads, which were rapidly depleted of virtually all the game and other natural resources that had once been found there. The protected areas became almost the only places in which it was still possible (but not legal) to hunt and gather. According to a WWF study of the Lobéké NP:

Baka Pygmies frequently use some areas of the [Park] to harvest bush mangoes and other wild forest products. They also carry out shrimp fishing during the dry season in some of the major streams in the park. In addition, there are secret

forests in the southern sector of the Park that Baka pygmies visit for traditional rituals and during Jengi festivals. Jengi in Baka is “spirit of the forests.” Young men are initiated into Jengi which is a secret cult of the Baka. New members undertake a pilgrimage to some of the secret sites before the Jengi ceremony.

18. In the mid 2000s Baka communities with NGO support conducted a survey in and around Boumba Bek. With the help of GPS devices they produced maps which confirmed that large swathes of their customary lands have been incorporated into the Park. WWF itself carried out a survey in the Boumba Bek and Nki Parks between March 2006 and July 2007 (“the 2007 survey”). This found that

the Baka’s traditional activities impact on 40% of the surface of the two national parks. The area has in no way been a “no human’s land,” but has been used by the hunter-gatherers for a long time.

19. One of those responsible for the latter survey had been the Regional Coordinator of the WWF Jengi Southeast Forest Program. He had been appointed in 2002, three years before the two Parks were formally established, and his views are therefore important:

Large parts of the two national parks are penetrated by Baka while carrying out their activities. It should be noted that, in Boumba-Bek NP, 40% of its surface was estimated as high penetration area, and 78% as the total penetration area. Those in Nki NP were calculated to be only 8% as high penetration area, 22% as the total penetration area, although people living in the southern and western parts of the park, who are out of the scope of this paper, may penetrate this part of the forest.<sup>5</sup>

These figures clearly show that forest included in national parks, especially in Boumba-Bek NP, are very relevant to Baka life in this region.

While many biologists and foresters believed that Baka had been living along the main roads since the 1960s, without carrying out much activity in deep forest that is today designated as the protected area, social scientists and activists, in particular, have demonstrated that the use of forest is very important to the Baka...

[This] vast stretch of forest is a very important area to the Baka who need it as actual as well as potential ground to obtain foodstuff, medicines, materials for handicrafts, and other essential materials of their life.

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<sup>5</sup> Nki was not fully surveyed as part of this study; the true figures are thought to be significantly higher than those quoted by the Coordinator.

... Even though the zoning plan designed by the Cameroon forestry administration classified the forestland into agro-forestry areas and protected areas, the Baka recognize no meaning in the distinctions. The carving out of a protected area does not mean to them that the park is a separate entity with specific regulations. For the Baka, the difference between the two areas is just an affair of the state.

“We do not differentiate between mangoes or yams on this side and those on the other side of the Boumba [River] because they are the same,” commented an elderly Baka. He also says, “The forest is the same, and we see no boundaries in it.”

20. The Baka are “persons whose rights have been affected” by the creation of both the parks and the buffer zones, within section 5 of the Wildlife Decree. But even if it had been possible to quantify their compensation a payment can only be made “in accordance with the legislation in force.” This allows compensation only for the loss of “investments” in the relevant land, and only if the land is registered. Baka do not “invest” in their land in the eyes of the law, and have never been able to register it. It follows that section 5 is of no use to the Baka, and never could have been of use to them.

21. The same holds true for sections 6 and 7 of the Decree (under which the Baka should have been informed of the proposal to form the protected areas, and been allowed to object). The Baka with whom we have discussed this issue have invariably said that they knew nothing of the Government’s proposals for the national parks until after they had been put into effect.

## **Annex III: Baka Rights under International law**

### Land and resource rights

1. Baka rights to their lands and resources are guaranteed by Articles 1 of both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These entrench the right of all “peoples” to self-determination and freely to dispose of their natural wealth and resources.<sup>6</sup> The Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights have both held that the denial of the right of an indigenous people to its lands and resources is a violation of its right to self-determination.
2. The key provision, however, is Article 14 of the African Charter, which stipulates that:

The right to property shall be guaranteed. It may only be encroached upon in the interest of public need or in the general interest of the community and in accordance with the provisions of appropriate laws

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<sup>6</sup> For the definition of a “people” see, for example, para 150 of the ACHPR decision in Centre for Minority Rights Development (Kenya) and Minority Rights Group International on behalf of Endorois Welfare Council v Kenya, 276/2003 [“the Endorois case”].

3. The African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights Commission (“the ACHPR”) considered the effect of Article 14 in the Endorois case, where an indigenous community which had been evicted from its lands to make way for a game reserve lodged claims against the Government of Kenya. The ACHPR held that effect of this provision was that:
  - (1) the traditional possession of land by indigenous people has an effect equivalent to that of a state-granted full right of property; and
  - (2) indigenous peoples who have unwillingly lost possession of their traditional lands do not as result lose their right of property unless third parties have acquired title to those lands in good faith. In the latter event they are entitled to restitution or to be given suitable alternative land.
  
4. As is plain from the Endorois case and a wealth of other authority, physical eviction from traditional land is not necessary to trigger the right to restitution. It is enough that an indigenous people has been denied access to the natural resources of those lands or the right to use them for subsistence, cultural or spiritual purposes.
  
5. The ACHPR held that the land “encroachments” were not justified “in the interest of public need or in the general interest of the community,” citing with approval the view of the UN Special Rapporteur that:

Few, if any, limitations on indigenous resource rights are appropriate, because the indigenous ownership of the resources is associated with the most important and fundamental human rights, including the right to life, food, the right to self-determination, to shelter, and the right to exist as a people.



6. ACHPR concluded that:

- (1) Any limitations on rights must be proportionate to a legitimate need, and should be the least restrictive measures possible. In the present Communication, the African Commission holds the view that ... the upheaval and displacement of the Endorois from the land they call home and the denial of their property rights over their ancestral land is disproportionate to any public need served by the Game Reserve.
- (2) Even if the Game Reserve was a legitimate aim and served a public need, it could have been accomplished by alternative means proportionate to the need. From the evidence submitted both orally and in writing, it is clear that the community was willing to work with the Government in a way that respected their property rights, even if a Game Reserve was being created.

#### Other human rights

7. Under Article 7 of the ICCPR, the Baka have the right as individuals not to be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; under Article 9 not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention; and under Article 17 not to be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy, family or home. Closely analogous rights are guaranteed by Articles 4 and 6 of the African Charter.
8. As a “people” the Baka are entitled to the protection of Articles 20 to 24 of the Charter. In the Endorois case the ACHPR ruled that Article 22 requires communities to be consulted before decisions are made that will affect them. The consultations must be conducted in good faith, in a culturally appropriate way and with the object of reaching agreement. Crucially, it went on to hold that:

In any development or investment projects that would have a major impact within the Endorois territory, the State has a duty not only to consult with the community, but also to obtain their free, prior, and informed consent, according to their customs and traditions.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> ibid paragraph 291

9. As an ethnic minority the Baka are also entitled to the protection of Article 27 of the ICCPR. The Human Rights Committee has held that this confers on an indigenous community the right to hunt traditionally in protected areas where this is an important part of their culture.
  
10. The Baka have rights under Article 5 (c), (d) and (e) of the International Covenant on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In response to the eviction of Bushmen from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in 2001 the UN Race Committee observed that the effect of these provisions was that “no decisions directly relating to the rights and interests of members of indigenous peoples should be taken without their informed consent.”
  
11. As a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Cameroon is also bound by the Decisions on Protected Areas made by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (“COP”). According to Decision VII/28 on Protected Areas of COP 7

the establishment, management and monitoring of protected areas should take place with the full and effective participation, and the full respect for the rights of, indigenous and local communities consistent with domestic law and applicable international obligations.

## **Annex IV: The Guidelines**

1. The 2000 Guidelines expected Enterprises to
  - (1) respect the human rights of those affected by their activities consistent with the host government's international obligations and commitments [Chapter II(2)]; and
  - (2) engage in adequate and timely communication and consultation with the communities directly affected by the environmental, health and safety policies of the enterprise and by their implementation" [Chapter V (2)(b)].
2. The "international obligations" assumed by Cameroon for the purposes of Chapter II (2) correspond to the rights of the Baka under international law which we have summarised in Annex III.
3. The 2011 Guidelines expect Enterprises to
  - (1) respect human rights, which means they should avoid infringing on the human rights of others and should address adverse human rights impacts with which they are involved. [Chapter IV (1)]
  - (2) within the context of their own activities, avoid causing or contributing to adverse human rights impacts and address such impacts when they occur. [Chapter IV (2)]
  - (3) seek ways to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to their business operations, products or services by a business relationship, even if they do not contribute to those impacts. [Chapter IV (3)]
  - (4) have a policy commitment to respect human rights. [Chapter IV (4)]
  - (5) carry out human rights due diligence as appropriate to their size, the nature and context of operations and the severity of the risks of adverse human rights impacts. [Chapter IV (5)]

- (6) provide for or co-operate through legitimate processes in the remediation of adverse human rights impacts where they identify that they have caused or contributed to these impacts. [Chapter IV (6)]
  - (7) engage in adequate and timely communication and consultation with the communities directly affected by the environmental, health and safety policies of the enterprise and by their implementation. [Chapter VI(2)(b)]
4. The “human rights” which WWF is obliged to respect under Chapter IV (1) include all the rights protected by the international human rights instruments referred to in paragraph 2. The responsibility to “respect” these rights requires an enterprise to have regard not only to the impact of its own actions but to the impact of operations directly linked to it. Human rights due diligence is crucial if these impacts are to be addressed, and is discussed in Annex III.
  5. The Guidelines Commentary provides that enterprises may need to respect in particular the human rights of individuals belonging to specific groups or populations that require special attention, and specifically cites indigenous peoples as an example of this.

#### Duty to consult

6. In the Vedanta case, the UK NCP looked to the Akwe: Kon Guidelines to determine what constituted an “adequate and timely” consultation with indigenous groups for the purposes of Chapter V (2)(b) of the 2000 Guidelines. There is no reason to suppose that a different approach should apply to the similarly worded Chapter V (2)(b) of the 2011 Guidelines.
7. The Akwe: Kon Guidelines were compiled by the Secretariat of the CBD and provide that:

The proponent of a development proposal or the responsible government authority should engage in a process of notification and public consultation of intention to carry out a development. Such notification should ... take into account the situation of remote or isolated and largely non literate communities, and ensure that such notification and consultation take place in the language(s) of the communities and region that will be affected.

Such notification should clearly identify the proponent, contain a brief summary of the proposal, the sites and communities likely to be affected, anticipated impacts (if any) on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, as well as possible cultural and social impacts, arrangements for public consultation ... and identify obligations under national and sub-national laws as well sub-regional, regional and international agreements.

### Application to WWF

8. The Guidelines are normally invoked to appraise the actions of conventional “business” enterprises but they apply to any “multinational enterprise.” This phrase is given a wide ambit by Chapter 1(4), which provides that:

A precise definition of multinational enterprises is not required for the purposes of the *Guidelines*. These enterprises operate in all sectors of the economy. They usually comprise companies or other entities established in more than one country and so linked that they may coordinate their operations in various ways<sup>8</sup>

9. This accords with the Guidelines Commentary, which states at §6 that “Governments wish to encourage the widest possible observance of the Guidelines”; and at §37, that Chapter IV on human rights applies to all enterprises “regardless of their size, sector, operational context, ownership and structure.”<sup>9</sup>

10. WWF is an independent foundation under Chapter 3 of the Swiss Civil Code, and enjoys all the legal and fiscal advantages which this status entails. It is entered in the Commercial Register of the Canton of Vaud and is endowed with legal personality under Article 52 of the Code. It is therefore an “entity” other than a company. It is “linked” to “other entities” which make up a network of over 80 WWF national offices around the world, whose operations it “co-ordinates.”

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<sup>8</sup> An identical passage appears in chapter 1(3) of the 2000 guidelines. See also the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, paragraph 6 of which provides that the phrase “multinational enterprise” includes “enterprises, whether they are of public, mixed or private ownership, which own or control production, distribution, services or other facilities outside the country in which they are based. The degree of autonomy of entities within multinational enterprises in relation to each other varies widely from one such enterprise to another, depending on the nature of the links between such entities and their fields of activity and having regard to the great diversity in the form of ownership, in the size, in the nature and location of the operations of the enterprises concerned.”

<sup>9</sup> See also the general principles listed in Chapter 1A, and in particular the first principle, that enterprises “should contribute to economic, environmental and social progress with a view to achieving sustainable development.” This precisely mirrors the declared purpose of organisations like WWF.

11. Conservation is an increasingly significant “sector of the economy” in many of the countries in which WWF operates. National parks and wildlife reserves are seen as a vital generator of tourist and other revenue. REDD+ projects are another important source of income, in which organisations like WWF have come to act increasingly as carbon middlemen. WWF has adopted a “market based approach to conservation” and has “business plans” for its major projects.
  
12. The Commentary to the Guidelines confirms that apply to state enterprises as well as to enterprises in the mixed and private sectors.<sup>10</sup> State enterprises pursue public policy objectives as well as and sometimes to the exclusion of a commercial function. When they generate profit, they usually apply them to further the public policy objectives for which they were founded and do not distribute dividends.
  
13. WWF occupies a similar position to that of a state enterprise. The WWF Constitution states that its general purpose is “to conserve the natural environment and ecological processes worldwide,” but also provides that it should “protect, acquire, administer, commercially exploit and dispose of land and other property and resources, including intellectual property.”
  
14. WWF exploits its intellectual property and other resources to considerable effect. Under a recent agreement with the Rewe Group in Germany, for example, it received an €875,000 profit from the sale of almost 2 million collectors' albums in six weeks. The panda emblem appears on Danone yoghurt cups, fashion garments and many other products and also generates significant profits. In 2014 alone the WWF network earned more than €59 million came from royalties and other trading activities, and this figure is set to increase. The recently released “2016 WWF Travel Catalog,” for example, showcases “over 75 conservation-focused nature and wildlife adventures...offered in tandem with our travel partner, Natural Habitat Adventures.” Corporations that “donate” \$1 million or more through their collaborations with WWF are permitted to call themselves “million dollar pandas.”

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<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., §4: “Ownership may be private, State or mixed”

15. WWF also operates the Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN), which enables over 300 companies to produce and trade in ‘credibly certified’ wood products. Each company pays WWF a fee to participate in the scheme and to be associated with the panda brand. In Cameroon, Société Forestière et Industrielle de la Doumé is an important member of GFTN, and in 2013 alone obtained certification for more than 285,000 hectares which WWF described at the time as “home to the Baka community, considered among the oldest residents of Cameroon’s rainforests.” The Groupe Decolvenaere and Pallisco are also GFTN members. The logging concessions managed by these three companies span well over 1.1 million hectares of Baka land.

SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL CHARITABLE TRUST

Complainant

v

THE WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE

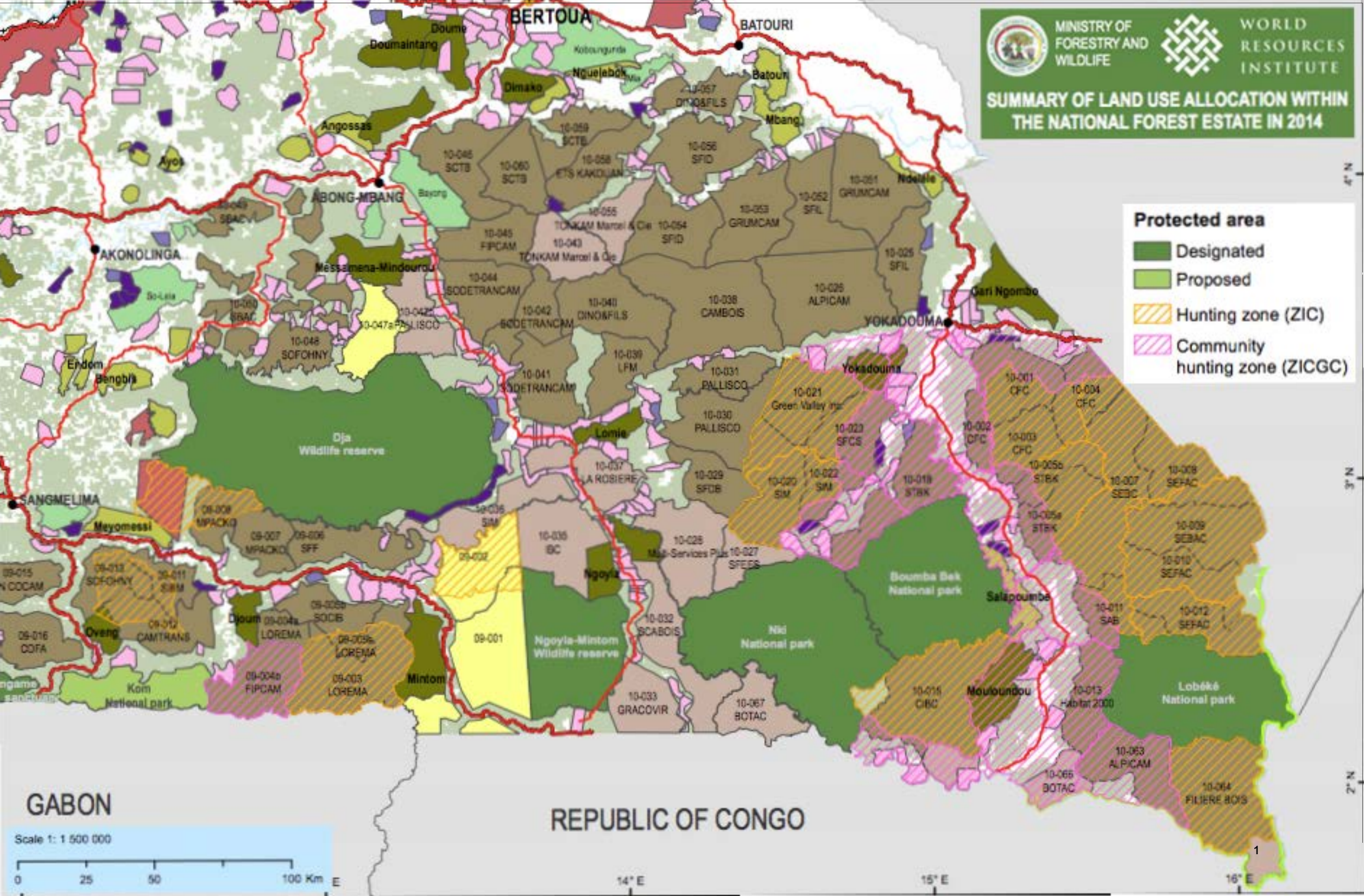
Respondent

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**BUNDLE**

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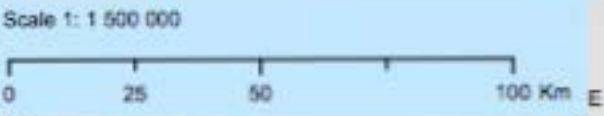


**Protected area**

- Designated
- Proposed
- Hunting zone (ZIC)
- Community hunting zone (ZICGC)

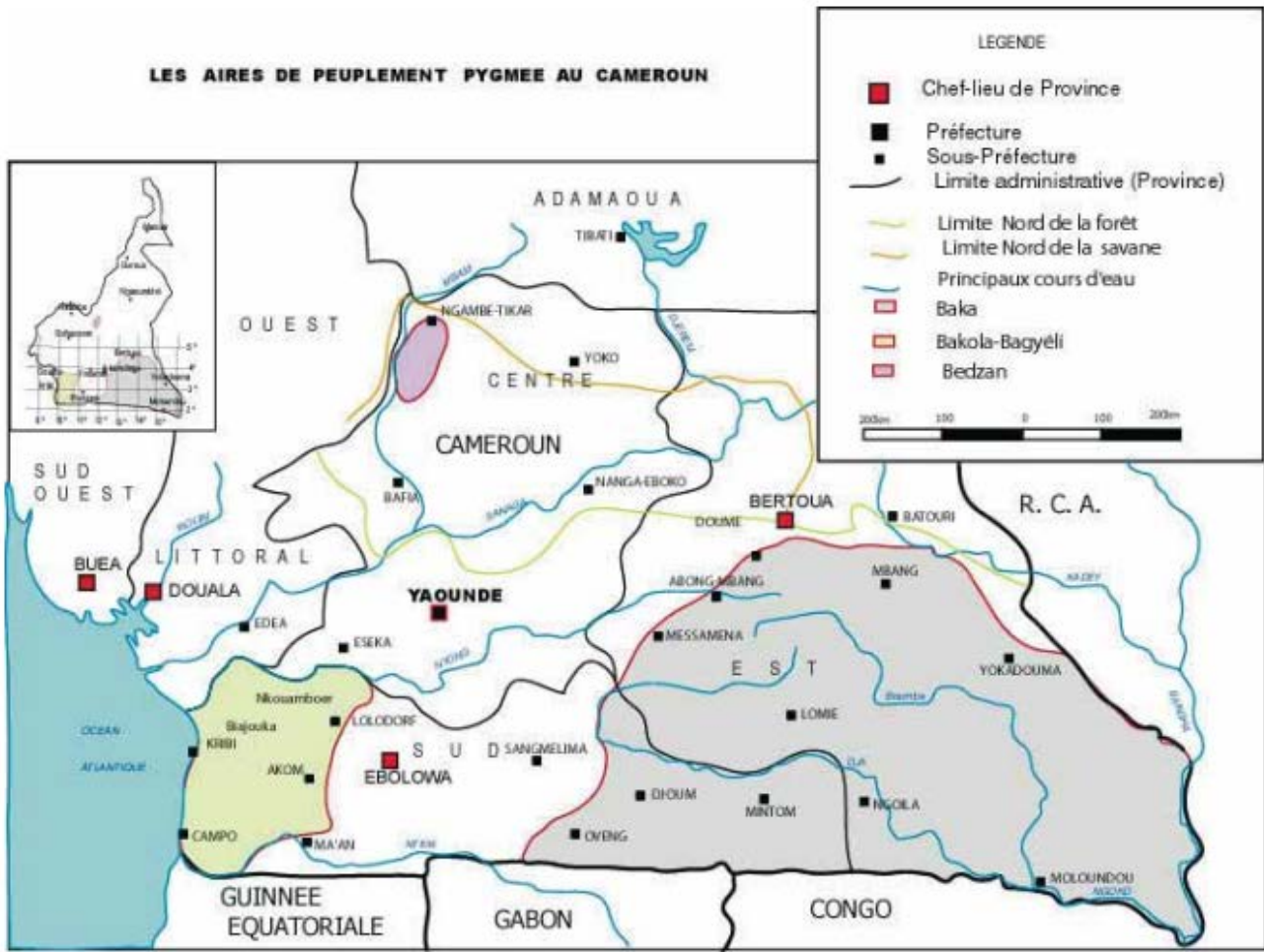
**GABON**

**REPUBLIC OF CONGO**



14° E      15° E      16° E

**LES AIRES DE PEUPLEMENT PYGMEE AU CAMEROUN**



Source: LOUNG Felix

Données: Emmanuel MOUNGOUMBOU INYI&E

**Source:** LOUNG Felix, reproduced in Nguiffo S and N Mballa. 2009. *Les dispositions constitutionnelles, législatives et administratives relatives aux populations autochtones au Cameroun*

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## Chronology of abuse of Baka by ecoguards and BIR

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This is a selection of incidents recorded by Survival International and others; many more are likely to have gone undocumented. Some of the dates are Survival International's estimates.

- 2001 Persecution of Baka by wildlife officials in SE Cameroon presented as case studies at CAURWA/FPP conference in Kigali, Rwanda, attended by WWF staff. FPP publishes studies in 2003.<sup>i</sup>
- 2004 World Rainforest Movement reports on "persecution of indigenous and local communities [in SE Cameroon] by government ecoguards, contrasted against the unmolested traffic of bushmeat out of their areas by commercial operators."<sup>ii</sup>
- 2007 Baka forest camp torched at night by ecoguards and Baka family from Ngola 120 beaten; incident eventually reported in a 2009 report by the Centre pour l'Environnement et le Développement (CED).<sup>iii</sup>
- 2007 Forest camp near Gbine destroyed by ecoguards.
- 2008/2009 Baka taken by ecoguards to WWF base in Malea, near Ngatto Ancien. Several are tortured and one dies a few months later. Possessions are destroyed. [p.7 et seq.]
- 2009 During a raid in the Etole forest, near Long, the Achilles tendon of one Baka man is severed by an ecoguard. Incident documented during a 2009 CED investigation.<sup>iv</sup>

One ecoguard is sentenced to six months in prison for having assaulted a Baka man, who was reportedly blinded permanently after the attack. The sentence is reported in the Cameroonian paper *Le Messenger* on 31.07.09. WWF staff member quoted as saying: "Our means of transport are used by MINFOF's ecoguards. These ecoguards commit abuses, but less and less." [p.52]

According to the same report, one man is whipped and another said to have lost an eye during a joint BIR-ecoguard raid in Zoulabot Ancien. Other beatings reported to have taken place in Ngatto Ancien.

Chief of Ngatto Ancien quoted in *Le Jour* (29.07.09) as saying: “We will die of hunger. The forest which was our only source of food and medicine is now barred to us by ecoguards, WWF agents and the Turkish man who is a hunting guide. All of these people often beat us and threaten us when they come across us in the forest.” [p.55]

- 2010 Camp near Gbine is destroyed. Baka representative complains at local park management meeting but nothing is done.
- Baka man is tortured by ecoguards and hospitalized; he is unable to walk properly for weeks afterwards.
- 2010 Baka man from Lopango is crippled and hospitalized by an anti-poaching unit; incident eventually reported in *L’Actu Quotidien* on 22.06.11. [p.50]
- Jan 2010 CED, the Réseau Recherches Actions Concertées Pygmées and Forest Peoples Programme file a submission to CERD “demonstrat[ing] that game wardens hired by the State are violently beating up and terrorising indigenous peoples in protected areas.” “In some cases, indigenous peoples have been forcibly expelled from these areas; and some continue to be denied access, in some cases through violent acts by State agents.”<sup>v</sup>
- May 2010 The same organizations file a submission to ACHPR concerning, among other issues, evictions of indigenous people from protected areas in SE Cameroon. Outlines how park guards have physically assaulted indigenous people and burned down their houses.<sup>vi</sup>
- Feb 2011 Ecoguards and BIR make several raids in Ndongo and neighbouring villages. At least five people are said to have died from their beatings. Many flee to Congo.
- 2011 Baka from Yenga make a video<sup>\*</sup> with the Baka NGO Association Okani and the UK organization, claim that ecoguards are violently preventing them from using the forest. WWF claims to receive evidence questioning the veracity of their complaints but never releases it. [p.10]
- 2011 A BIR/ecoguard unit beats a man with burning-hot machetes at Gbine
- Sept 2011 Baka in Mbouda returning from a funeral are beaten by ecoguards and BIR. [p.14]

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<sup>\*</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22O1b9xe2Rk> (last accessed 9 February 2016)

- March 2012 During a raid on Ngatto Ancien, one Baka man is waterboarded and others beaten. A former WWF consultant was present in the village at the time of the attack. [p.16]
- 2012 Several people are arrested for alleged elephant hunting near Salapoumbe. They are beaten and forced to eat raw elephant meat.
- 2012 Several people are beaten in a forest camp near Ngatto Ancien and one young teenager is told by ecoguards that they would slit his throat. Possessions are stolen. [p.18]
- 2012 Several Baka are arrested on a hunting trip near Lomié, and have all their pots and pans confiscated.
- 2012 Baka from Ndongo and Nguilili made to crawl on their knees for a long distance, and then chased on motorbikes.
- 2012 Baka in Mbouda assaulted by ecoguards who are looking for illegal loggers near Ndongo. [p.14]
- Dec 2012 Several men are beaten by ecoguards during a raid in Ngatto Ancien. [p.20]
- In a video recorded in Gbine, one man says: “if the BIR find you with steel cables, they put a machete in the fire and beat you hard.”<sup>†</sup>
- Early 2013 Ecoguards and WWF employees burn fishing camps near Ndongo and confiscate food. [p.22]
- Mar 2013 A forest camp near Bele is destroyed by ecoguards.
- April 2013 Ecoguards and WWF staff threaten an elderly Baka man with torture in the district of Messok, drive him away from his village and leave him to walk back on foot.
- June 2013 Teenagers are beaten by ecoguards at Zoulabot Ancien.
- Aug 2013 Guards burn foraging camp and throw belongings into a river at Tembe Rivière.
- Oct 2013 CED, Association Okani, RACOPY, MBOSCUDA, IWGIA and FPP file supplementary report with ACHPR: “In some cases, indigenous peoples have been forcibly expelled from these areas; and some continue to be denied access, in some cases through violent acts by State agents.”<sup>vii</sup>

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<sup>†</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vln1Ab-e75w> (last accessed 9 February 2016)

- Dec 2013 Ecoguards and BIR raid several villages along the Ngatto-Ngatto Ancien Road. Tools are stolen and clothes and schoolbooks are burnt. [p.26]
- Early 2014 Members of a family in Elandjoh are beaten by ecoguards. [p.27]
- Apr 2014 Ecoguards take Baka man and wife from their beds during in the night, beat them and strip the woman of her clothes. Medical records appear to support the Baka's account. [p.28]
- In the same period at least three other Baka men were beaten in the same area.
- Jun/Jul 2014 WWF-funded ecoguards cross from Congo to Ndongo and beat at least three Baka men and one pregnant Baka woman. [p.45]
- Nov 2014 Baka man in Gribe beaten by an anti-poaching team.

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<sup>i</sup> Nelson, J. & L. Hossack (eds). 2003. *Indigenous Peoples and Protected Areas in Africa: From Principles to Practice*. Forest Peoples Programme. Moreton-in-Marsh, UK. Case studies 6 and 7.

<sup>ii</sup> Nelson, J. 2004. 'Still off of the Conservation Map in Central Africa: Bureaucratic Neglect of Forest Communities in Cameroon.' World Rainforest Movement. Uruguay.

<sup>iii</sup> Antang Yamo. 2009. 'Etat des lieux de la situation des communautés Baka vivant autour des parcs nationaux de Boumba Bek et Nki.' Centre pour l'Environnement et le Développement. Yaoundé, Cameroon, p.55

<sup>iv</sup> *ibid.* p.56

<sup>v</sup> CED et al. 2010. 'The situation of indigenous peoples in Cameroon: A supplementary report submitted in connection with Cameroon's 15th-19th periodic reports (CERD/C/CMR/19),' p.5

<sup>vi</sup> CED et al. 2010. 'Indigenous peoples' rights in Cameroon: Supplementary report submitted to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in connection with Cameroon's second periodic report,' p. 24

<sup>vii</sup> CED et al. 2013. 'The rights of indigenous peoples in Cameroon Supplementary report submitted further to Cameroon's third periodic report 54th ordinary session,' p.38

**Statement made by ██████████ to Survival International in Ngatto Ancien, on 31 July 2014.**

**This incident seems to have taken place some time between December 2008 and January 2009.**

Wildlife officers came here from Messok when we were mourning the death of Bobiya's younger brother, Yenga Baya. It was only wildlife officers, quite a lot of them. ██████████ [a non-Baka man living in the village] had been elephant hunting and had run away. They stayed here for several days, they slept in ██████████'s house and in ██████████'s [another non-Baka] house, who was in Yaoundé.

They arrived and made people stare at the sun. They brought my wife there, with her baby in her arms. They both fell ill and grew thin after that.

The wildlife officers also smashed saucepans and threw machetes away.

They took people away to Malea: BOBIYA Jérémie, ██████████, ██████████, ██████████, ██████████

**██████████ told Survival International independently, 22 July 2014 that:**

This happened during the dry season. They made people look at the sun so they ruined their eyes. They told them if that if they didn't look at the sun they would beat them hard.

That time they threw away an old man's medicine too.

**Statement made by ██████████ to Survival International in Ngatto Ancien about the same incident, 31 July 2014.**

They handcuffed us here and threw us to the ground, in this square here. They beat us on our bottoms, with a machete.

For one day?  
Every day they were here they beat us.

*Do you know why you weren't taken to the base?*  
Their boss told them to leave me here.

*Why was it just those four that were taken?*  
The wildlife officers said they had told ██████████ to run away.

*Did you know their names?*  
No.

*Where they all wildlife officers?*  
Yes there was no BIR [Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide].

**Statement made by ██████████ to Survival International on 3 August 2014 in a forest camp near Elandjoh, about the same incident.**

We were there in the village. ██████████ [a non-Baka man living in Ngatto Ancien] had gone into the forest to kill an elephant. We didn't know that an elephant had been killed in our forest. We were there in the village and watched the wildlife officers arrive.

██████████ ran away, he was already running away. They started to grab me, with my little brother ██████████. They started to ask us, "Has an elephant died in this village?" We didn't know. Then they said we were lying. So they started to handcuff us. They started to beat us to make us tell the truth. Afterwards, when they had stopped beating us, they broke down ██████████'s door and they found a bottle of elephant fat and an elephant tail. Then they came down to arrest Bobiya [the former chief of the village]. They handcuffed him too and brought him to ██████████'s verandah. They said to us, "You are not telling us the truth." They made us lie on the floor with Bobiya. They started to beat us with machetes. They started to beat us from 6am to 6pm. Then they took off the handcuffs. We had all been handcuffed together, one to the other.

So when we saw that they'd taken off the handcuffs we tried to run away. I ran away with my little brother, ██████████. We left Bobiya there by himself. ██████████ arrived from Elandjoh. They also grabbed ██████████, with Bobiya. We had already run away. When night came we returned to the village. After this they said that we had to carry their bags to their base in Malea [built by WWF]. We carried their bags to the base. It was there that we could have died from our beatings.

They took a machete that they hadn't used before and beat us with it. When we were coming back we couldn't walk. If we hadn't used our strength we could have died there on the road. It was there too that they beat Bobiya, and an illness took him and killed him. That's all I saw.

*How many wildlife officers were there?*

Many. I couldn't count them.

*How did they arrive?*

On foot.

*Did you know their names?*

Commando was there, and Brice.

*How did they beat you in ██████████'s verandah?*

I was lying on my stomach. One person put his boot on my head and the other beat my feet. They beat ██████████ on the chest. Bobiya was also lying on his stomach. They beat him everywhere with the machete, even on his head.

*And in Malea?*

We were lying on our stomachs on the cement in the base. They beat all of us all over our bodies, from our feet to our heads.



**Statements made by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to Survival International on 3 August 2014 in Ngatto Ancien about the same incident**

**[REDACTED] (70-80 years old)**

When they came to find me in my house I picked up a big machete. It was just in my hand they sprayed the gas in my eyes and I fell to the ground. If I hadn't turned my head it would have taken all my eye. They took the big machete and smashed my pots with it, when they found me with nothing [no meat].

*Which eye was it? Is it better now?*

It was my left eye. I still don't see well out of it and it bothers me still.

*Did you know the names of any of the wildlife officers?*

No.

**[REDACTED] (70-80 years old)**

I was ill when they came. I ran out of the house and kept falling and getting up and falling again. My daughter started to cry. She thought I was going to die.

They threw away my medicines. I had a bunch of plantain bananas and they cut it up with a machete.

**Transcript from a video produced in 2011 by InsightShare, the Baka organization Okani, and Baka men and women from the village of Yenga.\***

First Baka man: This village is Ngoumbila [a district of Yenga]  
I am Remy Kpobodo  
all of this is our heart  
now we are going into the forest  
Come on  
Were [sic] going to fish in the forest.

Second Baka man: I will talk about the problem of our forest that the WWF<sup>†</sup> confiscated  
in the past our parents laid traps in the forest  
they killed game and ate without threats from the WWF  
We have never know [sic] the WWF now it disturbs us  
The [sic] deny us the forest how will we live  
we are dying of starvation, us and our children  
we survive by digging yams; this helps us a lot  
but now that we are banned, it hurts us a lot  
It husts [sic] us why? Because now when we enter the forest the  
WWF chase us  
and when the WWF catch you they beat you.

Baka woman: We fish in the forest. This is the woman's job  
Baka interviewer: *why do we ask you not to go into the forest?*  
Baka woman: we walk in the forest and we eat all that we find  
Baka interviewer: *who prevents you from going into the forest?*  
Baka woman: the commanders of this earth stop us.  
Baka interviewer: *their name?*  
Baka woman: WWF  
Baka interviewer: *when you do go into the forest how do they treat you?*  
Baka woman: if they find you in the forest they beat you and burn down your  
cabins

[...]

Group of Baka men: they have killed us because of our forest this forest is ours  
we suffer because of our forest mercy mercy  
always they hit us because of our forest  
we didn't steal we took from our forest

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\* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22O1b9xe2Rk> (last accessed 31 January 2016)

† The Baka speaking in this video use the word “dobidobi” to refer to their abusers. Many Baka use this word, and many do not readily distinguish between WWF and Ministry of Forest and Fauna officials. WWF requested that InsightShare remove this video from its website, alleging that it had received evidence that the Baka in the video had been “tricked and persuaded” into making false statements. WWF has never released this evidence; see the following pages for more information.

From: Gareth Benest <[REDACTED]>  
Date: 28 March 2013 17:31  
Subject: Re: AJE story on Baka of Cameroon  
To: James Reinl <[REDACTED]>  
Cc: Nick Barber <[REDACTED]>, Nick Lunch <[REDACTED]>, Nick Barber <[REDACTED]>, Jean-Luc Blakey <[REDACTED]>

Dear James,

Greetings from springtime/wintertime Oxford...you choose, we're not sure these days.

Our discussions with WWF US regarding the video in question were with Dan Forman, however I understand from his LinkedIn profile that he is no longer with WWF. His designation at the time was 'Manager, Program Communications and Advocacy'.

They contacted us whilst we were launching a major exhibition at the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian (Washington DC) of the Conversations With the Earth project, to which OKANI have contributed through the participatory video processes that InsightShare seeded amongst their staff and the communities they work alongside. The initial contact came by email from Dan to the former CWE Coordinator (Claire Greensfelder), pasted below, in which WWF state their objections to the video and make a request to remove the video from online platforms whilst inaccuracies are addressed.

We were hosting over 30 representatives of indigenous communities from around the world (though unfortunately not from the Baka community, who were all denied visas) and we responded according to our limited time/capacity in that period. I spoke with Dan the evening the email arrived. He described a written report WWF had received (perhaps commissioned) describing how the Baka of Yenga had been 'tricked and persuaded' into making false statements about WWF by a 'foreigner'. He insisted (as in the email) that the participants were saying 'dobedobe' not WWF, which if you listen to the interviews on the film is at least plausible but which Messe has denied to you directly. I don't recall much more detail about the objections made but we agreed to temporarily remove the video from the CWE website and YouTube channel whilst we consulted with OKANI and took time to understand the other objections and accusations. Dan agreed to send us a copy of the report right away.

In response to their (serious) claims and objections we removed the video from public access on all the CWE / InsightShare online platforms, and did not screen it at our various events in NYC and DC, and began our efforts to understand the perspectives of both parties involved.

Since the initial email and conversation with Dan Forman on 06/10/11, I personally made several requests for a copy of the report but have not received anything. For example, here are our Skype IM exchanges:

On 19/10/2011, at 15:02, Gareth Benest wrote:

> Hi Dan. I sent you a couple of emails over the few weeks but haven't heard back. Could you send me a copy of the report you mentioned and quoted during our call? It will significantly help our processes at this end. Thanks.

On 19/10/2011, at 15:56, Dan Forman wrote:

> I waiting for a cleaned up version I can send. Thank you for following up.

On 19/10/2011, at 16:02, Gareth Benest wrote:

> OK, thanks Dan. Looking forward to receiving it.

On 10/11/2011, at 12:38, Gareth Benest wrote:

> Hi Dan. Just wondering whether you are able to share that report from Cameroon yet? I'm still very keen (as you might have realised) to see this process through to a positive conclusion and would like to

understand all the various perspectives and opinions of everyone involved. Please do let me know when you think you will be able to share your report with us. Thanks,

No answer, end of communications. We have been left doubting the existence of this report and highly suspicious of the claims attributed to it.

Nevertheless, we continued to search for clarifications from Messe and OKANI and eventually received assurance from them that the situation was no longer as serious as it had been and that WWF were now engaging with the people in Yenga and the issues raised. The video in that sense had achieved its goal of dialogue between parties and there was no real need to publish it again. As recently as one month ago, we revisited the discussion internally and began exploring whether we ought to re-publish the video, depending on further consultation with OKANI we hoped would be possible through Nick Barber. That is how the situation stood until these conversations with yourself and the discovery that the video had been posted by Baka Beyond without our knowledge.

I look forward to hearing more about WWF's response to this chain of events and to understanding more about the situation as it is today in Yenga...and one day to reading that report. Please do keep us informed of your investigations and findings.

Kind regards,

Gareth

Gareth Benest  
Director of Programmes

E: g [REDACTED]  
T: + [REDACTED]  
M: [REDACTED] 5  
S: garethbenest

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[www.insightshare.org](http://www.insightshare.org)

From: "Forman, Dan" <[REDACTED]>  
To: "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>, "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>, "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>  
Date: Wed, 5 Oct 2011 15:21:06 -0400  
Subject: Mistakes in BaKa Face to Face with Society  
Thread-Topic: Mistakes in BaKa Face to Face with Society

Claire, I recently viewed the video "BaKa Face to Face with Society" on your site and want to call attention to two major factual errors and respectfully ask you to promptly correct them.

1. The translation from the BaKa dialect into English has serious mistakes in it. WWF is actually never mentioned by name in the video, yet the subtitle would have you think

otherwise. "Dobi Dobi," which many of the interviewee's reference, does not directly translate to "WWF." "Dobi Dobi" is a colloquialism for everybody involved in implementing the Cameroon forestry and wildlife law and its Anti-poaching campaign.

2. While WWF works in the area highlighted in the video and provides technical guidance to park authorities, we have no mandate to directly engage in any form of law enforcement. WWF condemns the types of events the villagers are describing in the video and is a staunch advocate for the BaKa people and their right to access the forests to meet their subsistence and livelihood needs.

It is our hope that you understand how damaging this unbalanced portrayal is, not only for WWF, but for the local communities who depend on NGOs such as ours to help advocate for their rights. We would greatly appreciate that while the inaccuracies are being fixed the video be removed from your site and not shown at any of your events.

Thank you for your time. Please let me know if you would like to discuss this matter.

**Dan Forman**  
**Manager, Program Communications & Advocacy**  
*World Wildlife Fund*  
*1250 24th Street, NW*  
*Washington, DC 20037-1193*

Phone: 202 495 1510

Mobile: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[www.worldwildlife.org](http://www.worldwildlife.org)

Skype: danforman1

**Interview conducted by Survival International with [REDACTED], aged 35, in Mbouda, 22 July 2014.**

**The first incident took place in September 2011, the second in 2012.**

The first time they came I was with two Hausas (Mosta and Mamoudou) and five Baka (NDENGBA Emile, [REDACTED])

About 10 people came, at about 6am. The sun had just risen. They beat us, all of us, the women were crying. They beat the soles of our feet as well.

They made the five of us go to Carrefour [i.e. walk to the road], then put us in the car and dropped us off 5km away, after the bridge at Mbaka.

We had to walk back, very slowly because our feet were bleeding.

*Were they only wildlife officers?*

No they were with BIR [Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide].

*What did they say they wanted?*

They were asking, "Where are the guns?" If you don't say anything they start beating you. "You have a gun in your house!"

*Why did they drive you away from Mbouda?*

I don't know; it was a punishment.

[...]

The second time they came, they came here to make us show them the illegal logging. They started beating us – it was chaos.

*Who did they beat?*

[REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

After we said it was in Ndongo [not Mbouda], they started really beating us, still on our backs with machetes.

*Did you recognize any of the guards?*

The *chef de mission* was Mokoakele Alfred.

After that Ndengba was sick, he grew so thin. He was so ill that he died.<sup>‡</sup>

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<sup>‡</sup> According to local records, NDENGBA Emile died on 17 January, 2013, aged 25.

**Separate interview about the same incident with ██████████, 25 July 2015**

We came to the dance. On the way back we took the main road. ██████████ fell over because he had drunk too much. ██████████ and I carried him home. As we got back to the house, the rooster was crowing. We were tired, because it was now 6am. We heard the sound of boots on the ground. We hear tapping at the door. Others had encircled the house. They were looking for ██████████.

We told them he was not there, he was fishing by the water. They asked us to get out. The moment I opened the door they struck me and I fell to the ground.

██████████ was sleeping in ██████████'s house. When ██████████ opened the door he was slapped. We went back inside ██████████'s house. They gave me a gun and told me to break the door to ██████████'s room. There was a suitcase with a lock. They broke it open and told me to look through it. Now I found the gold. I wanted to keep it but they said they would take it. They took us outside and told us to lie down – me, ██████████, ██████████, ██████████ [██████████], ██████████ and two Hausa men.

We were all lying down and they beat us on our backs with machetes. Then we left together with them, they took us the road that goes to the lake. They beat ██████████ and then the rest of us and left us there.

*Where did they beat you?*  
On the back.

*How many were there?*  
There were 10: nine BIR [Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide] and one Cameroonian ecoguard.

*What colour was their uniforms?*  
The wildlife officer was wearing camouflage-coloured uniform. The BIR were wearing black.

**Statement made by a former WWF consultant to Survival International on 21 January 2014.**

**This incident took place on 25 March 2012.**

A group of my Baka friends and I were in the forest, on our way to visit a sacred site just outside the Nki reserve. A member of our group, Serge\*, stopped and examined the ground ahead of us. He determined someone had passed there not hours before, and said that they were most likely to be poachers. We were apprehensive about running into the poachers, but Serge chose a path for us that took us away from the direction of the tracks.

The next morning, we heard gunshots ring out across the Nki National Park Reserve. We were seated atop an enormous rock formation that jutted out above the treetops at the outer edge of the park, when three shots echoed through the trees. Although we had planned to spend another night in the forest, we hurried back to the village in order to avoid any chance of crossing paths with whoever fired those shots.

We arrived safely back at the village of Ngatto Ancien the next morning. But two nights after we had returned, I awoke to the sound of another gunshot in the middle of the night. It was much louder and incredibly close by. I trembled in my hut for a minute, waiting for more sound, but there was none. Exiting into the night, I saw a white SUV parked in the street, and the shadows of men moving.

There was the dark form of a man in the street, lying nearly motionless as blows from fists and gun butts struck him, making a sound like raw meat. He was a suspected poacher that the guards had accosted after seeing him in the forest holding ivories. I learned later that he was not Baka, but in the night it was too dark to see faces or blood. Serge's sister urged me to leave the scene for my own safety.

I learned more of the story piece by piece the next morning. Two men had been caught on the roadside with twelve ivories the night prior. The Ministry of Forests and Wildlife deployed a team of ecoguards, armed wildlife police with military training entrusted with enforcing the preservation of protected fauna, to address the situation.

Being experts of the forest in every way, the Baka are often recruited to serve as guides on poaching expeditions. With evidence of six or more elephants having recently been killed for ivory, the ecoguards started their intensive investigations in the Baka communities nearby the forest where the suspected poachers were found.

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\* Name has been changed out of concern for the individual's safety



Throughout the day, people went missing. One woman sat desolately outside her sister's home, drinking a homemade alcoholic brew. "They are going to kill him," she said, of her son who had been escorted away by ecoguards earlier that morning. He had been beaten openly in the street, and then taken to a nearby forest clearing for further interrogation.

Another friend of mine offered video testimony, describing how he had been beaten, threatened, and held to the ground while water was poured into his nose and mouth. Ecoguards found him suspect because he had four cuts of deer meat in his hut, even though this was a perfectly legal quantity of a non-endangered species. Off-camera, he described ecoguards threatening to throw his son, an adolescent boy with epilepsy, into the cooking fire.

The ecoguards themselves were very open about their interrogation tactics. I had the chance to talk to them during the several days that they spent in Ngatto Ancien. When I asked what would happen when another potential poacher was identified, he said "his skin will come off."

There was no sense of due process of law, presumed innocence, or potential for error among the guards. The director of the wildlife section for the regional branch of the Ministry of Forest and Wildlife said himself that torture is a necessary means for eliciting the truth from poachers. He clarified that anyone that was being tortured was a poacher; if they did not admit as such, it was simply because they were refusing to come clean.

Some said that my presence in the village caused the ecoguards to leave sooner than they would have otherwise. Others said that they just relocated their interrogations out of sight. All agreed that the violence was standard practice in the event of suspected poaching, creating an unpredictable hell that Baka communities surrounding forest reserves must suffer through in the name of protecting at-risk species.

**Statement made by ██████████ to Survival International on 31 July 2014 in Ngatto Ancien.**

**This incident seems to have taken place some time between July and August 2012.**

They beat me with a machete. They beat my wife, ██████████, and ██████████. I was in the forest breaking open bush mangos [to collect the kernels]. They came to harass me, but I hadn't stolen anything.

They came at 5 o'clock in the morning, with torches.

*How many of them were there?*

Two.

*Did you know their names?*

Commando and Brice.

They beat me on my feet and also on my head. They took my machete, my spear, my axe and my knife. ██████████ had a torch but he ran away and they took it.

Akpati ran away, they were closing in and kicked him with their boots as he threw himself between them. Then they made a barrier. They were saying that we were in the park.

They threatened ██████████ and slapped her. They asked us to carry their bags. The three of us took their bags. ██████████ dropped the bags he was carrying and ran away. ██████████ and I arrived at the river. When they were leaving they asked us for 2000CFA each. We refused. Then they gave us 1500CFA, for showing them the road. Then we went back to the village.

**Statement made by ██████████ to Survival International on 31 July 2014 in Ngatto Ancien. She is referring to the same incident as ██████████.**

I was with ██████████, ██████████, ██████████ and others, looking for bush mangoes. They arrived at 5am, while everyone was asleep. They took machetes, spears and axes. They said "Do you know the limits?" We said "We are 17km [from the village], we are not in the reserve." They said "We do not want to see you in the forest."

**Statement made by ██████████ (approx. 18 years old) to Survival International on 31 July 2014 in Ngatto Ancien. He is referring to the same incident as ██████████ and ██████████, but was interviewed separately.**

They started beating. They told me they were going to take me a slit my throat when they finished beating me. Commando pointed his gun and said that if anyone moves we will kill them. They came at 5 in the morning, with torches, walking in the rain.

**Statement made by ██████████, to Survival International in Ngatto Ancien, 3 August 2014.**

**He is referring to the same incident as ██████████, ██████████ and ██████████, who were in the second camp.**

I had gone to the forest to collect wild mangos. The guards came to abuse me in the forest. I had left my wife in the village and gone to the forest to collect wild mango nuts, there by the Leve [stream]. We went to try and break open a lot of wild mangos. Something dangerous was coming. There weren't a lot of people in our first camp, and we left to go on ahead. We decided we would spend time in the second camp collecting mangos. Early in the morning, before dawn, it started to rain. We were thinking we would carry on [with our work] that morning but something dangerous was about to happen. We couldn't start our work because the ecoguards arrived. The ecoguards came to find us in our camp. I had put my two spears like that above the door, the machete was hung up in the hut and I was lying down inside it. There were two of us, two men in our hut. I was lying down on the bed. I look outside the door – I see a pair of trousers like I have never seen before. I had a torch in the hut and when I see those trousers that are like the ones the BIR wear I take the torch to get a good look at the person and then I tried to calm myself down. I ask myself, what kind of colour trousers are those? I have never seen anything like them when I've been walking in the forest. The trousers meant "ecoguard." When I saw then I said, "Aah, we are already in danger." I said that in French. I left, I was so shocked by the danger that was about to come. I shook my friend and said, "Look, brother." He raised his head and he also saw. I said, "Look over there, there is danger outside our door." They had barred the way out of our door. My friend had started running and I was inside the hut. He had already left and ecoguards were chasing him. They came back; they didn't know I was inside the hut. When they went to chase my friend, one of them stayed to keep watch. Because others weren't running away. I also saw the path my friend took and started running as well. They started chasing me like they had chased my friend. They said, "Shoot! Shoot! Shoot!" But I ran away anyway. "Stop! Stop!" I couldn't understand what they were saying; all I could do was run. They had guns but I hadn't seen that. I ran away, saying to myself: "Whether they kill me or not, I need to get out of here. If they don't kill me it will be because I have run away."

My friend, who I ran away with, went straight to the others' camp, to tell them that danger was coming their way. He left to say, "Danger is coming, so be ready." While he was still there they saw the ecoguards arrived. They were ecoguards from Ngoyla. It was the ones who had come to harass us in the forest. We had gone to collect mangos, they didn't even find us with any meat and they started abusing us. They came to do that with us. What I say is true. Some time after that I went to accompany them in the forest. They were sending the mechanic, the one who builds houses, and they came with all the baggage and food they needed to go and build the watchtower over there. Until this day they haven't given me anything for carrying their belongings. I carried two basins of couscous on my back. I was still small at the time but I bore it on my back up to Ekoua, our river that's over there. That's all I wanted to say today. [...] What they came to do to us in the forest – I had a torch, a machete and spears – they left with these things forever.

**Statement made by [REDACTED] to Survival International on 31 July 2014 in Ngatto Ancien.**

**This incident seems to have taken place in December 2012.**

It happened at night, when I was walking to Elandjoh. The wildlife officers asked to see our teeth. There were two of us, with [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. They threw us to the ground. Commando [a wildlife officer] was there. There were only wildlife officers. They said, "Where are you going?" We said we were going to Elandjoh. They started to kick us. When we got down they would kick us down again. They did this five times.

They put us in their car and drove us to Ngatto Ancien and beat us in front of [REDACTED]'s [REDACTED] house. They told us to show them our teeth. "Everyone wants to see your teeth"<sup>‡</sup>

Then [REDACTED] arrived and found us.

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<sup>‡</sup> Some Baka have their front teeth filed into points.

**Statement made by ██████████ to Survival International in Ngatto Ancien, 2 August 2014.**

**This incident appears to have taken place around December 2012 and January 2013.**

The wildlife officers arrive and they find you with nothing. They rummage around, even under the bed. This time, when they arrived, they found █████, ██████████ and myself, ██████████. All three of us were sitting in the verandah. They took █████ first and took him behind a house. One wildlife officer and a driver, asking him to show them where he keeps his meat. But in fact it was to beat █████ with a machete. But we didn't know that.

As █████ came back, I heard my name come from there. "██████. Who is █████?" I got up, when I was with my little brother [██████] a policeman stayed with us, and we were handcuffed to each other. He was armed. I don't know his name, or the others' names. Two people had guns. The driver didn't have anything. They untied me and put █████ in my place. They handcuffed him too. They took me behind the house too. The same two people; the driver in front and the wildlife officer behind me with a machete. When I moved forward, the guy behind me kicked me and I fell.

I didn't know it was a plan like that, that they were going to beat me with the machete. I couldn't do anything. They had already rummaged through all my house and found nothing. Not even any bone or skin. They took us behind █████'s field. They said, "Tell us the truth or we'll beat you."

They only beat the two of us: █████ and me. They didn't touch █████. they took us in the car to the end of the village. They made us get out and told us to tell the truth otherwise they would beat us again. After they brought us back to the hanger. They left for Messok. That was the first and the last time I saw them.

**Statement made by NSONKALI, Charles Jones, of Ndongo, Cameroon, now residing in Bertoua, Cameroon, to BARBER, Nicholas, a researcher from Canada in Bertoua on 24 June, 2014.**

The incident occurred in early 2013, in late February or early March, in and around Ndongo village, southeast Cameroon.

Charles had been working there as a Research Assistant for a team of Japanese anthropologists, beginning in January. The researchers had left but Charles had stayed for a few weeks to work fields which he kept in his home village, before returning to his family in Bertoua. This is what he witnessed:

The chief of Ndongo, DONGA Emmanuel, and Charles were at Charles' house in the village. The chief's wife came to inform the chief that a group of strangers had arrived in the village and were waiting at the chefferie. Charles and the chief left Charles' house to go meet the strangers at the chefferie.

The group consisted of about 15 people. 6 of them were from MINFOF, 9 were cartographers from Lomié. The cartographers were presented as employees of WWF.

The MINFOF/WWF team asked the chief to provide them with guides to enter the forest. They told him that they wanted to go into the forest to collect data for cartography and to conduct monitoring activities of forest animals.

They told the chief that the data they were collecting would be used to redo the demarcation of the border between village territory and the Léké protected area, which villagers felt blocked them off from traditional hunting grounds, ancestral tombs, etc.

The chief called together notables and people from the village in order to select the guides.

4 guides were chosen from Ndongo, 3 Bantu and 1 Baka.

The expedition told the village that they would be going into the forest for 2 weeks.

It is true that sometimes people use the pretext of fishing in order to engage in poaching. These are people who come from across the nearby border with Congo. They cross the river in canoes and engage in poaching in the Cameroonian part of the forest.

WWF and MINFOF officials do not realize that it is Congolese and not Cameroonian people that are engaged in these poaching activities. The two groups speak the same dialect so it is difficult for outsiders to distinguish between them.

The chief gave permission for the MINFOF/WWF team to go upriver, to the upper Dja, for 2 weeks in order to collect mapping data and conduct monitoring activities.

The MINFOF/WWF team left to go up river, all 15 in one boat, in a 75hp boat.

That same day they crossed a fisherman, a notable from Ndongo, who was coming down the river.

They demanded to search his belongings to see if he had any meat, ammunition, etc. with him.

They searched a pot of fresh cooked fish that he had prepared to bring to his family (as he was returning to the village that day) with a dirty stick in order to see if it contained ammunition, etc. This ruined the food.

They found that he had only fish. They took some of his fish. They let him continue down river to the village and they continued upriver.

Upon arriving back in the village, the fisherman reported the incident to the chief. The chief replied that he had not given permission to the MINFOF/WWF team to perform this sort of search.

The chief decided to sanction the MINFOF/WWF expedition when they exited the forest after their mission.

Three days later a group of Muslim fishermen, who were married to women from Ndongo village, came to the village from an expedition in the forest. They reported to the chief that the MINFOF/WWF team had burned down their camp and a bag of couscous, broken their pots, and confiscated their fish. Having no food, they returned to the village early with no fish. The MINFOF/WWF team had accused them of being poachers.

Sensing that the situation was quite serious, the chief called together the chiefs from neighboring villages along the Dja. The neighboring chiefs (Baka and Bantu) stayed at the chief's house in Ndongo and waited for the MINFOF/WWF team to return to the village.

For about one week, the chiefs and other people from the village, including Charles, waited to see when the expedition would return.

Around the seventh day of the council, around 2 pm, and about fourteen days after the expedition had left, the MINFOF/WWF expedition returned. (The council knew they were returning by hearing the sound of the motorboat coming down the river.)

The expedition members went directly to a house belonging to the WWF in Ndongo, bringing with them all the fish they had confiscated, some of which was rotten.

The chief called the guides whom he had sent with the expedition to explain what had happened. The guides confirmed that the MINFOF/WWF expedition had burned (at least) three camps while in the forest and had confiscated fishermen's catches.

After hearing this report, the chief asked one of the guides to summon the 'chef de mission' for the MINFOF/WWF expedition from the WWF house.

The guide came back and informed the chief that the chef de mission refused to come.

At this point, another chef, from the village of Léké, who is older than the Ndongo chief, left with the four guides in order to collect the chef de mission from the WWF house.

After about one hour, the chef de mission accepted to come speak with the chief of Ndongo. The guides and the chief of Léké returned to the waiting council with the chef de mission. By this point many other villagers had joined the village chiefs and notables at the chief's house.

The chef de mission then called for the rest of the expedition to come join him at the council.

The ensuing meeting is documented in the accompanying video clips.

As the meeting got heated, the chef de mission got upset that he was being asked so many questions and said something along the lines of, 'if it continues like this, someone here could die,' invoking the fact that he was to a former 'militaire.'

The chief of Ndongo demanded that the MINFOF/WWF mission reimburse the value of the fish that they had confiscated and stated that none of them would be allowed to leave to return to the WWF house until they had done so.

This caused things to get very heated. After about two hours of heated discussion, things began to calm down a bit. Some Ndongo notables suggested that they should let the MINFOF/WWF expedition go wash and change their clothes as the latter had just gotten back from two weeks in forest.

Fearing that if they were allowed to leave they would flee, the chief demanded that the members of the expedition sign a paper. The members of the expedition refused to sign, saying they would go wash and then come back in order to make arrangements for compensating the fishermen whose materials they had confiscated, burned, etc.

After a lengthy debate, the members of expedition were allowed to leave.

After the expedition was allowed to leave, the villagers decided that, should the expedition members refuse to reimburse the fishermen for what had been confiscated and destroyed, that the team members should be put in prison in Ndongo.

After this course of action had been decided upon, the chief of Ndongo sent someone by motorcycle to Moloundou to bring word to a high ranking MINFOF official who was in charge of the expedition to inform him of what was happening and bring him to the village.  
fawi



After the messenger left on the motorbike and everyone had washed and eaten, the chef de mission of the MINFOF/WWF expedition called for all of the village chiefs, and Charles, to come to the WWF house.

4 chiefs (Ndongo, Léké, Mindourou, Abondo (Baka)) and Charles went to the WWF house.

Upon arriving at the house, the chiefs and Charles found that the chef de mission had bought beer in order to try to smooth things over. Some chiefs drank but Charles and the Ndongo chief refused.

In spite of the gift of beer, the two groups were unable to arrive at a resolution. The chiefs proclaimed that they would wait for the MINIOF boss to arrive from Moloundou so that he could pay proper compensation to the fishermen.

The MINFOF/WWF expedition agreed to wait for the boss to arrive in order to find a resolution to the problem. Around midnight the chiefs and Charles left to go to sleep.

That night, after everyone was sleeping, all members of the expedition fled the village, without starting the motor of their boat so as not to awaken the villagers. They left all of the rotten fish in the WWF office. They descended downriver toward Moloundou.

Around 2 am, Charles was awakened by a villager knocking on his door. The villager told him that the expedition had fled.

Hearing this, Charles left the village immediately by motorbike to go to Moloundou. He was planning to travel back to his home in Bertoua. The incident had delayed his return to his family in Bertoua and, the expedition having fled, there was no longer any reason to delay his return.

The MINFOF boss found Charles the following morning at the bus station in Moloundou, where he was waiting to leave towards Bertoua (via Yokadouma). He told Charles that he had heard a report of the problems in Ndongo and asked what had happened. Charles told him that the MINFOF/WWF expedition members had fled the village the night before. He also complained about what the members of the expedition had done to the fishermen.

It is likely that this conversation occurred before those who had fled the village had arrived in Moloundou themselves, as it is much faster to travel there by road than by boat.

The MINFOF boss pledged that he would address the situation.

**Statement made by [REDACTED] to Survival International in Ngatto Ancien, 2 August 2014.**

**This incident took place in December 2013.**

They arrived at night, wildlife officers and BIR [Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide]. They took three spears, three machetes, a knife and an axe.

They came into my house and they slapped my children. They broke my suitcase and took three loincloths. They took my daughter's exercise books and burnt them together with my loincloths.

**Note:** a non-Baka forester called [REDACTED] was working in various different villages during this raid, which reportedly took place in several villages along the Yokadouma – Ngatto Ancien road over a period of several days. He saw the anti-poaching squad forcing a man to carry a burning hot saucepan on his head in Malea. He also saw them forcing the chief of Gwanenpoum onto his hands, with his feet on a chair, and pouring water on him.

[REDACTED] also reported that wildlife officers stole her belongings.

**Statement made by ██████████ to Survival International on 31 July 2014 in Ngatto Ancien.**

**This incident appears to have happened in early 2014.**

The wildlife officers arrived at night. They started to beat us right there on the road to Elandjoh. They said that we were hunting elephants but they didn't find anything. They rummaged in our houses and found nothing. And after that they beat us and then carried on to their base.

There were three cars, and there were many of them, mixed with BIR [Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide]. I didn't know their names.

*Who did they beat?*

They beat myself, ~~Reya~~, ~~Bama~~, my big sister ~~Wotte~~ and ~~Ami~~. That's two girls that they beat.

We were sleeping, in different houses. They knocked on the door. They started beating us. Other people ran away but we couldn't run away; it was night time. Us, the people who stayed, they beat us.

Is it good that whenever we see them we have to run away?

They started with ██████ My house is at the bottom [of the hill] there and they started at the bottom. Then they came up. They knocked on my door. They lifted my feet up into the air like that. Then they beat me.

They went to ██████'s house and beat him, then they went to ██████'s house and beat him and then continued on to the base.

No, ██████ was in my father's house. She was last.

*How did they beat you?*

They put my feet in the air and my head down low. My feet were against the wall of my house. They beat me with a machete on the soles of my two feet.

*Did you make a complaint?*

We didn't make a complaint.

*Why not?*

Because we didn't have money or transport.

*When did this happen?*

Maybe three months ago, during the rainy season.

Chefferie de 3<sup>ème</sup> degré  
de [redacted] Campement  
Baka

Campement Le 05 Avril 2014

et Monsieur le Délégué Chargé des affaires  
Baka

Objet: procès verbal de Mme [redacted] et Mari  
Contre le nommé Général [redacted] pour agression, violation  
de domicile

Monsieur le Délégué, j'ai l'honneur de vous présenter  
le récit des événements des deux Baka concernés

① Récit de Mme [redacted]

Dans la matinée de lundi 7 avril, de bonne heure, pendant  
que moi et mon mari & nous deux mions, nous avons entendu les gens  
frapper à la porte. Comme nous ne savions pas qui Tocquait  
l'on a fait des retards pour ouvrir., tout d'un coup, la porte était  
forcée et scandalisée, devant la porte, c'était le nommé général [redacted]  
que je voyais avec à sa main une matchiette. il m'a brutalement  
tirer de notre natte et m'a balancer dehors. de là, il a commencer  
à me donner des coups de pied et de matchiette. me voyant fatiguée  
de bastonnade et sachant qu'il m'avait blessé avec Matchiette (au  
total trois blessures) il m'a laisser gésir sur le sol. pendant  
que je subissais toutes ces tortures, une personne de la garde  
de [redacted] bagarait avec mon frère [redacted] et deux autres  
avaient déjà étrangler mon mari au sortir de la porte  
le coupant avec les matchiettes comme s'il était un animal

à ce moment, on nous a mis sur des motos et nous transportés à [REDACTED]

② Recit de [REDACTED]

Au moment où ma femme était torturée dehors, moi aussi, ne sachant pas qui étaient les agresseurs, j'ai pris ma machette pour sortir venger ma femme. A peine je mettais ma tête dehors, deux personnes montent et ranglé. Comme j'essayais de me défendre, c'est des coups de machette qui m'envahissaient. Je me retrouvais dans un bain de sang de quatre blessures graves: une au pied droit l'autre à l'épaule et deux au dos. Comme j'étais à bout de force, les agresseurs m'ont ligotté par derrière. Tout d'un coup, ils ont amené deux motos. ma femme dans l'une et moi dans l'autre pour [REDACTED] carrefour. pendant le général est resté attendre la moto à [REDACTED] pour amener [REDACTED]

Arrivée à [REDACTED], ils nous ont directement mis dans la cellule sans soins.

Dans l'interrogatoire, ils nous ont forcé d'accepter ce que nous ne connaissions pas à travers les tortures diverses

et dans ma maison, le général [REDACTED] et sa bande ont tout saccagé chez moi causant beaucoup de dommages: déchiré mes habits mon sac ma malette emporté ma machette, aussi ma porte a été endommagée.

\* La question du chef baka de savoir qu'est-ce qu'ils cherchaient et qu'est-ce qu'ils ont trouvé?

R Nous ne savons ce qu'ils cherchaient et ils n'ont rien trouvé.

Monsieur [REDACTED]

Mme [REDACTED] née [REDACTED]  
tous Baka domiciliés à [REDACTED]  
résidents à Seli

A Monsieur le Délégué des affaires sociales chargé  
des affaires Baka à [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Objet: Plainte contre M<sup>r</sup> [REDACTED]  
chef du Poste forestier de [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] pour violation, agression  
avec coups et blessures et soupçons  
de braconnage.

Monsieur le Délégué

Je viens auprès de votre haute bienveillance porter plainte contre  
M<sup>r</sup> [REDACTED] et ses éléments

Le 7-4-2014 aux environs de 4 heures du matin nous étions réveillés  
par des inconnus. A peine réveillés notre porte était ouverte et  
nous vîmes M<sup>r</sup> [REDACTED] armé d'une machette et nous tira de  
notre lit de force. Ses coups de machettes nous ont distribués et  
des blessures graves ont été causées sur ma femme et moi. Mon  
frère [REDACTED] qui voulait s'interposer eut sa part de coups. -  
Deux éléments de [REDACTED] se mirent dans la danse et donnèrent  
des coups et blessures. 4 blessures ont été enregistrées sur  
moi et ma femme 3 blessures. Fatigués par la torture, ma fem-  
me mise nue devant nos enfants et moi fûmes transportés à  
[REDACTED] et enfermés dans leur cellule sans soins.

Les tortures que nous avons endurées étaient insupportables et nous  
étions contraints de dire ce que nous ne désirions pas dire.

Les soupçons de braconnage n'ont pas connu de succès car  
aucune preuve n'avait été trouvée sur nous et leur perquisi-  
tion n'ont abouti à aucune preuve tangible. Face à cette  
situation, je voudrais que justice soit faite car pareilles actions  
inhumaines méritent d'être réprimées. Aussi M<sup>r</sup> [REDACTED] et compagnie  
n'ont aucun brin de respect à nos personnes Bakas en mettant  
une mère d'enfants nue sous raison. A quelle classe d'hom-  
mes appartenons nous, pour être ainsi traités?

Que M<sup>r</sup> [redacted] et ses éléments justifient de quel tort nous  
étions coupables pour mériter pareil châtiment. Est ce parce  
que nous sommes Babas ?

Esperant avoir gain de cause à pareille action M<sup>r</sup> le Délégué  
veuillez agréer l'expression de mon profond respect

Signe [redacted]

Nom : [REDACTED]  
Prénom : [REDACTED]  
Age : 42 ans  
Domicile : [REDACTED]  
Profession : cultivatrice  
Ethnie : BAKA

le 07/04/2014

Mle : x les blessures traumatiques  
sur dos et au poignet  
du bras gauche de suite  
d'une agression -

ATCD : - Tabac (+)  
- Alcool (+)  
- HTA (-)  
- Diabète (-)

Elp : - T<sub>3</sub>  
- Conj : pâles  
- T<sub>4</sub> :



- EG : altéré

CAT :

① - en urgence

→ nettoyage des blessures à la solution de Dakin.

→ Suture à plusieurs points

→ pansement à la bétadine

→ Injection de :

- SAT en S/c

- placement perfusion

- SGJ 500cc

- Ceftriaxone 1gr

1gr / 12h en IV

→ Exacryl 2 Amp en IM.

→ Diclofenac 75  
1 Amp / 12h en IVL

→ Dexaméthasone!  
2 Amp / 12h en IVL

~~J. Camille~~



le 08/04/2014

T<sup>3</sup> =

TA =

Vu ce jour: Va mieux

Stop Exacryl;

Continuer T<sup>3</sup> en cours

ajouter : tot'hemma :  
2 amp 8h dans 1/2 verre  
d'eau.

~~J. Gammal~~



le 09/04/2014

T<sub>2</sub> =  
TAC

Vu ce jour ; Va mieux

est  $\rightarrow$  en cours

~~J. Gammal~~



le 15/04/2014


Vu ce jour: ablation totale des  
fils.

- Pansement à Sec

Reçu:

- <u>Bupropène 400;</u>		pdt 10j.
2cp x 2 x J		
- <u>Amoxicilline 500;</u>		
2gls x 2 x J		

NB: Repas stricte pour 2 IT de 18 jours.  
C.M. à faire impérativement

  
Commune de

Nom : [REDACTED]  
Prénom : [REDACTED]  
Age : 43 ans  
Domicile : [REDACTED]  
Profession : cultivateur  
Ethnie : BAKA

le 07/04/2014

MC : des blessures traumatiques  
au tibia droit,  
au dos,  
le triceps gauche,  
de suite d'une agression.

ATCD : - Alcool (+) - HTA (+)  
- Tabac (+) - Diabète (+)  
- chirurgie : HAD  
- Allergologie RAS.

E/P : T<sup>+</sup>  
TA =  
Comp : pâles

- E Giattéré

CAT ;

① - En urgence

- nettoyage des blessures
- Injection de l'Exacel Amp en IM pour Hémostase Rapide
- Suture à plusieurs points.
- pansement à la létardine
- Injection de :

- SAT 1 Amp en S/C

- SGT 6 stoc en perfusion rapide  
cefrioxone 1g.  
1 fl en 12h en IVL

Diclofénac 75

1 Amp / 12h en 3A

Bexaméthasone;

2 Amp / 12h en IVL

~~J. Gammouh~~

le 08 / 04 / 2014

TX =

DA =

Vu ce jour; Va assez mieux

Stop Exacel

continuer 3 en cours et ajouter

lot Henna;

2 Amp / 8h en p.o. dans un

$\frac{1}{2}$  Verre d'eau



le 09/04/2014

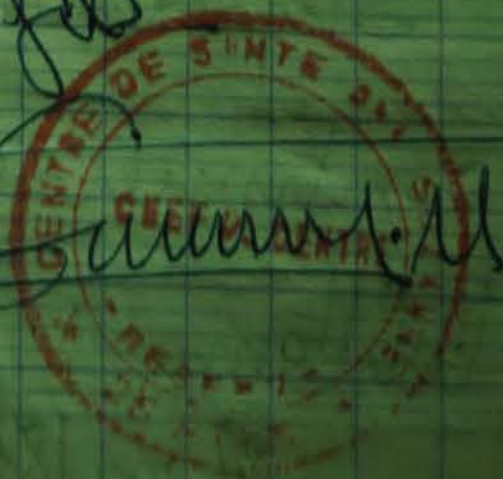
T° =

TA =

Vu ce jour; Va mieux

sont T<sup>3</sup> en cours

Jusqu'à l'ablation  
totale des foyers







le 17/05/2014

Mle: tumeur à l'omoplate & droit  
avec masse palpable sous  
cutané de  $\phi = 7.8\text{cm}$ .

HAMA: la masse palpable avait débuté  
il y a longtemps sans provoquer  
de douleur et était trop petite,  
négligeable. elle a augmenté de  
volume au fil des jours mais  
sans douleur.

la douleur a commencé après notre  
agression, empêchant toute  
mouvement du bras.

E/C: - cong: colorés

- T =

- EG = conservé

- TC =  $36.7^{\circ}\text{C}$

- Stop Dipyrone,
- Pst à la bétadine
- Cont T<sup>3</sup> en cours

~~J. Samuël~~



le 26/05/2014

- Un ce jour:
- Va encore trop mieux
  - Ablation partielle des fils
  - Stop injection
  - Continuer T<sup>3</sup> avec:
  - cotrimoxazole 480: 2cp x 2xJ pdt 10jrs
  - Rufenac 50: 2cp x 2xJ pdt 10jrs

- Dexaméthasone;

2cp x 2 x 7 jst 10gr.

  
J. [Signature]

le 28/05/2014

In ce jour:

- Va ~~travailler~~ mieux
- Ablation totale des fils
- pst Sec
- continuer 3 relai

il sort le jour sans problème post-opé-  
ratoire.

il doit observer 3 semaines de convalescence  
sans travaux durs.

  
J. [Signature]

**Statement made by [REDACTED] (21 years old) to Survival International in Mbaka, 25 July 2014**

“The people from Congo arrived as I finished my work. My wife and [REDACTED] decided to rest a bit. We decided to rest, eat plantain bananas and then to go to our field. Suddenly, a motorized pirogue arrived, with people in Congolese uniforms. They greeted us without beating us. They were together with [REDACTED]’s wife and a Congolese woman was in the pirogue.

When I saw these people, I told my wife to take the pot off the fire and to wrap up the plantains. Mama lifted off the pot and she went off to go to the bathroom. The ecoguards turned around and came back. When they came to the camp, I was wearing my clothes for work. They took my machete and asked whose camp it was. I said the people they were looking for weren’t there and they started to beat me with my machete. My wife came back and saw what was happening, and she wanted to run away. But before she had a chance they fell on her – a pregnant woman. She started to cry, “You’ve come to kill us in the forest. At least kill me with my husband.”

They hit her with the end of a gun, she fell and they kicked her with their boots on her back. They said, “Come, let’s find the person we’re looking for.”

We arrived in [REDACTED]’s camp and found some Baka. They asked whose camp it was. “Do you know where [REDACTED] is?”

They replied, “We don’t know him.”

Still armed with my machete, they fell on them and started beating them. They asked them and me to lie down so they could beat us. I said no, that I wouldn’t get down. They beat us until they were tired and then said, “Let’s go find people on the road to Mbouda.” Then they saw people from Mbouda and didn’t bother them. Then they told us to go back. We don’t know why, maybe some said they’d found the gun.”

*Where did they beat you?*

On my back.

*Who was in [REDACTED]’s camp?*

[REDACTED]’s wife and [REDACTED].

*What did they do when the wildlife officers told you to get down?*

[REDACTED] did get down; I refused.

*Did you report this to the police?*

We’re afraid. When we go there they ask us for money and papers.

*When did this happen?*

About two weeks ago.

**Statement made to Survival International by ██████████ in Ndjamena, 25 July 2014.**

As soon as the anti-poaching squads are able to, they come to beat people with machetes. They make people get undressed, so the person is naked, without any clothes at all. They make him or her get on their knees and beat them with machetes, and they take water and pour it over them. Even if the person is holding a child, they'll pour water on them. And now the abuse that happened before, those who were beaten then are no longer with us. They died from the pain from the machetes they were beaten with. And others have left to go to Congo. They're no longer here, because they're afraid of this problem we have with BIR and ecoguards.

**Statement made to Survival International by [REDACTED], a Baka woman in Mbaka, 25 July 2014.**

We've had enough of WWF/conservationists [*dobidob*]. Is there any Baka that wears there uniform? Do they share the money that they get with us? No. Their work is just ruining the forest. [...] Even the safari hunters – we don't need them. We get nothing from them. The safari hunters and WWF/conservationists are just ruining the forest. They are not good. If these whites find you in the forest they want to kill you. Kill you like an animal: it's as if they see you as an animal. What kind of white people don't want you to eat the food in the forest?

**Note:** The Baka word *tendele* usually refers to white people but it is also used in the sense of "outsiders/"

**Statement made by [REDACTED] to Survival International in Mbaka, 25 July 2014.**

Since they have been born, my children have never seen how to kill a boar. They don't know how to climb for honey. Why? Because we are afraid of the outsiders. All our food is in the forest. All our medicines are in the forest. If we decide to go to the forest, there are MINFOF people that leave to go and beat us there. And they force us to return home and we can't go to the forest any more.

Our ancestors didn't know this work in the cocoa plantations. But we have tried hard to learn how to do this work – that's how we can do it today. But we're still longing for a way back to the forest, but it's become difficult. Why don't we go into the forest? Because we're afraid of those people who come to beat us. And then, when we look for a way into the forest, the people comb through it until they find our camps and ask, "What are you doing here?"

What do they say when they find us there? "You're here to kill elephants." But even if they haven't found anything we can kill elephants with, just a small spear, no gun, they will take it away and beat you for hunting elephants.

But we have to watch the forest and all the medicines our parents showed us there. We never go and gather these medicines. They just rot. There is no one to go and get them. Our food is in the forest. All our things are in the forest. We are not really used to the plantain bananas of the village but now we eat it. Our food was the wild yams of the forest: *sapa* was our food, *suma* was our food, *dondo* was our food, *keke* was our food, all the different kinds of honey were our food.

When we decide to enter the forest to look for these things, they send people to beat us for nothing. You haven't done anything, you have gone into the forest too find food and people beat you for no reason. Why? Because of the forest.





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## Le BIR intimide les pygmées

[ 10/10/2011 à 12:27 ]

[Imprimer](#) [Recommander](#) [Partager](#)

Christelle Kouetcha

[Tweeter](#) [G+1](#) [0](#)

Les agents du **Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide (BIR)** sèment la terreur au sein des communautés Baka dans la région de l'Est. Associés dans la lutte anti-braconnage, ces agents passent outre leur mission et rançonnent les pygmées. « *Comme ils savent que l'on a peur d'eux, ils viennent nous arracher les produits ou les gibiers sans nous payer ou alors ils vous donnent ce qu'ils veulent* », raconte, **Roger Njoubé, élite du village Lopango**. À en croire ce dernier, les éléments du Bir n'hésitent pas à tirer sur des Baka lorsqu'ils sont surpris avec un gibier. Certains Baka, révèlent qu'ils sont parfois sollicités par ces éléments pour des opérations de braconnage puisqu'ils connaissent bien la forêt.

Des aides qui ne sont pas toujours payées : « Nous travaillons pour certains patrons du BIR. Nous les aidons à tuer le gibier et à la fin de la journée ils ne nous payent rien. Même pas un morceau de viande. Tu ne peux pas te plaindre, sinon tu te mets en danger. Puisqu'il a tous les moyens pour te coller une étiquette de braconnier », relate Roger Njoubé, chasseur Baka, très sollicité par les braconniers. Quelques prostituées rencontrées dans le village Socambo, à la frontière du Cameroun et du Congo, confient qu'elles s'assurent toujours d'avoir comme amant des éléments du BIR, ainsi « *comme les pygmées ont peur d'eux, je vais pouvoir m'approvisionner en macabo, viande boucanée, en plantain... à faible coût et en grande quantité* », indique Darling Kouga\* prostituée venue de Douala. Elle ajoute qu'en compagnie d'un élément du BIR, elle peut acheter une assiette de « Djasang » (un condiment utilisé dans la cuisine locale) à 1 000 Fcfa voire 500 Fcfa alors que les pygmées le vendent normalement à 3 000 Fcfa.

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Echos du Littoral

## Echos des régions

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INFO EN IMAGES



**POLITIQUE**

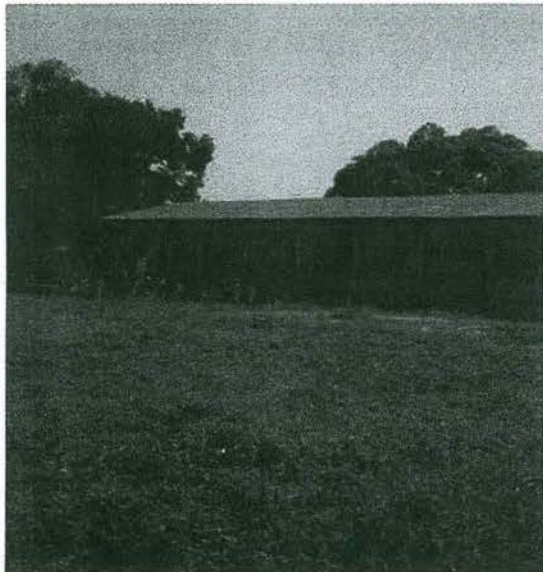
Assemblée nationale : Mijital Zake pour remplacer Bouba Simala ?

## Éducation Le chemin de croix des enfants

Dans les villages où les exploitants forestiers passent, là où elles existent, les écoles sont de simples hangars ou des maisons en terre battue où les élèves sont souvent assis à même le sol.

L'accès à l'éducation n'est pas chose aisée dans les villages voisins des exploitations forestières dans la région de l'Est. Plusieurs parmi eux n'ont toujours pas d'établissement scolaire. Dans le campement Baka de Kanyol, les enfants sont obligés de marcher sur près de 10 Km pour se rendre à l'école primaire. Les quelques écoles en fonction sont construites pour la plupart en terre battue, en planches ou avec des feuilles. Le plus souvent c'est la présence d'un drapeau dressé dans la cour qui informe de la présence d'une école. Au Village Lopango à Yokadouma, ce sont les hangars et les vieilles maisons abandonnées qui servent de salle de classe. « Nous avons demandé que l'on construise une école dans le cadre de redevance forestière. Un jour on a été surpris que l'on vienne plutôt nous bâtir ce 'vieil hangar', regrette Jean Marie Bandjo, un habitant du campement.

Dans certains villages, les exploitants forestiers n'ont jamais daigné construire une école. À Dimako et à Mayos, les établissements scolaires sont l'œuvre des Ong. Les élèves, en nombre pléthorique, sont assis à même le sol, ou sont assis sept à huit par banc comme c'est le cas à l'école primaire d'Eboumetoum. Les ensei-



gnants affectés dans cette zone sont constamment absents. Ils se plaignent du mauvais état de la route et du manque de matériel didactique.

**Difficultés**  
Élite du village Mayos et ex-conseil-

lère municipale, Georgette Olinga confie que cette année, les élèves du campement Mayos ont fait près de deux mois sans voir leur enseignante tellement la vieille route laissée par la Sfid était glissante après la tombée des

pluies. Certains enseignants affectés dans ces zones expliquent qu'ils ne disposent pas de garantie de sécurité, ni d'équipement et de logements nécessaires pour répondre présent à leurs postes.

Dans les villages éloignés du centre-ville, quelques enseignants bénévoles dispensent les cours, non sans difficultés. Plusieurs de ces écoles saisonnières ne disposent pas d'équipements et de matériels didactiques : tableaux, craies, cahiers, livres...

Au village Monmikouboung (ce qui signifie "petit ruisseau qui garde les Baka") par exemple, les élèves utilisent un morceau de contreplaqué comme tableau. En général, les élèves d'ici ont de la peine à se présenter aux examens officiels, car ils ne sont pas à la page des enseignements. Les élèves admis dans les classes du secondaire éprouvent d'énormes difficultés à continuer les études, car près de la moitié des villages de la région de l'Est ne disposent pas de lycée ni de collège. Plusieurs sont contraints de se rendre à Yokadouma, Bertoua, Yaoundé ou Douala pour poursuivre leurs études. Encore qu'il faille que la famille dispose d'assez d'argent pour cela.

C. K.

## Richards Ndongo Martyrisé par le WWF

Agé de 40 ans, cet autochtone Baka a été copieusement battu par des agents de cette Ong internationale.



Richards Ndongo, 40 ans, n'arrive plus à marcher depuis bientôt un an. Originaire du Village Lopango, ce pygmée Baka raconte qu'il a été copieusement battu par des agents de la World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF). La scène s'est produite au mois de mai de l'année dernière. Le Baka, était accompagné de son fils Justin Kema, lorsque les agents de « dobi dobi » (c'est ainsi que les Baka désignent familièrement le WWF) l'ont empoigné dans la forêt. « J'étais allé chercher de la viande en brousse pour manger avec ma famille. Sur le chemin de retour, les agents de WWF, m'ont surpris avec un petit sanglier et m'ont bastonné », raconte-t-il. Selon son récit, les agents de WWF ont utilisé leur ceinture pour le battre. La tête, le corps, et surtout le pied ont reçu des coups de ceinturon. Justin, le fils, explique que les agents de WWF ont battu son père pendant plus de deux heures sans relâche. Lui, il a réussi à se cacher dans la forêt pour regarder comment son père était battu : « Je ne pouvais rien. Voir mon père gémir et supplier sans cesse était insupportable. Je me suis alors enfui pour retourner au village ».

Richards Ndongo a été dépouillé de son sanglier et laissé pour mort au cœur de la forêt. « J'ai passé plus de cinq jours en forêt. Blessé, je traînais le pied pour arriver. Au village, on me croyait mort », pleure le Baka, tout en confiant « je n'oublierai jamais le visage de cet agent du WWF ».

Affaibli, Richards Ndongo a été conduit d'urgence à l'hôpital par l'épouse du chef du village. « Le pus sortait de partout. Je ne pouvais même pas me lever. J'ai fait plus de deux mois à l'hôpital avant de sortir car il n'y avait plus d'argent. Le mal n'est pas fini, je ne peux plus rien faire. Ni les champs, ni la pêche, ni la chasse. WWF m'a rendu inutile pour mon village et ma famille », se plaint Richards Ndongo.

Il s'insurge contre les restrictions données aux Baka de chasser, alors que dans le même temps, des safaris venus d'Europe pour la plupart tuent des animaux sans pitié et comme ils veulent. « On interdit aux Baka de chasser, mais on laisse les Blancs venir tuer des animaux pour le plaisir », se désole Richards Ndongo. Surtout que, constate-t-il, pendant ces safaris, les animaux tués et abandonnés ne doivent pas être touchés par la population. « Les safaris laissent la viande pourrir en forêt ; pourtant des familles entières ont faim », regrette cet homme, les yeux larmoyants.

Christelle Kouécha

## Exactions Le WWF accusé de brimade

Les pygmées Baka accusent les employés de cette Ong internationale d'agression et d'abus de pouvoir depuis qu'ils se sont installés dans la région pour contribuer à la régulation de l'exploitation forestière.

L'Ong Worldwide Fund For Nature (WWF) n'est pas la bienvenue chez les pygmées des communautés Baka (premiers autochtones de la localité) de la région de l'Est. Plusieurs communautés villageoises confient qu'elles sont victimes de plusieurs cas d'agressions et de brutalité orchestrés par des agents du WWF. Dans les villages de Monmikouboung et Lopango situés dans le voisinage de Yokadouma par exemple, les hommes et les femmes ont le chair de poule lorsque le nom de WWF est prononcé. « Le WWF n'a pas pitié de nous. Quand ils nous trouvent dans la forêt, ils nous tapent sans pitié », révèle, Paul Bossi, élite du village Lopango.

À en croire les Baka, les agents de cette Ong n'ont aucun « scrupule » lorsqu'il s'agit de battre sur eux. Ceinturons, machette (Bala Bala), branche d'arbre, sont utilisés pour brimer le Baka. « Lorsqu'ils nous trouvent en forêt, c'est le saute qui peu. Sinon dès que tu es arrêté, tu es ligoté comme un gibier avec des lianes ou des ficelles. D'autres te traînent au sol avant de te



battre. Certains te frappent sans se soucier de toi », raconte René Loumo, un habitant du Village... Si le Baka est surpris avec un gibier, il est soumis à un traitement plutôt « militaire ». Les éléments du WWF le contraignent à grimper dans un arbre dont le tronc a été préalablement enduit d'huile de vidange. À la moindre glissade qui est inévitable, le Baka est frappé. « Ils nous disent que c'est une

correction pour que nous ne chassions plus. Pourtant, depuis toujours, nous vivons de la chasse », constate Jean Marie Bandjo, Baka de Lopango.

Par crainte de ces brimades, les femmes aussi ne se rendent plus dans la forêt comme autrefois. « Quel héritage nous allons laisser à nos enfants. Nous ne pouvons plus entrer dans la forêt pour leur apprendre comment chasser. Ils ne peuvent plus reconnaître les traces du Ngeubi ou du Sinatunga (c'est ainsi qu'ils désignent la girafe en langue locale). La forêt c'est notre lieu sacré et de repos. Mais le WWF, le BIR, le Safari nous bloquent », regrette Richards Ndongo, l'une des victimes du WWF.

**Répression**  
Coordonateur du WWF à Yokadouma, Louis Defo rejette en bloc les accusations des Baka. Pour lui, elles sont « non fondées », tranche-t-il sans s'expliquer davantage. Apollinaire Balla Ottou (chef de section faune et aires protégées à la délégation département de la Forêt et de la Faune pour la Boumba et Ngoko) quant à lui soutient que le WWF n'est

pas chargé de la répression. Pour lui, les Baka confondent les agents du WWF avec ceux de la délégation régionale de la Faune et de la Forêt qui empruntent parfois le véhicule de cette Ong. « Même si les agents du WWF voient un Baka avec du gibier, ils doivent juste informer la délégation », soutient-il.

Pourtant, selon des rapports et des témoignages de Baka recueillis par les Ong locales comme le Cefaid (Ong qui œuvre pour la protection de l'environnement et des droits des autochtones), plusieurs Baka ont été flagellés et arrêtés injustement dans des affaires de braconnage et autres. « Nous avons enregistré plusieurs plaintes de Baka qui accusent des employés du WWF. Ils ne sont pas bêtes les Baka, ils connaissent bien leur bourreau », déclare Victor Amougou, coordonnateur du Cefaid. Ce faisant, il brandit la plainte d'un Baka, dans laquelle il accuse un agent du WWF de bastonnade et de l'avoir exploité pour le braconnage étant donné sa connaissance de la forêt.

C. K.

# Le Messager

Directeur de Publication: Plus N. NJAWÉ

N° 2909 DU VENDREDI 31 JUILLET 2009 Cameroun 400 F.CFA

**Quotidien**



# Douala Ntonè Ntonè affronte la police judiciaire

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La nomination d'Aaron Lemb comme directeur général fait des vagues

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### Protection des minorités

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### Commémoration

## 95 ans déjà que Douala Manga Bell a été pendu **P.3**

• *Le Ngondo s'en souvient...*

## Les pygmées de l'Est dans l'étau esclavagiste des Bantous

Les modes de vie et les conceptions, même ancestrales, font que les pygmées ont tendance à se sentir inférieurs aux Bantous qui en profitent.

### Le complexe d'infériorité à l'origine des exactions

« Les Bakas sont des bêtes. Ils sont idiots et ne comprennent pas grand-chose à la vie (...) L'homme pygmée est un voleur et il faut corriger les voleurs (...) Les Bakas ne savent pas ce qui est bien pour eux (...) Avec eux, c'est la chicotte et rien d'autre... » Ce sont autant d'assertions entendues durant une dizaine de jours dans de nombreux villages Bantous de la Boumba et Ngoko. Non loin de ces villages, les voyageurs peuvent apercevoir des campements pygmées. Les Bakas et les Bantous cohabitent depuis de longues décennies. Mais, les rapports ne sont pas toujours amicaux. « Les Bantous considèrent les Bakas comme des sous-hommes », reconnaît Charles Gall, sous-préfet de Yokadouma. Depuis neuf mois qu'il est à la tête de cet arrondissement, il a eu le temps de s'en rendre compte. Le contraire aurait d'ailleurs été surprenant. Tellement la vie de tous les jours fait ressortir les rapports de dominance à dominés qui existent entre les Bantous et les Bakas.

La première explication pourrait être historique. « Le Baka n'est pas encore sorti de son histoire, de l'idée que l'on a de lui, c'est-à-dire l'esclave. C'est un peuple qui est exploité sans que rien ne soit véritablement fait, même pas par lui-même », explique Emmanuel Aveka, le délégué départemental du ministère des Affaires sociales (Minas) pour la Boumba et Ngoko. Au sein de la population, l'on reconnaît en effet que l'homme Baka, au regard de son comportement, se sent encore inférieur à l'homme Bantou. « Un Bantou peut battre sur un Baka durant des heures sans qu'il ne réagisse. Pourtant, quand il s'agit d'une bagarre entre deux frères Bakas, nous vous rendez compte de la puissance physique de ces hommes », renchérit le sous-préfet de Yokadouma.



Unis, malgré le peu de considération qu'on leur accorde,

#### Esclavage, mépris, exclusion, etc.

La deuxième explication peut venir de la sous-représentativité des Bakas au sein de la société. « Ils n'ont pas de porte-parole. Raison pour laquelle leur intégration sociale est menacée », explique Emmanuel Aveka. En plus d'être confrontés à un problème de survie, dans la mesure où les lois camerounaises sur la protection de l'environnement et de la forêt sont très rigides. Cela ne leur permet pas en effet de vivre selon leurs coutumes (cueillette, chasse, ramassage, médecine traditionnelle, etc.). Les sévices psychologiques

sont également légion. Le sous-préfet raconte qu'un jour, alors qu'il présidait une réunion avec les chefs des différentes communautés, un chef Bantou s'est insurgé du fait qu'un chef Baka se soit assis à côté du chef de terre. Il a fallu l'intervention de ce dernier pour que cela ne tourne pas en affrontement. En fait, tout le monde (les Bantous en premier) s'accorde à reconnaître que les Bakas sont marginalisés et parfois maltraités. Et cela ne semble pas prêt de s'arrêter...

Alain NOAH AWANA

### INDIFFÉRENCE

Consciente des exactions et autres méfaits à l'encontre des Bakas par leurs frères Bantous, l'administration camerounaise semble pourtant dépassée. Des fonctionnaires sont même parfois impliqués.

## Le rôle trouble de l'administration et des Ong

Le gouvernement, à travers les ministères de compétence, est tributaire de la protection des droits des peuples. L'article 8 de la Déclaration des Nations unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones (13 septembre 2007), en son alinéa 2, présente le rôle que doivent jouer les États. Il leur est en effet demandé de mettre en place des mécanismes de prévention et de réparation efficaces pour y parvenir. Mais, au regard de ce qui se passe à Yokadouma et ses environs, on semble bien loin de cet objectif. À la délégation départementale du Minas pour la Boumba et Ngoko, on affirme faire des efforts pour protéger les droits des Bakas. « Avec les Ong, nous avons mis en place un système d'alerte qui nous permet de suivre certains cas. Les Ong nous préviennent, nous saisissions le procureur de la République et les Ong assurent le suivi des procédures judiciaires », explique le délégué Emmanuel Aveka. Il faut également noter que les fonctionnaires du Minas ne sont pas encore rodés à la tâche. Le pouvoir d'intervenir dans la protection des droits des peuples autochtones ne leur a été transmis que depuis deux ans à peine par le ministère de



Les Baka dans leur campement.

l'Administration territoriale et de la décentralisation (Minatd). Ils doivent vite s'arrimer car Emmanuel Aveka est formel : « Les dérapages continuent d'exister ».

Son homologue du ministère des Forêts et de la faune (Minfa) n'est pas sur la même longueur d'onde. « Depuis deux ans que je

suis là, on n'a pas encore eu de cas comme cela », soutient en effet Etel Pandong. Il dément ainsi l'information selon laquelle des écogardes du Minfo commettent souvent des dérapages. Pourtant, Nasser, un écogarde très réputé dans la région, a été condamné l'année dernière à 6 mois d'emprisonnement avec

suris pour avoir brutalisé un Baka. A World wide fund for nature (Wwf), l'on enfonce le clou. « Nos moyens de transport sont utilisés par les écogardes du Minfo. Ces écogardes commettent des exactions, mais de moins en moins (...) Nous saisissons chaque fois notre partenaire, le Minfo, et nous sensibilisons également les écogardes », soutient Olivier. Autre polémique récente : une mission conjointe (Bir - gendarmes - militaires - écogardes) envoyée pour la récupération des armes de guerre qui transitent par la RCA et le Congo. « Nous en avons saisi une quarantaine », affirme Etel Pandong. Il n'est cependant « pas au courant » que des Bakas aient été brutalisés au cours de ladite opération. Pourtant Michel Lessa affirme avoir été fouetté par le Bir au lieu dit Hangar Zoulabot Ancien, des témoins affirment que Pierre Malla Massilik (samedi à Zoulabot) a perdu un œil après avoir été brutalisé par un autre élément du Bir, d'autres bastonnades auraient eu lieu à Ngato Ancien, etc. Le gouvernement, encore une fois, a choisi de fermer les yeux.

A.N.A.

Exploités, marginalisés, et même maltraités, ils posent parfois des actes répréhensibles... Pour faire face à l'ennemi.

### Bakas : on se défend comme on peut

Deux jeunes Bakas sont actuellement pensionnaires à la prison centrale de Yokadouma. Le troisième est en fuite. Ils sont accusés de viol sur une jeune femme Bantou. Cela s'est passé il y a quelques mois dans les environs de Ntiou, à 25 kilomètres environ de Yokadouma. Selon certaines personnes proches du dossier, ils auraient déclaré qu'ils voulaient se venger sur une femme Bantou de tout ce qu'on fait subir à leurs soeurs. En 2007, un Baka a été condamné à 17 mois d'emprisonnement ferme et 650 000 Fcfa de dommages et intérêts pour avoir tenté de rouler un Bantou sur une transaction de plantation. Un de ses frères a commis l'erreur de vendre à trois personnes différentes sa plantation. Les cas comme ceux-ci existent. Car, comme le relève un Bantou du village Mintoni, « les Bakas ne sont pas des sains ». Les Bantous ont des griefs à leurs voisins Bakas. « Ce sont des gens qui dérangent beaucoup. Ce sont des écarts et des voleurs de première classe », crie le chef Bantou de Ntiou, André Assama. Il explique que les Bakas, très souvent employés dans l'entretien des plantations des Bantous, prennent de l'argent sans faire le travail. « Ils espèrent le paiement anticipé et s'enfuient en brisant une fois l'argent encaissé », soutient-il. On reproche également aux Bakas d'être des « super voleurs ». Nombreux sont les cas cités par certains planteurs qui ont trouvé des Bakas en train de voler dans leurs plantations. « L'année dernière, j'ai attrapé les deux Bakas que j'avais engagés dans ma plantation, dans la nuit, en train de cueillir mon cacao », explique Marthe, propriétaire d'une plantation non loin de Mokoundou. Pour elle, les pygmées méritent parfois la bastonnade, car ils sont exaspérants. De manière globale, lorsque l'on parle d'un Baka à un Bantou, ce dernier se rebiffe et se met à débiter des listes d'accusations contre le Baka. « Ce n'est pas pour justifier les brutalités dont ils sont victimes. Mais, il faut que les Ong et autres administrations comprennent que nous aussi nous sommes victimes des Bakas », soutient un villageois de Djemba, Victor Amougou, le coordinateur du Cefad (organisme d'appui au développement et à l'autopromotion) corrécteur des affirmations. « Les Bakas sont contraints d'abandonner leurs plantations pour aller travailler dans celles des Bantous toute l'année. Et quand ils retournent dans leurs campements, ils n'ont rien à manger. Ce qui les pousse parfois à aller chiper les produits vivriers chez les Bantous », explique-t-il.

A.N.A.

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## foumbot

Deux vendeurs de crânes humains interpellés

Ils sont en garde à vue au commissariat.

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Un mort lors d'un mariage

L'embarcation rentrait du Nigeria.

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## ministère des sports et de l'éducation physique



# Une centaine de millions de fcfa pour recevoir Le Guen

Un million pour chacun des anciens ministres présents à la cérémonie.

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# Le Code Biya

de François Mattel

au Palais Polyvalent des Sports de Yaoundé  
Le Vendredi 07 Août 2009  
Café littéraire à 17h 45 - Entrée libre

# Cameroun : menaces sur

pygmées

## Les oubliés de la République

Le gouvernement camerounais n'a pas encore réussi à les intégrer à sa stratégie de développement



21 juillet 2009, village Malesi Ancien, près de Yokadouma. Des femmes pygmées.

Les populations autochtones communément appelées pygmées, ont toujours été considérées comme les premiers habitants des pays de la sous-région Afrique centrale. À travers les multiples définitions à leur sujet, nous savons qu'ils vivent essentiellement de la chasse, de la pêche, du message et de la cueillette. Mais aujourd'hui, les peuples baka font face à plusieurs problèmes du fait de la course à l'or vert et de l'exploitation forestière.

Selon Samuel Ngafiso, coordinateur du Centre pour l'environnement et le développement (Ced), les peuples « pyg-

mées » sont profondément liés à la forêt. « La qualité de leur vie est directement liée à la qualité et à la richesse de la forêt qui les abrite. Privaient en tant que telles des ressources dont ils ont besoin (aliments, médicaments, culturels, etc.), les « pygmées » seraient en danger. Un danger qui tend à se matérialiser de plus en plus à travers les différents politiques de préservation et même d'exploitation forestière qui les octroie de leur espace de vie multiséculaire. Pour Samuel Ngafiso, « Le gouvernement qui ne comprend pas toujours cela ont tenté de les se-

créter en les installant le long des côtes, mais les « pygmées » ne disposent pas de croirs sur la terre. Il n'y a donc pas de droits installés, et l'État ne leur reconnaît plus de droits coutumiers dans certaines des régions d'où ils venaient. Le peuplement qui a résulté penche encore aujourd'hui ».

Aujourd'hui, les pygmées font face aux problèmes d'adaptation et d'intégration. L'État n'a pas encore réussi à intégrer leur prime en compte dans les stratégies de développement national. Les programmes gouvernementaux sont un effet partiellement totalement adaptés à leurs modes de vie. « Le calendrier scolaire est calqué sur le modèle colonial français, et n'a été accepté au Cameroun par exemple que parce qu'il est considérable avec le calendrier agricole le mode de production dominant. Il est cependant inadéquat au mode de vie des « pygmées ». Les périodes de classe coïncident parfois avec la période de chasse. En conséquence, et malgré leur intelligence, peu d'entre eux ont réussi à avoir un cursus scolaire normal et ont rien obtenu pas beaucoup dans le secondaire et dans le supérieur », ajoute-t-il. Les infrastructures, scolaires, sanitaires, et les écoles existent dans leurs villages. Il n'y a pas de stations des communications, autoroutes du Cameroun. « En réalité, nous ne les aidons pas à comprendre la problématique de ces communautés. L'État a fallu dans la prise en compte de leurs besoins », conclut-il.

Muriel Etjo (stagiaire)

forêt

## Privés de leur bois, privés de leur vie

Crucifiés dans la forêt est désormais interdit aux Baka. Conséquence directe, la famine, les maladies et la pauvreté s'installent.

Les pygmées ont toujours vécu dans la forêt. C'est le cas des peuples Baka vivant dans les villages proches de Yokadouma. À travers la forêt qui est leur habitat naturel, ils ont toujours de quoi manger, de quoi se soigner et ils y pratiquent des rites traditionnels. Mais depuis quelques années, les Baka ont vu peu à peu la forêt se transformer en zones protégées, en forêts de faiblesse d'aménagement (Faf) et en zones de chasse professionnelle. Aujourd'hui, l'accès à la forêt est interdit aux pygmées et cela provoque de grands problèmes dans leur mode de vie.

Au village Nkou, les population Baka déclarent souffrir du fait qu'ils ne vont plus en forêt. Il arrive qu'ils consomment seulement du porc ou des ignames sans viande ni poisson. Une situation qui était inimaginable avant, selon Etienne Assama, le chef du village. « Les populations de Nkou connaissent désormais la famine, parce que les agents du ministère des Forêts et de la Faune et du Wildlife veulent plus que nous étions en forêt sous prétexte d'assurer la protection des espèces et des écosystèmes en voie de disparition. Ils ont marqué des limites qu'ils nous interdisent de franchir, alors que c'est au cœur de ces limites que se trouvent nos champs



Malesi ancien le 20 juillet 2009. Des Baka dans la cour du village.

rites traditionnels. C'est le cas du « Djengui », une cérémonie qui a lieu chaque année et qui vise à éloigner la mort du village. Ces différents problèmes, ce sont les mêmes réalités vécues par les autres villages pygmées des environs de Yokadouma. Si cette situation perdure, il apparaît clairement que les Baka devront être obligés à changer de mode de vie et abandonner tout ce qui leur a spécifié la forêt.

M.E. (Stg)

agriculture

## De nombreuses plantations confisquées

Les personnes qui louent les cacayères des Baka refusent souvent de les rendre à la fin du bail.

Dans les villages voisins de Yokadouma, les populations louent les plantations des pygmées baka. Anné contre une somme de 100.000 Fcfa par exemple, la récolte annuelle d'une cacayère estimée à 200.000 Fcfa appartient au locataire. Mais malgré le caractère avantageux de ces marchés, certaines personnes refusent souvent de rendre les plantations à la fin du contrat. Selon Charles Gal, sous-préfet de Yokadouma, les plaintes des pygmées baka à ce sujet sont nombreuses. « J'en reçois presque tous les jours de plus que je suis là », confie-t-il. Comme le souligne Charles Gal, généralement les personnes qui vont louer

les plantations des pygmées baka ne paient pas souvent la totalité du prix de location. « Ils donnent 2.000 Fcfa au début du bail et par la suite ce sont des vœux vœux, une bouteille d'alcool, un vieux portefeuille, des bâtons de charbon... ». La plupart du temps, les plantations ne sont pas rendues parce que les Baka sont menacés par les locataires. C'est le cas de Boniface Manque qui attend toujours la restitution de sa plantation louée à Martin Epama depuis trois ans. Au début de l'engagement, Martin Epama devait exploiter la cacayère pendant une année, mais contre toute attente, il a refusé de céder la plantation à son proprié-

taire. Malgré que l'affaire ait été portée auprès du sous-préfet par le chef du village de Zouabo (en la situation pas changée). Un autre locataire, Gerson Sak Pak, avait 25 plantations confisquées. Il a été sommé par le sous-préfet à toute les rendre à leur propriétaire. Plusieurs affaires similaires ont été enregistrées dans d'autres villages. Une situation qui a poussé Charles Gal, le sous-préfet de Yokadouma à publier un arrêté interdisant désormais toute location de plantations. Malgré cela, les locations de plantations continuent d'augmenter.

M.E. (Stg)

raymond mekpo

## Tué pour un régime de plantain

Le jeune Baka aurait succombé à une agression du conseiller municipal de la Commune rurale de Saboumbé.

Le 27 avril 2008, les religieuses de Saboumbé, un village situé à 125 km de Yokadouma, constatent le décès de Raymond Mekpok, un jeune pygmée baka qu'elles savaient évidemment porteur d'épilepsie. Le jeune homme de 21 ans aurait succombé aux coups reçus une semaine plus tôt au cours d'une bagarre à Ngoula 120 (28 km de Yokadouma) où il avait le conseiller municipal de Saboumbé. Laurent Medoua Pem.

Laurent Medoua Pem est en liberté provisoire depuis le 9 mai 2008. L'affaire qui se poursuit au tribunal de grande instance de Yokadouma est passée en audience le 24 août 2009. Laurent Medoua Pem, dont le procureur de la République a reconnu la gravité des charges contre lui, faisait l'objet d'un mandat d'arrêt.

M.E. (Stg)

sylyvie libalaka

## Violée et assassinée par trois garçons

Après l'agression sexuelle, elle a été jetée dans un puits.

Le crime a pu être à Mimbou, un village situé à 14 km de Yokadouma sur la route qui mène à Saboumbé. Au mois d'octobre 2008, au cours d'une fête célébrant l'anniversaire de la récolte de cacao, une jeune pygmée baka est agressée sexuellement et tuée par trois garçons originaires du coin. Son corps sera retrouvé trois jours plus tard au fond d'un puits.

Selon le procès verbal de l'enquête menée par la brigade de gendarmerie de Yokadouma, Sylvie Libalaka âgée de 14 ans, est approchée au cours de la fête par Gerson Zok, le principal en cause. Ce dernier tente les approches pour séduire la jeune fille. Malgré son refus, elle est violée par les trois garçons. Elle est jetée dans la fosse à l'égout. Les trois garçons ont été arrêtés par le sous-préfet de Saboumbé, Charles Gal, et les autres garçons (Moukoko Ababou) sont arrêtés et détenus à la prison principale de Yokadouma. Le procureur général poursuit la suite. Sylvie Libalaka est mère de deux enfants.

M.E. (Stg)

peuples autochtones

## Un plaidoyer pour le respect des droits

D'avril 2007 à décembre 2009, le Centre pour l'environnement et le développement (Ced) a mené un programme de protection et de promotion des droits de peuples autochtones. Ce programme consistait spécifiquement les populations pygmées. Au niveau national et international, le Ced intervient à travers les médias internationaux qui sont les conventions, mener un plaidoyer pour le respect

des droits des peuples autochtones, dont la journée internationale se célèbre le 9 août prochain. Selon Samuel Ngafiso, coordinateur du Ced, « l'organisation essaye de ne pas se substituer aux autochtones, mais plutôt d'accompagner leur quête d'identité et de reconnaissance. Nous avons aussi passé du temps à essayer à mieux comprendre la richesse de la culture des pygmées, afin de contribuer à une meilleure valorisation de leur di-

science. Nous tentons d'attirer l'attention des autres acteurs sur leur présence, et sur les enjeux qui préoccupent pour eux les politiques, projets et pratiques des autres acteurs ». Le Ced veut attirer l'attention sur la nécessité de la mise en place d'une action cohérente de promotion des communautés autochtones en tenant compte de leur point de vue.

M.E. (Stg)

# les pygmées Baka

■ **békir cem canturk**

## Guide de chasse et bourreau des pygmées

Entre bastonnades et destruction de biens, ce Turc fait régner sa loi.

Dans les villages de Zoulabot Ancien, Maléa Ancien, Ngatto Ancien, Gibé et Song, les pygmées Baka ont toujours tiré leur subsistance de la forêt. Grâce à elle, ils avaient de quoi manger, se soigner et pratiquer le troc contre des produits de première nécessité comme le pétrole, le sel, Thuile, etc. Depuis quelque temps, du fait de la classification de la forêt en aires protégées interdites d'accès, les Baka doivent aller en forêt en cachette. Depuis 2003, ils doivent aussi faire face à un nouveau danger : Békir Cem Canturk, le guide de chasse turc présenté comme très violent.

Dans la zone de Yokadouma et ses environs, ils sont nombreux, les Baka qui craignent celui qu'on appelle « Safarix », surnom tiré du nom de son entreprise de chasse professionnelle,

Mbam et Kim Safaris, 1,55 m environ, les cheveux grisonnant, Békir Cem Canturk a la mine peu souriante. Selon Victor Amougou, responsable de l'ONG Cefaid à Yokadouma, il est accusé par les Baka de plusieurs cas de maltraitance et de brutalité lorsqu'il surprend un pygmée dans sa zone de chasse. Et pourtant, selon son cahier de charge signé en 2003 par Egbe Achuo Hilmann, ancien ministre de l'Environnement et des Forêts, les populations riveraines bénéficient d'un droit d'exploitation coutumier sur la zone de chasse qu'il exploite. Comme le raconte les habitants du village Zoulabot Ancien, le Turc est à l'origine de plusieurs cas de bastonnade en forêt et de destruction de biens. Selon Daniel Ngallo, chef du village Song, « deux femmes enceintes Baka ramassaient des mangues sauvages en forêt

quand elles ont été surprises par le Turc. Elles ont été menacées avec des armes à feu et dans leur fuite, elles sont tombées. L'une des femmes est même tombée la venue contre un tronç d'arbre. Elles ont avorté après suite à ce choc ».

Approché pour avoir sa version des faits sur ces différentes accusations, Békir n'a pas souhaité s'exprimer sur le sujet. Selon son cahier de charge, celui-ci doit verser, tous les cinq ans, un bail de 5,2 millions de Fcfa à l'Etat camerounais pour l'exploitation de 83000 ha de forêt représentant la zone de chasse n° 40 appelée Lebé. Il doit chaque année réaliser pour les populations riveraines un projet social à l'instar d'un dispensaire, d'une route ou encore d'une école. Mais depuis 2003, rien n'a encore été fait.

M.E.(Stg)

■ **charles gall**

## « Les non-Baka prennent les Baka pour des esclaves »

Le chef du département de Langues africaines et de linguistique de l'Université de Yaoundé I explique le fonctionnement de son département.

**Quelles sont les difficultés que rencontrent les Baka ?**

Je suis sous-préfet de Yokadouma depuis seulement 10 mois. À mon arrivée, j'ai trouvé des populations très désordonnées et une ville sale. Il a fallu faire un grand ménage pour remettre un peu de salubrité, même si nous n'avons pas encore atteint les résultats escomptés. La population de cette ville est en majorité composée de jeunes comme le Cameroun en général. Ici, les gens ne vont pas longtemps à l'école. Ils arrivent à mi-parcours et se lancent très vite dans la vie active. Ils se mettent aussi très tôt en couple, à 27 ans pour les plus vieux. Et puis, il y a une mentalité envers les Baka que je n'aime pas.

**De quoi s'agit-il exactement ?**

En fait, le véritable problème c'est que les populations non baka et pas seulement celles de Yokadouma, considèrent les Baka comme des sous-hommes, des esclaves. Elles les traitent très mal du fait de ce rapport de supériorité qu'elles entretiennent dans les environs. Je ne peux pas tolérer que soit le prétexte que certains ont encore des difficultés d'intégration, il faille les exploiter. Ce comportement n'est en rien différent de celui



qui avait cours pendant la colonisation. Heureusement, certaines ONG comme le Cefaid, Orad et autres veillent. Certaines affaires arrivent déjà en justice, d'autres se règlent à l'amiable. Je reçois

tout le temps des plaintes des organisations non gouvernementales (ONG) qui militent pour la protection des droits de ces peuples dits autochtones.

**Que faites-vous pour que cette situation s'améliore ?**

Chaque fois qu'un cas de brutalité, d'escroquerie ou de maltraitance sur un Baka m'est signalé, l'accusé est conduit dans mes bureaux et si ce qui lui est reproché est vrai, je lui demande de ne plus se comporter de la sorte sous peine de sanctions sévères. Au cours de mes descentes sur le terrain, je sensibiliserai les populations sur le fait que les Baka sont des Camerounais à part entière. Il faut expliquer aux populations que les Baka ont des droits qu'il faut respecter. Pour l'instant, je n'ai pas encore réalisé ma tournée de prise de contact faute de moyens matériels et financiers. Mais lorsque je la ferai, j'appuierai davantage cette vision. Les routes sont mauvaises ou inexistantes ici, il nous manque des véhicules appropriés pour rendre les descentes sur le terrain régulières.

Propos recueillis par M.E.(Stg)

■ **mpickong mekou éclador**

## « La forêt est notre seule richesse »

En même temps qu'il parle de leurs pénibles conditions de vie, le chef de village Ngatto Ancien se plaint qu'on leur interdise l'accès à la forêt.

**Comment vivent les populations de Ngatto Ancien ?**

Très mal. Nous sommes les oubliés du Cameroun. La route pour parvenir jusqu'à nous est impraticable. Nous mourons de faim. La forêt qui était notre unique pourvoyeuse de nourriture et de médicaments nous est désormais interdite par les écogardes, les agents du World Wide Fund (Wwf) et le Turc qui est guide de chasse. Toutes ces personnes nous frappent et nous menacent souvent quand ils nous surprennent dans la forêt. Maintenant, on ne parle que d'aires protégées, d'unités forestières d'aménagement (Ufa) et de zones de chasse. Nous évitons maintenant d'entrer de nouveau en forêt par peur de représailles. Les autorités administratives ne sont plus venues dans cette zone depuis 2003. Il n'y a pas de marché où nous ravitailler en produits de première nécessité comme le pétrole, le savon, le sel. Nous soufflons du froid parce que nous n'avons pas de vêtements. Il n'y a pas de centre de santé, encore moins d'école. Nous sommes abandonnés.

**Quelle importance revêt la forêt pour vous ?**  
La forêt est notre seule richesse. C'est grâce à elle que nous avons de quoi manger et que nous pouvons échanger nos produits pour d'autres qui



nous sont grandement utiles comme le sel. C'est dans la forêt que nous avons nos plantations de plantains, d'ignames, d'arachides, de patates, de manioc. C'est en forêt que nous ramassons les mangues sauvages que nous consommons au village. Nous pêchons et chassons le petit gibier

dans la forêt. Elle abrite aussi les lieux sacrés pour nos rites traditionnels. C'est en forêt que nous allons invoquer les esprits, nous purifier, demander la bénédiction des dieux. Nous avons toujours vécu dans la forêt et c'est grâce à la forêt que nous vivons. Maintenant que l'on nous interdit d'y entrer, qu'allons-nous devenir ?

**Le non accès à la forêt est-elle la seule difficulté à laquelle vous êtes confronté ?**

Nous avons un grand nombre de décès dans le village, parce que nous sommes coupés du monde. Les habitants de Ngatto Ancien souffrent de diverses maladies mortelles. Il y a la pneumonie, les abcès internes, les hémies, la fièvre, la diarrhée, la rougeole, la varicelle. Les grossesses difficiles sont aussi à compter. Les femmes meurent souvent d'accouchement difficile. Il n'y a pas de route pour les évacuer à Yokadouma, encore moins de dispensaire dans les environs. La seule case de santé qui a été construite cette année attend toujours des médicaments et un médecin. Nous souffrons trop, il faut que les autorités de Yaoundé nous aident, sinon nous allons tous mourir !

Propos recueillis par M.E.(Stg)

■ **vos avis**

**Quel regard portez-vous sur les exactions dont sont victimes les pygmées Baka ?**

**Manassé Efofodebe, réceptionniste**

Les pygmées Baka sont des citoyens camerounais. Ceux qui les maltraitent et pensent que ce sont des esclaves parce qu'ils ne se sont pas encore totalement intégrés sont méchants. Ce n'est pas bien de profiter de quelqu'un qui n'est pas conscient de ce qu'il fait et les pygmées Baka ne sont pas véritablement conscients de ce qu'on leur demande parfois. Ils exécutent seulement parce qu'ils ont une haute vision des non Baka. Si l'on regarde bien, ces personnes qui maltraitent les Baka ne sont pas aussi fortes qu'eux. Elles ont juste l'avantage psychologique.



**Nestor Kpwalong, gérant de call-box**

Les pygmées Baka sont des êtres humains. Ils ne participent pas véritablement à la vie du pays, mais ils appartiennent à la nation camerounaise.

Même si le gouvernement ne les aide pas vraiment, ce ne sont pas des animaux. Pour moi, il faudrait faciliter petit à petit leur intégration à la nation sans chercher à les changer. En se débrouillant d'eux, le gouvernement montre, peut être sans le savoir, que les pygmées n'ont pas véritablement de droits. On doit arrêter de les exploiter. Comment pouvons-nous faire à d'autres camerounais ce que nous reprochions aux européens de nous avoir fait à une époque ?



**Etienne Ongba, moto-taximan**

Je vis à Yokadouma depuis dix ans et j'ai toujours en quelque sorte connu les Baka. Ce sont des personnes plutôt calmes qui n'aiment pas

la violence. Les populations de Yokadouma et des environs devraient aussi se comporter de la sorte envers les Baka et non les exploiter comme elles le font. Elles doivent arrêter de profiter de leur naïveté et de l'influence qu'elles ont sur eux. C'est de l'esclavage déguisé, de l'exploitation et de la méchanceté. Les Baka devraient aller se plaindre auprès des ONG pour que l'on arrête de les traiter ainsi. Les Baka sont vraiment trop naïfs.



17 / JUNE / 2015

A VILLAGE SEH.

Nous le gense et Notable  
de village seh  
refuson le Ecofac  
pour venir nous deranger  
dans notre foret. Nous Somme  
le gens de la foret, nous  
mangeron dans la foret.

Mer ci

- ① Ekanga André ~~---~~
- ② Nghala Pascal: *ru*
- ③ Mahn Pierre *NS*



Village Assoumndélé République du Cameroun  
(Baka) - paix - travail - patrie.  
Chefferie traditionnelle  
3<sup>e</sup> Deg. (Baka).


## lettre de recommandation :

Nous, Communautés, Baka d'Assou-  
mndélé (A travers ma voie chef 3<sup>e</sup>  
degré), Nous réclamons la libre,  
utilisation de Notre Forêt : (puisque  
notre vie en dépend de celle-ci :

- P.F.N.L (Mangues, Moabi, Djansang, Koko et
- pharmacopée - (écorses, Feuille, Racines etc.
- Chasse.
- cueillette.
- Et pêche.

- Que les projets de conservations  
(C.W.F, Ecotae, Mintof) prennent de réso-  
lutions de clémences pour notre  
utilisation de Forêt qui est utile pour  
notre vie sur terre...

le chef 3<sup>e</sup> Deg.  
Assoumndélé

 MENÉWA,  
SAMSON

NDONGO-30-10-2014

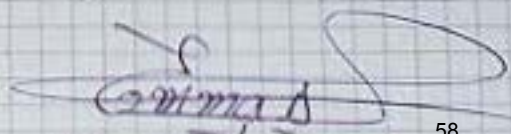
Chef du village de Ndongo  
à NDONGO, DJA RIVIERE frontatier  
au CONGO Brazaville

Je me dresse au Responsable  
W.W.F NGI-SUB.

Je vous dit une chause Mr:  
Depuis l'installation de WWF ici a  
Ndongo nous somme très d'accord  
mais les dire et promesse promis  
n'étais jamais Realiser.  
nous doubusonts de vos aplication  
des loi. et nos promesses par vous  
C'est ou? Mr nous aimeronts que  
abent de financer vos activité,  
que vous venez d'abord Croiser  
les population sur le terrain  
pour les impactes qui ne vas pas  
Et vous?

Je vous Remerci

Le chef de Ndongo



DONGA Emmanuel

31/10/2014

Mous les Baka de Ndongo veulent que WWF  
des arrête de donner l'argent aux brigades  
d'antibracconage

Hgeli Alphonse (Defao) ~~Defao~~

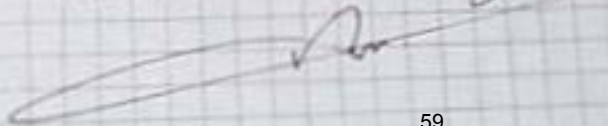
Monyaka Rene ~~Defao~~

Hguide Laurent ~~Defao~~

Enyorpha Sophie ~~Defao~~

Monigie Albert ~~Defao~~

Rapporteur  
N'borali Charles-June





# PROMOTION DES DROITS LEGAUX ET HUMAINS DES PEUPLES DE LA FORET

Email : [associationokani@gmail.com](mailto:associationokani@gmail.com)

N° 063/RDA/B15/A2/BAPP/2 : s/c BP 14 Bertoua tel. Bureau : + (237) 22 07 92 23

Bertoua, le 08 Décembre 2015

A Monsieur le Directeur National  
de WWF/Cameroun à Yaoundé

**Objet** : Transmission officielle des documents.

Monsieur,

Nous venons par la présente solliciter l'obtention des documents ci-après :

- Les plans d'aménagement actuels des parcs de Bumba-Bek, Nki et Lobéké ;
- Le décret de création du parc de Lobéké ;
- Le rapport de l'enquête menée par le WWF sur l'impact de son travail sur les Baka ;
- L'accord de partenariat WWF et Minfof (2006) ;
- Le rapport « Joris D.V. 2001, intitulé : la question des pygmées dans le processus de gestion participative des aires protégées, projet Jengi/WWF, Sud-Est Cameroun, WWF Cameroon Programme, 45 p ;
- Le rapport « Kenrick Justin, 1992, Is a culturally and Ecologically Sustainable Future possible for the Baka ;
- Their Neighbors and the Forest, Report produced for WWF Cameroun.

S'il vous plait, ces documents nous permettront de mieux assoir notre collaboration tant recherchée.

Sincèrement vôtre.

**ASSOCIATION OKANI**  
COURRIER DEPART LE 08/12/2015  
ENREGISTRE S / N° 084/064/2015



ASSOCIATION OKANI  
*Messé Venant*  
COORDINATEUR GENERAL  
Pour Okani,

Le Coordonnateur  
Venant Messé

08 DEC 2015

# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CONSERVATION: WWF STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES



A WWF Position Paper



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# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CONSERVATION: WWF STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

A WWF Position Paper

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II. Conservation Objectives. . . . . 4

III. Principles of Partnership. . . . . 5





## FOREWORD

Indigenous peoples inhabit nearly 20 per cent of the planet, mainly in areas where they have lived for thousands of years. Indigenous peoples are among the earth's most important stewards, as evidenced by the high degree of correspondence between the lands, waters and territories of indigenous peoples and the remaining high-biodiversity regions of the world.

During almost five decades of conservation work, WWF has collaborated with many indigenous peoples and their organizations on activities such as conservation area management, sustainable use of natural resources and policy advocacy on issues of shared concern. These initiatives include work with the Candoshi and Achuar of Peru, the Mapuche of Chile, the Awa and Embera of Colombia, the Yup'ik and Chu'pik of Alaska, the Inuit of Canada, the Ewenk of Siberia, the San of Namibia, the Bagyeli of Cameroon, the Karen of Thailand, the Rai, Lumba and Sherpas of Nepal, the Dayak peoples of Borneo, the Sibuyan Mangyan Tababukid of the Philippines, diverse peoples of New Guinea and the South Pacific and many others across the globe. Currently, WWF is working with indigenous peoples in all regions of the world: in Europe, South, Central and North America, Asia, the Pacific and Africa.

WWF's Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation was first developed in 1996, making WWF the first major conservation organization to formally adopt a policy recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples. We undertook this commitment to help rectify what historically has been an erosion of the rights of indigenous peoples and establish safeguards to ensure that our conservation actions would not contribute to erosion of these rights. We undertook it also because of the enormous contribution indigenous peoples have made to the maintenance of many of the earth's most fragile ecosystems and our belief that partnership with indigenous peoples is central to achieving our conservation goals.

Since 1996, WWF has sought periodically to learn from our experiences working with indigenous peoples and share information and lessons with broader audiences. In 2000 WWF published a series of case studies on *Indigenous Peoples and Conservation Organizations: Experiences in Collaboration*. WWF and Terralingua's *Indigenous and Traditional Peoples of the World and Ecoregion Conservation*, also published in 2000, highlighted the high degree of overlap between priority conservation regions and the lands of indigenous and traditional peoples. In 2007 we published a review and recommendations on measures for *Strengthening WWF Partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities*, including a reaffirmation of the basic guiding principles of this policy and identification of actions to strengthen its implementation and monitoring.

We are now reissuing the WWF Statement of Principles, both to include new developments in international standards as well as to reaffirm our commitment to this policy and its consistent application across WWF programme areas. WWF is also undertaking actions to strengthen policy implementation and monitoring, based on our review recommendations and lessons learned. We are increasing policy support capacities at international and national levels, and have issued new policy implementation guidance as part of WWF's programme management standards. Recognizing the significant growth and development of indigenous institutions and representative organizations over time, WWF is committed to continuing to expand our partnerships with these organizations in local, national, regional and international settings.

We believe that the principles of partnership articulated in this statement are critical to the just and effective realization of our mission to conserve nature. We also recognize that as an organization we are still learning and that the statement will need to remain a living document over time. Therefore, we would be pleased to receive comment and criticism from readers of this statement, to enable us to continue to improve our approach and contribution in this field.

James P. Leape  
Director General  
WWF-International

Guillermo Castilleja  
Executive Director, Conservation  
WWF-International

Gland, Switzerland

# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES<sup>1</sup> AND CONSERVATION:

## WWF Statement of Principles

Principles for partnership between WWF and indigenous peoples' organizations in conserving biodiversity within indigenous peoples' lands and territories, and in promoting sustainable use of natural resources

### Preamble

1. Most of the remaining significant areas of high natural value on earth are inhabited by indigenous peoples. This testifies to the efficacy of indigenous resource management systems. Indigenous peoples, their representative institutions and conservation organizations should be natural allies in the struggle to conserve both a healthy natural world and healthy human societies. Regrettably, the goals of conserving biodiversity and protecting and securing indigenous cultures and livelihoods have sometimes been perceived as contradictory rather than mutually reinforcing.
2. The principles for partnership outlined in this statement arise from WWF's mission to conserve biodiversity, combined with recognition that indigenous peoples are key stewards and protectors of nature. Their knowledge, social, and livelihood systems — their cultures — are closely attuned to the natural laws operating in local ecosystems. Unfortunately, such nature-attuned cultures have become highly vulnerable to destructive forces related to unsustainable use of resources, population expansion, and the global economy.
3. WWF recognizes that industrialized societies bear a heavy responsibility for the creation of these destructive forces. WWF believes that environmental and other non-governmental organizations, together with other institutions worldwide, should adopt strategies with indigenous peoples, both to correct the national and international political, economic, social, and legal imbalances giving rise to these destructive forces, and to address their local effects. The following principles aim to provide guidance in formulating and implementing such strategies.

## I. Rights and Interests of Indigenous Peoples

4. WWF acknowledges that, without recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, no constructive agreements can be drawn up between conservation organizations and indigenous peoples and their representative organisations.
5. Since indigenous peoples are often discriminated against and politically marginalized, WWF is committed to make special efforts to respect, protect, and comply with their collective and individual rights, including customary as well as resource rights, in the context of conservation initiatives. This includes, but is not limited to, those set out in national and international law, and in other international instruments.

In particular, WWF fully endorses the provisions about indigenous peoples contained in the following international instruments:

- Agenda 21
  - Convention on Biological Diversity
  - ILO Convention 169 (Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries)<sup>2</sup>
  - UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples<sup>3</sup>
6. WWF appreciates the enormous contributions indigenous peoples have made to the maintenance of many of the earth's most fragile ecosystems. It recognizes the importance of indigenous resource rights and knowledge for the conservation of these areas.
  7. WWF recognizes indigenous peoples as rightful architects of and partners for conservation and development strategies that affect their territories.
  8. WWF recognizes that indigenous peoples have the rights to the lands, territories, and resources that they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and that those rights must be recognized and effectively protected, as laid out in the ILO Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
  9. WWF recognizes the right of indigenous peoples to exert control over their lands, territories, and resources, and establish on them the management and governance systems that best suit their cultures and social needs, whilst respecting national sovereignty and conforming to national conservation and development objectives.
  10. WWF recognizes, respects, and promotes the collective rights of indigenous peoples to maintain and enjoy their cultural and intellectual heritage.

11. Consistent with Article 7 of the ILO Convention 169, WWF recognizes indigenous peoples' right to decide on issues such as technologies and management systems to be used on their lands, and supports their application insofar as they are environmentally sustainable and contribute to the conservation of nature.
12. WWF recognizes that indigenous peoples have the right to determine priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands, territories, and other resources, including the right to require that States obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting those lands, territories, and resources.
13. WWF recognizes and supports the rights of indigenous peoples to improve the quality of their lives, and to benefit directly and equitably from the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources within their territories.
14. In instances where multiple local groups claim rights to resources in indigenous territories, WWF recognizes the primary rights of indigenous peoples based on historical claims and long-term presence, with due regard for the rights and welfare of other legitimate stakeholders.
15. WWF respects the rights of indigenous peoples to enjoy an equitable share in any economic or other benefits realized from their intellectual property and traditional knowledge, building on the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
16. In conformity with the provisions of the ILO Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, WWF recognizes the right of indigenous peoples not to be removed from the territories they occupy. Where their relocation is considered necessary as an exceptional measure, it shall take place only with their free, prior informed consent, and in full respect of national and international laws and conventions which guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples.
17. In accordance with IUCN RESWCC3.056, WWF recognizes the right of indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation and/or initial contact to their lives, lands and territories, and to freely decide to remain in isolation, maintain their cultural values, and freely decide if, when and how they wish to contact and/or integrate with the outside world.

## II. Conservation Objectives

18. At the heart of WWF's work is the belief that the earth's natural systems, resources, and life forms should be conserved for their intrinsic value and for the benefit of future generations.

WWF bases all of its conservation work on the principles contained in its Mission: to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

In addition, WWF fully endorses the provisions about biodiversity conservation and sustainable development contained in the following documents:

- Agenda 21
  - Convention on Biological Diversity
  - Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES)
  - Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention)
  - Caring for the Earth
19. WWF encourages and supports ecologically sound development activities, particularly those that link conservation and human needs. WWF may choose not to support, and may actively oppose, activities it judges unsustainable from the standpoint of species or ecosystems, or which are inconsistent with WWF policies on endangered or threatened species or with international agreements protecting wildlife and other natural resources, even if those activities are carried out by indigenous communities.
  20. WWF seeks out partnerships with local communities, grass roots groups, non-governmental organizations, governments, corporations, international funding institutions, and other groups, including indigenous communities and indigenous peoples' organizations, who share WWF's commitment to the following conservation objectives:
    - i) conserving the world's biological diversity
    - ii) ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
    - iii) promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption

### III. Principles of Partnership

21. The following principles will govern: (i) WWF conservation activities within indigenous peoples' lands and territories; (ii) WWF partnerships with indigenous peoples' organizations; (iii) WWF partnerships with other organizations whose activities may impact upon indigenous peoples.
22. Whenever it promotes conservation objectives, and in the context of its involvement in conservation activities affecting indigenous peoples' lands and territories, WWF will encourage governments to "take steps as necessary ... to guarantee effective protection of [indigenous peoples'] rights of ownership and possession" of those lands and territories, as determined by the ILO Convention 169 (Art. 14).
23. Prior to initiating conservation activities in an area, WWF will exercise due diligence to:
  - seek out information about the historic claims and current exercise of customary rights of indigenous peoples in that area; and
  - inform itself about relevant constitutional provisions, legislation, and administrative practices affecting such rights and claims in the national context.
24. When WWF conservation activities impinge on areas where historic claims and/or current exercise of customary resource rights of indigenous peoples are present, WWF will assume an obligation to:
  - identify, seek out, and consult with legitimate representatives of relevant indigenous peoples' organizations at the earliest stages of programme development; and
  - provide fora for consultation between WWF and affected peoples, so that information can be shared on an ongoing basis, and problems, grievances, and disputes related to the partnership can be resolved in a timely manner.
25. In addition, consistent with the relevance and significance of the proposed activities to the achievement of conservation objectives, WWF will be ready to:
  - assist indigenous peoples' organizations in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of conservation activities, and to invest in strengthening such organizations and in developing relevant human resources in the respective indigenous communities;
  - assist them in gaining access to other sources of technical and financial support to advance those development objectives that fall outside WWF's mission.

26. In the context of its involvement in conservation activities affecting areas inhabited by indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation and/or initial contact, WWF will:
  - not seek contact, nor promote actions which will affect the peace and tranquillity of these peoples and their chosen rights to remain in voluntary isolation and/or initial contact;
  - consult with and work through appropriate institutional channels including responsible agencies and representative indigenous organisations;
  - promote and support policy and practical measures to protect the rights, livelihoods, lands and natural resources of indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation and/or in initial contact, consonant with WWF conservation priorities.
27. In instances where states or other stakeholders, including long-term residents, contest the rights of indigenous peoples, WWF will be ready to assist indigenous peoples to protect, through legally accepted mechanisms, their natural resource base, consistent with the achievement of WWF's Mission and subject to availability of resources.
28. Where the resource rights of indigenous peoples are challenged by national governments, private corporations, and/or other groups, and the defence of those rights are deemed relevant and significant to the achievement of its Mission, WWF will, in coordination and consultation with indigenous peoples' organizations and subject to availability of resources:
  - seek out and/or invest in the development of legitimate and transparent mechanisms to resolve conflicts at local, regional, national, and international levels, as appropriate;
  - seek to ensure that the primary rights and interests of indigenous peoples are well represented in such fora, including investment to inform and prepare indigenous peoples' representatives to take part in negotiations.
29. Consistent with WWF conservation priorities, WWF will promote and advocate for the implementation of Article 29 of the UN Declaration the Rights of Indigenous Peoples calling on States to establish programmes to fulfil "the right of indigenous peoples to conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources"; and Article 7 of the ILO Convention 169 calling on governments to take measures, in co-operation with the peoples concerned, to protect and preserve the environment of indigenous territories.



30. WWF will not promote or support, and may actively oppose, interventions which have not received the prior free and informed consent of affected indigenous communities, and/or would adversely impact - directly or indirectly - on the environment of indigenous peoples' territories, and/or would affect their rights.

This includes activities such as:

- economic or other development activities;
- natural resources exploitation;
- commercially oriented or academic research;
- resettlement of indigenous communities;
- creation of protected areas or imposition of restrictions on subsistence resource use;
- colonization within indigenous territories.

31. With respect to the existing knowledge of indigenous communities, prior to starting work in a particular area, WWF will establish agreements with the indigenous organizations representing local communities, to ensure that they are able to fully participate in decisions about the use of knowledge acquired in or about the area they inhabit, and equitably benefit from it. These agreements will explicitly determine the ways and conditions under which WWF will be allowed to use such knowledge.

32. In the context of its partnerships with organizations other than those specifically representing the interests of indigenous peoples (including national governments, donor agencies, private corporations, and non-governmental organizations), WWF will:

- ensure that such partnerships do not undermine, and if possible serve to actively promote, the basic human rights and customary resource rights of indigenous peoples;
- ensure that all relevant information developed through such partnerships and accessible to WWF, is shared with the appropriate representatives of indigenous peoples;
- ensure that any national or international advocacy or fundraising activity related to indigenous peoples will be undertaken in consultation with representatives of relevant indigenous peoples' organizations.

33. WWF recognizes that the resolution of problems related to indigenous peoples may require action in international fora, in addition to national interventions. In pursuit of the foregoing principles, and in order to enhance its own understanding of indigenous peoples' issues, and when consistent and relevant to its conservation objectives, WWF will:
- actively seek inclusion and engagement in relevant international, as well as national fora;
  - initiate an ongoing process of dialogue with indigenous peoples' groups on the principles for partnership proposed herein.
34. WWF commits itself to promoting nationally and internationally, whenever possible and appropriate, the implementation of all of these principles in the context of conservation actions within indigenous peoples' lands and territories.
35. WWF is committed to upholding the above principles, and the spirit that informs them, to the best of its abilities.

## Notes

- 1 In this position statement, as well as in other institutional documents, WWF refers to indigenous and tribal peoples using the definition of the ILO Convention 169. Unless explicitly said otherwise, the term "indigenous peoples" includes both concepts, "indigenous" and "tribal".
- 2 Adopted by the General Conference of the International Labour Organization on 27 June 1989.
- 3 As adopted by the UN General Assembly at its sixty-first session, September 2007 (UN document A/RES/61/295).

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## Indigenous Peoples and Conservation

Indigenous peoples are among the Earth's most important stewards and are critical to WWF's mission to build a future where human needs are met in harmony with nature. WWF is committed to working with indigenous peoples and organizations to conserve and sustainably use natural resources and to advocate on issues of shared concern. We believe that collaboration depends on lasting partnerships based on recognition of indigenous peoples' rights and interests, appreciation for their contributions to biodiversity conservation and understanding of the links between biological and cultural diversity.

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Protocole d'accord  
Entre les parties ci-après désignées

Le Ministère des Forêts et de la Faune, représenté par le Conservateur du Parc National de Boumba Bek, ci-dessous dénommé MINFOF, d'une part

Et, d'autre part

Les communautés autochtones Baka vivant à l'intérieur et autour de cette Aire Protégée, représentées par le président de l'Association des Kulawé BUMA'A KPODE ci-dessous dénommée Kulawé

L'acte de création du Parc National de Boumba Bek signé en octobre 2005 par Décret du Premier Ministre, Chef du Gouvernement du Cameroun précise, dans son article 3, les missions assignées à cette Aire protégée notamment « ***l'amélioration des conditions de vie des populations et le développement durable tant au niveau local, régional qu'international*** ». Quant à l'exercice des droits d'usage des populations, le texte stipule que « ***les modalités d'exercice par les populations de leurs droits d'usage doivent être élaborées selon un processus participatif*** » qui ne tient compte que des pratiques compatibles avec les objectifs d'utilisation durable des ressources naturelles. Par ailleurs, ce Décret prévoit « ***l'indemnisation des personnes victimes d'expropriation et occupant une portion dans les limites de cette Aire Protégée*** ».

Dans le cadre des efforts de mise en œuvre de ces dispositions et en rapport avec les engagements internationaux du Gouvernement Camerounais en matière de respects des droits des populations en général et des communautés autochtones en particulier, des recherches participatives sur le finage des communautés Baka de la zone de Boumba Bek ont été réalisées entre 2006 et 2008. Au terme de ces études, des données significatives ont été obtenues sur les différents usages coutumiers et les pratiques ancestrales de ces communautés de chasseurs-cueilleurs ainsi que sur les espaces et espèces qu'elles utilisent traditionnellement.

Sur la base de ces données et dans la logique du principe de Consentement Libre, Préalable et Eclairé (CLIP), une série d'activités destinées à faciliter la prise en compte effective des droits coutumiers des communautés Baka dans le processus d'aménagement de cette aire protégée ainsi que la sécurisation de ceux-ci dans le plan d'aménagement a été réalisée.

Des négociations en vue de l'exercice de ces droits ancestraux (usage, accès, résidence, etc.) des Baka ont été ainsi engagées entre les Pouvoirs Publics Camerounais et les communautés Baka concernées appuyées par certaines ONG.

Le présent protocole d'accord officialise les résolutions auxquelles se sont parvenues les deux parties et constituent le cadre de référence d'exercice desdits droits et de suivi de leur mise en œuvre ainsi que les modalités de participation des communautés autochtones dans l'aménagement global du Parc.

Ainsi, en application des dispositions internationales dont le Gouvernement de la République s'est engagé notamment celles :

- de la ***Convention sur la Diversité Biologique (CDB)*** :
  - dans son préambule dont les parties reconnaissent qu'un grand nombre de communautés locales et de populations autochtones dépendent étroitement et traditionnellement des ressources biologiques sur lesquelles sont fondées leurs traditions et qu'il est souhaitable d'assurer le partage équitable des

avantages découlant de l'utilisation des connaissances traditionnelles intéressant la conservation de la diversité biologique et l'utilisation durable de ses éléments

- dans son article 8 (J) qui stipule que sous réserve des dispositions de sa législation nationale, chaque Etat, respecte, préserve et maintient les connaissances, innovations et pratiques des communautés autochtones et locales qui incarnent des modes de vie traditionnels présentant un intérêt pour la conservation et l'utilisation durable de la diversité biologique et en favorise l'application sur une plus grande échelle, avec l'accord et la participation des dépositaires de ces connaissances, innovations et pratiques, et encourage le partage équitable des avantages découlant de l'utilisation de ces connaissances, innovations et pratique.
  - dans son article 10 (C) qui demande aux Etats de protéger et encourager l'usage coutumier des ressources biologiques conformément aux pratiques culturelles traditionnelles compatibles avec les impératifs de leur conservation ou de leur utilisation durable.
- du **Pacte International sur les Droits Civils et Politiques** qui, dans son article 1<sup>er</sup>, aliéna 2, stipule que « ... tous les peuples peuvent disposer librement de leurs richesses et de leurs ressources naturelles.... en aucun cas, un peuple ne pourra être privé de ses propres moyens de subsistance »
  - du Comité **sur l'Eradication de toute forme de discrimination raciale** dans sa recommandation XXIII qui exige aux Etats l'engagement de reconnaître et de protéger le droits des populations autochtones de posséder, de mettre en valeur, de contrôler et d'utiliser leurs terres, leurs ressources et leurs territoires communaux et, lorsqu'ils ont été privés des terres et territoires qui, traditionnellement, leur appartenaient ou, sinon, qu'ils habitaient ou utilisaient, sans leur consentement libre et informé, de prendre des mesures pour que ces terres et ces territoires leurs soient rendus. Ce n'est que dans les cas où il est factuellement impossible de le faire que le droit à la restitution devra être remplacé par le droit à une indemnisation juste, équitable et rapide. Cette indemnisation devra se faire, dans la mesure du possible sous forme de terres et territoires.
  - de la **convention 107** de l'OIT
    - dans son article 14 qui stipule que les droits de propriété et de possession sur les terres et territoires qu'ils occupent traditionnellement doivent être reconnus et les gouvernements en tant que de besoin prendre des mesures pour identifier les terres que les peuples intéressés occupent pour garantir la protection effective de leur droit de propriété et de possession
    - dans son article 16 (2) qui stipule que les peuples autochtones ne peuvent être déplacés qu'à titre exceptionnel et uniquement avec leur consentement libre et éclairé et précise des voies de recours existantes en cas de déplacement.
  - de la **convention 169** de l'OIT dans son article 5 qui précise qu'en appliquant ses dispositions, il faudra reconnaître et protéger les valeurs et les pratiques sociales, culturelles, religieuses et spirituelles de ces peuples et prendre dûment en considération la nature des problèmes qui se posent à eux, en tant que groupes comme en tant qu'individus

- de la **déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones** qui :
  - Dans son article 8(1) et (2) stipule que les autochtones, peuples ou individus, ont le droit de ne pas subir des assimilations forcées ou la destruction de leur culture et exige aux Etats de mettre en place des mécanismes de prévention et de réparation efficaces visant tout acte ayant pour but ou pour effet de les déposséder de leurs terres, territoires et ressources.
  - Quant à l'article 10, il est mentionné que les peuples autochtones ne peuvent être enlevés de force de leurs terres ou territoires. Aucune réinstallation ne peut avoir lieu sans le consentement préalable - donné librement et en connaissance de cause - des peuples autochtones concernés et un accord sur une indemnisation juste et équitable et, lorsque cela est possible la faculté de retour
  - L'article 20 (2) de cette déclaration précise que les peuples autochtones privés de leurs moyens de subsistance et de développement ont droit à une indemnisation juste et équitable.
  - Quant à l'article 24 de cet instrument, il stipule que les Peuples autochtones ont droit à leur pharmacopée traditionnelle et de conserver leur pratique médicale notamment de préserver leurs plantes médicinales, animaux, minéraux d'intérêt vital
  - Pour l'article 25 de cette déclaration, les peuples autochtones ont le droit de conserver et de renforcer leurs liens spirituels particuliers avec les terres, territoires, eaux et zones maritimes côtières et autres ressources qu'ils possèdent ou occupent et utilisent traditionnellement, et d'assumer leurs responsabilités en la matière à l'égard des générations futures
  - L'article 26 (1) de la déclaration précise clairement que les peuples autochtones ont droit aux terres, territoires et ressources qu'ils possèdent et occupent traditionnellement ou qu'ils ont utilisés ou acquis et, dans son aliéna 3, il exige aux États de s'accorder à la reconnaissance et la protection juridiques à ces terres, territoires et ressources. Cette reconnaissance se fait en respectant dûment les coutumes, traditions et régimes fonciers des peuples autochtones concernés
  - De même, l'article 28 (1) de cette déclaration reconnaît aux Peuples autochtones le droit à la réparation, par le biais, notamment, de la restitution ou, lorsque cela n'est pas possible, d'une indemnisation juste, correcte et équitable pour les terres, territoires et ressources qu'ils possédaient traditionnellement ou occupaient ou utilisaient et qui ont été confisqués, pris, occupés, exploités ou donné librement en connaissance de cause.
  - Dans son aliéna 2, cet article stipule que, sauf si les peuples concernés en décident librement d'une autre façon, l'indemnisation se fait sous forme de terres, de territoires et de ressources équivalents par leur qualité, étendue et leur régime juridique...
  - Quant à l'article 30, il est clairement stipulé qu'il ne peut y avoir d'activités militaires sur les terres ou territoires des peuples autochtones, à moins que ces activités soient justifiées par une menace importante contre l'intérêt public ou qu'elle ait été décidée en accord avec les peuples autochtones concernés, ou demandée par ces derniers.
  
- de la **Charte Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples** dans son article 21 prévoit la libre disposition des peuples de leurs richesses et de leurs ressources et précise que, en aucun cas, un peuple ne peut en être privé et que la protection des peuples d'Afrique à la terre et leurs ressources est fondamentale pour leur survie.

- de la **Constitution de la République du Cameroun** dans son article 45 qui les traités ou accords internationaux régulièrement approuvés ou ratifiés ont, dès leur publication, une autorité supérieure à celle des lois, sous réserve, pour chaque accord ou traité, de son application par l'autre partie. De même qu'il est stipulé dans son préambule que cette loi fondamentale constitue une base de référence pour la protection des droits de minorités et dispose que: « *l'Etat assure la protection des minorités et préserve les droits des populations autochtones conformément à la loi* ».

Ainsi, les communautés Baka et les Pouvoirs Publics Camerounais,

- conscients du fait que la gestion de l'environnement, la conservation de la biodiversité et la nécessité de garantir la survie des peuples autochtones sont des enjeux prioritaires pour le Cameroun
- conscients du fait que l'espace forestier dit Boumba Bek a fait l'objet de classement comme Parc National par acte du Premier Ministre du 06 Octobre 2005 sous le n° 2005/3284/PM
- conscients des divergences qui existent entre les instruments juridiques internationaux qui garantissent aux communautés l'exercice de leurs droits traditionnels et la reconnaissance de leur droit de propriété et de possession d'une part et, d'autre part, certaines lois nationales notamment le code forestier (interdiction de toute activité humaine dans le Parc National) et la loi foncière (propriété des terres à l'Etat) ainsi que bon nombre de leurs textes subséquents
- conscients des résultats et recommandations des différentes études menées dans le cadre des efforts de conservation et de gestion durable des ressources du Parc National de Boumba Bek d'une part et du respect des droits coutumiers des communautés autochtones en matière de chasse, de pêche, de collecte des produits forestiers, de pratiques culturelles et culturelles entre autres
- conscients que les communautés autochtones Baka dépendent étroitement et traditionnellement des ressources biologiques contenues dans cette Aire Protégées et sa périphérie sur lesquelles ils fondent leurs subsistances et leurs traditions et que ces ressources leur appartiennent
- conscients du fait que l'usage coutumiers et les pratiques traditionnelles des communautés autochtones Baka sont essentiellement pour leur survie et se sont toujours exercés de manière durable
- conscients que l'utilisation durable et la conservation de la diversité biologique ainsi que de l'environnement global de cet espace ne pourront se faire qu'en prenant en compte les défis liés au développement social, culturel et économique de ces populations
- conscients de la nécessité de respecter et d'appliquer le principe de Consentement, Libre, Informé et Préalable avant la mise en œuvre de tout projet pouvant affecter les communautés en général et plus particulièrement dans le cadre de l'aménagement de ce Parc National
- conscients du fait que la politique gouvernementale n'a pour autre ambitions que l'amélioration des conditions de vie des populations et que, pour ce faire, celles-ci qui vivent dans une précarité notoire ont besoin d'utiliser librement leurs ressources, leurs terres et territoires.
- Conscients du fait que les droits humains sont non hiérarchiques, indéniables, indivisibles et interdépendants.

Ont convenu de ce qui suit :

#### **Article 1<sup>er</sup> : De l'objet du Protocole**



Le présent Protocole d'accord a pour objet la sécurisation des droits coutumiers et traditionnels des communautés autochtones Baka dans le plan d'aménagement du Parc National de Boumba Bek et la définition des modalités en vue de l'exercice de ces droits coutumiers et traditionnels par les membres de ces communautés dans le Parc National de Boumba Bek et sa périphérie ainsi que les modalités d'implication et de participation de ces populations dans l'aménagement de cette Aire protégée.

#### **Article 2 : De la durée du protocole**

Ce protocole a une durée équivalente à celle de l'aménagement du Parc National de Boumba Bek dans le cadre de la collaboration entre les parties. Toutefois, les communautés continuent indéfiniment à exercer leurs droits ancestraux reconnus même après les opérations d'aménagement du Parc.

#### **Article 3 : Des communautés autochtones concernées**

Sont concernées par le présent protocole, les communautés autochtones Baka vivant autour et du Parc National de Boumba-Bek et menant ou ayant mené des activités traditionnelles dans cet espace forestier. Il s'agit plus spécifiquement des populations Baka des villages allant de Ndongo dans l'Arrondissement de Moloundou à Ngatto Ancien dans l'Arrondissement de Yokadouma en passant par Salapoumbé et aussi des communautés Baka vivant dans le secteur de Messok et Ngoyla ainsi que celles installées au sein de cette Aire Protégée.

#### **Article 4 : Des interlocuteurs des parties**

Pour les communautés autochtones Baka, l'Association des Kulawé dénommée Buma'a Kpodé est l'interlocuteur valable. Elle est représentée par son Président ou son représentant en cas d'empêchement tandis que le Conservateur de cette Aire Protégée est l'interlocuteur pour les Pouvoirs Publics.

#### **Article 5 : De la prise de décision**

Dans le cadre de ce protocole, les décisions se prennent par consensus, c'est-à-dire en l'absence de toute objection de l'une des parties, et tiennent compte de la culture Baka qui nécessite entre autres préalables des consultations à l'interne et de la concertation entre les membres des communautés. Le processus de prise des décisions se fait selon le principe de Consentement libre, préalable et bien informé des populations concernées.

#### **Article 6 : De la participation des communautés Baka dans l'aménagement du Parc**

L'implication des communautés Baka dans l'élaboration, la révision, l'exécution et suivi évaluation du plan d'aménagement du Parc National de Boumba Bek doit être garantie et effective. Tous les programmes et plans relatifs à la gestion du Parc sont élaborés et mis en œuvre dans une collaboration et une concertation étroite entre les parties. Aucune opération, outre celles relevant des missions régaliennes de l'Etat, ne pourra être envisagée sans l'implication et la participation des dites communautés.

#### **Article 7 : Des obligations des communautés Baka**

Les Baka, individu ou communauté, ont l'obligation de :

- désigner leurs représentants dans le cadre des activités stratégiques, techniques et de communication en lien avec l'aménagement du Parc. Ces représentants peuvent se constituer en une ou plusieurs associations
- mettre librement sur pied et selon leurs propres normes, culture et usages, une ou plusieurs associations devant les représenter dans le cadre de ce protocole d'entente et dans les instances de prise de décisions relatives à la gestion du Parc National de Boumba Bek. Dans cet effort d'organisation, les Baka bénéficient de l'appui des

administrations compétentes (MINATD, MINAS, MINFOF, etc.) et de l'assistance technique des ONG

- informer les autorités compétentes sur toute pratique contraire aux impératifs de gestion durable observés dans leurs zones d'actions et de dénoncer tout acte ou cas d'exploitation illégale des ressources dans le Parc et sa périphérie
- éviter toute méthode allant à l'encontre des principes d'utilisation durable des ressources contenues dans le Parc et sa périphérie notamment l'abattage des arbres hôtes, la pêche par empoisonnement des eaux, la chasse à l'arme à feu, etc.
- agir dans le cadre de leurs activités traditionnelles selon leur propre calendrier et d'informer les pouvoirs publics en cas d'une éventuelle modification de celui-ci
- éviter toute collaboration avec les élites, les autorités, les villageois, les safaris, les concessionnaires, etc. allant dans le sens de l'exploitation illégale des ressources forestières et fauniques et d'en dénoncer les auteurs.
- respecter leurs engagements vis-à-vis des autres parties prenantes en général et des pouvoirs publics en particulier dans le cadre de la gestion du Parc
- donner ou refuser leur consentement de manière libre, éclairé et préalable pour tout projet les concernant ou pouvant les affecter d'une manière ou d'une autre
- suivre l'exécution des activités relatives à l'aménagement du Parc et leurs meneurs et porter leur jugement sur leur pertinence, leur importance et les faiblesses observées dans leur réalisation

#### **Article 8 : Des obligations des Pouvoirs Publics**

Les pouvoirs publics ont quant à eux pour obligations de :

- ✓ appuyer la mise en place des associations des Baka et leur renforcement
- ✓ respecter le calendrier des activités traditionnelles des communautés
- ✓ respecter les droits des communautés notamment leurs droits culturels, le droit à l'identité, le droit à l'éducation et la santé, le droit à la participation et à la consultation, le droit à la restitution, l'indemnisation et la compensation, le droit à la terres, aux territoires et aux ressources, le droit de propriété et de possession, le droit d'accès aux avantages de manière juste, rapide et équitable, le droit à la protection, le droit à la survie, le droit au développement, etc.
- ✓ faciliter le processus de mise en place des associations autochtones relevant du Parc National de Boumba Bek
- ✓ associer les Baka dans toutes les opérations tant stratégiques, techniques que de communication relevant de l'aménagement du Parc
- ✓ se rapprocher des communautés ou y être présents pour développer l'esprit de confiance entre les pouvoirs publics et les communautés
- ✓ faire observer une attitude positive et exemplaire de ses agents dans l'exercice de leurs missions
- ✓ apporter toute information, éducation et formation nécessaires au renforcement de la participation des communautés dans le processus de gestion du Parc
- ✓ renforcer les capacités techniques, organisationnelles, institutionnelles et financières des communautés
- ✓ promouvoir les activités relatives au développement social, culturel et économique des populations Baka conformément à leur sollicitation et dans le respect de leur culture
- ✓ faire appel à toute personne physique ou morale, de concert avec les Baka, pour la bonne marche de la collaboration entre les pouvoirs publics et les communautés
- ✓ faciliter l'accès des Baka, individu ou communauté, dans les services sociaux de base notamment la santé, l'éducation, la justice

- ✓ promouvoir l'emploi chez les Baka à travers le développement issu de la collaboration avec les autres acteurs tant du secteur public que du secteur privé ou de la société civile
- ✓ faciliter les partenariats entre ces communautés et les administrations techniques publiques et privées
- ✓ faciliter la mise en place des cadres de concertation, de discussions et de collaboration entre les pouvoirs publics et les communautés et leurs partenaires (ONG et autres) dans le cadre de l'aménagement du Parc
- ✓ inscrire dans les plans d'actions annuels les activités relatives à l'exercice des droits traditionnels des communautés autochtones Baka et les accompagner, si nécessaire et à la demande de ces dernières, dans leur mise en œuvre
- ✓ supporter financièrement, matériellement et techniquement les communautés Baka ou leurs représentants en vue de leur participation effective et efficiente dans l'aménagement du Parc
- ✓ utiliser prioritairement l'expertise locale ou endogène des Baka dans les opérations d'aménagement
- ✓ valoriser les connaissances traditionnelles des communautés Baka
- ✓ rendre l'aménagement du Parc un cadre incitatif pour les communautés Baka en ce qui concerne leurs préoccupations
- ✓ promouvoir les activités alternatives chez les Baka de concert avec ces derniers
- ✓ vulgariser auprès des populations tout texte ayant trait à l'aménagement du Parc et aux obligations et droits de ces communautés
- ✓ expliquer les rôles de chaque acteur dans le processus d'aménagement de cette Aire Protégée
- ✓ promouvoir le droit à la terre des Baka dans les villages riverains du Parc National Boumba Bek en termes de reconnaissance de leurs villages et de leurs chefferies traditionnelles
- ✓ accompagner les Baka dans les activités permettant de les rendre autonomes notamment dans les projets générateurs de revenus (agriculture, élevage, pêche, petits métiers et autres emplois)
- ✓ mettre sur pied une plate forme de concertation Baka, services de conservation, ONG d'accompagnement pour le suivi-évaluation et contrôle. Cette plate forme se rencontre semestriellement.
- ✓ Faciliter la création et la mise en place des instances endogènes de surveillance au niveau des villages
- ✓ Favoriser toute collaboration entre les populations Baka et les autorités compétentes et parties prenantes pour dénonciation directe ou/et indirecte (MINFOF, MINAS MINATD, ONG, etc.)
- ✓ Appuyer la structuration des communautés en vue du suivi approprié des activités d'exploitation des ressources forestières, fauniques et halieutiques avec le concours de l'Administration ((MINFOF, MINAS MINATD, etc.) et des ONG
- ✓

#### **Article 9 : Des obligations des parties**

Les deux parties ont l'obligation de :

- respecter les clauses contenues dans ce protocole et toute autre clause arrêtée d'un commun accord dans le cadre de la gestion du Parc
- collaborer l'une et l'autre partie pour la bonne marche des activités d'aménagement du Parc et de ses missions vis-à-vis des communautés
- partager ou échanger toutes les informations intéressant la gestion du Parc à leur possession respective

**Article 10: De la gestion des conflits et des voies de recours**

Une instance chargée spécifiquement de la gestion des conflits (prévention et règlement) sera mise en place d'un commun accord entre les parties. Les membres de cet organe relèveront également des pouvoirs publics et des communautés Baka élargi à d'autres acteurs en cas de nécessité ou de besoin.

Pour tout différend entre les services de la conservation et les Baka découlant de l'exécution du présent Protocole d'accord, la négociation et le dialogue seront privilégiés.

Toutefois en cas de désaccord il va falloir se référer à l'arbitrage de la plateforme de concertation présentée dans l'article 4 ci-dessus, si le désaccord persiste, les parties se référeront à l'arbitrage d'une personne neutre.

Si l'insatisfaction de l'une ou toutes les parties se poursuit, recours est fait aux juridictions compétentes pour arbitrage.

**Article 11 : De l'assistance technique et l'Appui conseil**

Les parties bénéficient de l'accompagnement technique des partenaires au développement dans le cadre des appuis apportés par la coopération internationale et des Organisations Non Gouvernementales nationales et locales ainsi que des autres administrations techniques.

**Article 12 : De la révision du protocole**

Le présent Protocole d'Accord qui prend effet à partir de sa date de signature ne peut être amendé par des accords spécifiques ou abrogé que d'un commun par les deux parties.

**Article 13 :****Article 14 : De la validité et l'entrée en vigueur**

Les dispositions de ce protocole prennent effet à compter de sa date de signature et sa durée est équivalente à celle du plan d'aménagement du Parc.

**Article 15 : Du suivi de la mise en œuvre du protocole**

Le suivi de la mise en œuvre du présent protocole qui est assuré concomitamment par chacune des deux parties concerne tous les aspects liés aux activités d'aménagement du Parc.

Le partage ou l'échange des informations se fera dans le cadre de la plate forme de collaboration et de concertation entre les parties ou à travers tout autre canal approprié à cet effet adopté d'un commun accord entre les parties.

Ce suivi qui se fait sur la base d'un calendrier ou plan d'actions participativement élaboré tient compte des programmes et priorités de chaque des parties qui en désignent des responsables à cet effet.

**Article 16 : Du cadre organisationnel/institutionnel d'exécution, du suivi-évaluation du protocole**

Une instance fonctionnelle de collaboration, de concertation, de discussions et d'échanges entre les leaders autochtones Baka ou leurs organisations et les responsables des pouvoirs publics sera mise sur pied et les membres de cet organe tiendront ses assises tous les six mois sans préjudice de la tenue des sessions extraordinaires convoquées en cas de besoin.

La coordination des activités de la plate forme est assurée par le Conservateur du Parc alors que la présidence des sessions et les lieux de ces assises se feront à tour de role et consensuelle sur la base d'un calendrier adopté d'un commun accord entre les parties.

Le calendrier de ces rencontres est arrêté d'un commun accord entre les parties au début de chaque exercice, soit lors de la planification des activités à entreprendre dans le cadre de l'aménagement du Parc. Ce calendrier tient compte des priorités de chacune des parties et, autant que possible, de la culture des communautés autochtones concernées.

**Article 17 : Des mécanismes de contrôle du respect des règles et normes établies**

Chaque partie met en place son mécanisme interne de contrôle du respect des normes et règles établies. Le produit issu de ce mécanisme est débattu pendant les sessions de la plate forme et/ou lors de toute autre occasion favorable à cet effet.

Le contrôle qui est effectué indépendamment par chaque partie concerne à la fois les actions des membres des communautés et celles des agents ou représentants des pouvoirs publics et des autres acteurs (exploitants forestiers, safaris, partenaires au développement, élites, etc.).

A cet effet, l'accès à l'information de l'une ou toutes les parties est libre pour des besoins de vérification ainsi qu'à tout élément de preuve de fait.

#### **Article 18 : Des sanctions**

Par le terme sanction, il est compris les récompenses et les punitions.

En cas de violation des termes de ce protocole ou lors de certains actes de bravoures ou de bonnes pratiques par l'une ou l'autre des parties, les sanctions ci-dessous sont applicables :

##### **a) aux communautés Baka**

Les sanctions qui sont appliquées au niveau coutumier et, en cas de persistance, le recours à la réglementation officielle se résument ainsi qu'il suit :

- Avertissement par les Kobo
- Plainte à Edjengui
- Dénonciation pour application des sanctions prévues par les lois nationales.

Quant aux récompenses, elles concernent les actes positifs et leurs impacts dans le cadre de l'aménagement du Parc et vont des félicitations écrites aux primes en nature ou/et en espèces et autres avantages ainsi que toutes autres formes de récompenses légales ou décidées d'accord parties.

##### **b) aux agents des pouvoirs publics**

En ce qui concerne les actes orchestrés par les agents des pouvoirs publics, en cas de non respect des clauses de ce protocole, les sanctions sont celles relevant du règlement intérieur de leur service et de la réglementation en vigueur.

De même, pour les actes de bravoure enregistrés par ces agents, ils bénéficient des récompenses allant des félicitations écrites aux primes en nature ou/et en espèces et autres avantages.

**Nota :** Les sanctions infligées dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de ce protocole sont publiées ou portées à la connaissance des parties.

#### **Article 19 : De la plate forme de collaboration, de concertation et de négociations entre les parties**

Après concertation entre les parties, il est créé une plate forme fonctionnelle de collaboration et de négociation regroupant, outre ces dernières, d'autres parties prenantes au processus de gestion ou d'administration du Parc notamment les autorités administratives, les responsables des administrations publiques, les ONG nationales et locales, le secteur privé, les partenaires au développement dans le cadre de la coopération internationale.

Fait à \_\_\_\_\_, le \_\_\_\_\_

Les parties

Pour les Communautés Baka

Pour les Pouvoirs Publics

## MAPPING OF RESOURCE USE AREA BY THE BAKA PYGMIES INSIDE AND AROUND BOUMBA-BEK NATIONAL PARK IN SOUTHEAST CAMEROON, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BAKA'S CUSTOMARY RIGHTS

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**ABSTRACT** In the beginning of the year 2000 the Cameroon government created several protected areas within the framework of efforts aimed at biodiversity conservation in southeast Cameroon, one of which is the Boumba-Bek National Park. The creation of this park restricted the rights of the Baka indigenous hunter-gatherers living in the region to use the resource there. To take into consideration adequately the customary rights of this indigenous people in the management and development of this protected area, we carried out scientific studies as part of investigation by the WWF Cameroon on how the Baka use this forest space. Results of these studies revealed that the Baka have been using the forest for various purposes for a long time. Resources used by the Baka in this forest are very important for them economically, socially and culturally. To accommodate the Baka customary rights to access the forest resources, the management plan for Boumba-Bek National Park should be partly modified to elaborate sufficiently the actuality of Baka traditional use of land and resources.

**Key Words:** Indigenous peoples; Hunter-gatherers; Protected area; Southeast Cameroon.

### INTRODUCTION

For almost 20 years, discussions on indigenous peoples (IPs) have taken center stage at the international level. With this growing global attention, the place and rights of these populations in relation to the management and conservation of forest resources is most recurrent (Persoon et al, 2004; Aquino, 2004). There is controversy, meanwhile, especially concerning the customary rights of IPs in connection with the creation and management of protected areas (Stevens, 1997; Nelson & Hossack, 2003; Schmidt-Soltau, 2003; 2004; 2009; Colchester et al., 2008). Debates center on, among others issues, the foundation of these rights, the participation of IPs in the establishment and management of protected areas, and compatibility of their use of natural resources in relation to conservation principles.

In some parts of the world, especially in Asia and North America, the debate has become popular over the years thanks to scientific works on the issues. In Central Africa on the contrary, scientific investigations on the ground is still

insufficient for the local people and agencies to act for the customary rights of IPs. In a bid to throw more light on the issues that are debated and above all to assist the Cameroon government to engage in the process aimed at firmly including the customary rights of IPs in the management of protected areas, scientific investigations were carried out on many aspects including use of space and resources by the Pygmies in some protected areas, such as Campo Ma'an, Dja, Boumba-Bek, and Nki.

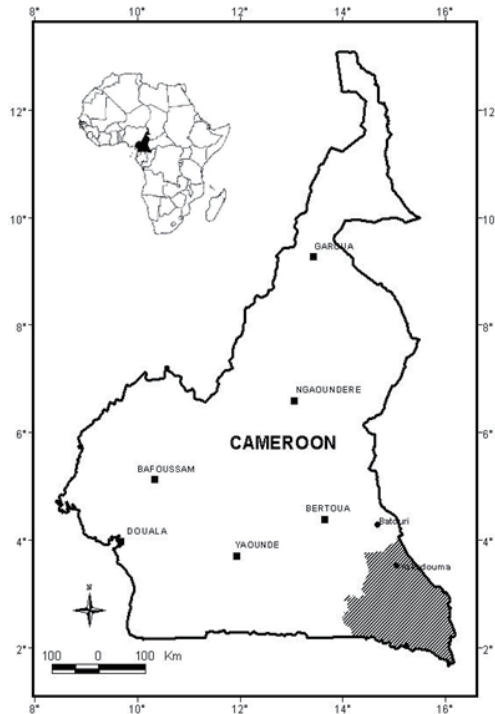
The management plan is supposed to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to recognize and protect certain customary rights of the Baka and to ensure their participation in the planning and management entities. To make this possible, and to take into account the wishes of Baka to safeguard their customary rights in the protected area, several organizations have initiated a process which aims at protecting the customary rights of the Baka in the management plans for Boumba-Bek and Nki National Parks (NPs).

This process includes, among others, mapping of Baka resource and space uses, advocacy, reinforcing organizational capacities, negotiations, etc. In order to establish a scientific basis for its contribution to the process, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Cameroon commissioned a study aimed at identifying all contours of the use of Boumba-Bek and Nki forest massif by the Baka. This paper presents some of its results, which will be incorporated into the forthcoming management plan, and from which planning and co-management efforts will be pursued.

## STUDY SITE AND PEOPLE

Boumba-Bek and Nki NPs are located in southeast Cameroon. The geographical region which is the subject of WWF Cameroon Southeast Project covers 23,000 km<sup>2</sup> of tropical moist forests (Fig. 1). A part of the Congo Basin, the area harbors high densities of forest wildlife with more than 40 species of large mammals, 120 fish species, and 305 bird species (Nzoo Dongmo et al., 2002). The area is inhabited by about 110,000 people, comprising Bantu- and Ubangian-speaking agriculturalists, Baka Pygmy hunter-gatherers, and immigrants from various parts of Cameroon and neighboring countries. The Bantu and other agricultural groups, the Baka, and migrants constitute 60%, 25% and 15% of the total population, respectively. The northern and eastern part of Boumba-Bek NP and its buffer zone where this study was conducted contains 23,269 inhabitants, composed of 49% mostly Bantu and other agriculturalists, 29% Baka, and 22% immigrants<sup>(1)</sup>. Relationships between the Bantu villagers and Baka are complex, but in most areas, the latter are marginalized and dominated by the former (Joiris, 2001; 2003; Abéga & Bigombé, 2006).

Traditionally, both the agriculturalists and Baka have "acephalous" societies, with loose social and organizational structures. Baka Pygmies have been predominantly hunter-gatherers. Before the 1950s, they were leading a nomadic life style in small camps in the forest (Althabe, 1965). Since the colonial period, almost all populations have been concentrated in about a hundred small villages



**Fig. 1.** Research area in southeast Cameroon.

along the main roads. Following change in the political as well as economic situations, Baka have more or less become semi-sedentary agriculturists who also depend on hunting and gathering for their livelihood. The main economic activity of the Bantu people is slash-and-burn agriculture, in which they grow plantain, cassava, maize, groundnuts, as well as cacao as cash crop. Hunting, fishing and gathering of non-timber forests products are also important for them. Some are employed in other sectors, such as government services, logging, sport hunting, and mining<sup>(2)</sup>. Animal husbandry is poorly developed. Compared with other regions of Cameroon, the people in this forest region are particularly poor. Poverty in the region is contrasted with its biological and mineral richness (Defo, 2005), for the people derive little economic benefit from these resources.

#### INADEQUATE INVOLVEMENT OF THE BAKA INTO THE LAND USE PLANNING

In the wake of prescriptions of the Rio de Janeiro Conference in 1992 related to the preservation of biodiversity, the Cameroon government committed to conserve 30% of its national territory (Law No. 94/01). Efforts aimed at



concretizing these commitments were made manifest, amongst others, through the putting in place of several conservation projects, and the establishment of many protected areas, through the adoption of a land use plan for Southeast Cameroon (Decree No. 95/678).

Southeastern Cameroon caught the attention of conservation organizations and the government, thanks to its rich biodiversity. As early as 1995 the area was demarcated for protection. This management option was later confirmed by the Cameroon government in establishing a regulatory framework for land use in southeastern Cameroon. This zoning framework made provision for the establishment of several wildlife reserves in the region, one of which was the Boumba-Bek NP. It was axiomatic then, that plans to create wildlife reserves in this region would restrict access of local people to certain areas. As the government pursued its zoning plan in conformity with biodiversity conservation, the government, supported by WWF and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) proceeded with the classification of forestland in southeastern Cameroon between 1999 and 2001. In conformity with requirements of Decree (No. 135/D/MINEF/CAB) spelling out procedures for zoning the forests in the permanent forest domain, the zoning went through the following main stages: sharing of information with the public, sensitization of administrative authorities, awareness raising and consultation with local populations, holding commission meetings on the Divisional level, and the completion of the zoning document. This process was rounded off by prime ministerial decrees signed in 2001 for establishment of Lobéké NP, and in 2005 for establishment of Boumba-Bek and Nki NPs.

These decrees finally divided the forest into permanent and non-permanent forest domains in conformity with Article 20 of Law No. 94/01. The permanent forest domain, which covers more than three fifths of the total surface area which is subject of the project, 3 council forests, 10 sport hunting zones formerly allocated to 22 logging concessions, and 3 national parks (Lobéké, Boumba-Bek, and Nki). The non-permanent forest domain is made up principally of agro-forestry zones, with 14 community hunting zones superimposed on them (Fig. 2).

Even though we appreciate efforts made by different actors, from the technocrats who designed the zoning plan to the authorities that created the regulatory framework specifically for this exercise, it is important to raise concerns on the unsatisfactory involvement of the Baka hunter-gatherers in the zoning process. During the process, the recognition of “human occupation of territory” was limited only to clear indicators of human inhabitation such as settlements, farming fields and fallows that can be identified by aerial photographs and satellite images (Côté, 1993).

This method can distinguish a village area where almost all agro-pastoral activities are permitted to some extent, the non-permanent forest domain and areas where access is restricted by regulation, such as national parks and sport hunting zones. But, this procedure can only take into account the land used by sedentary farmers, and the mode of occupation and exploitation by the semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers were largely invisible and ignored. Beyond this technical shortcoming, one has to raise concerns regarding the feasibility of

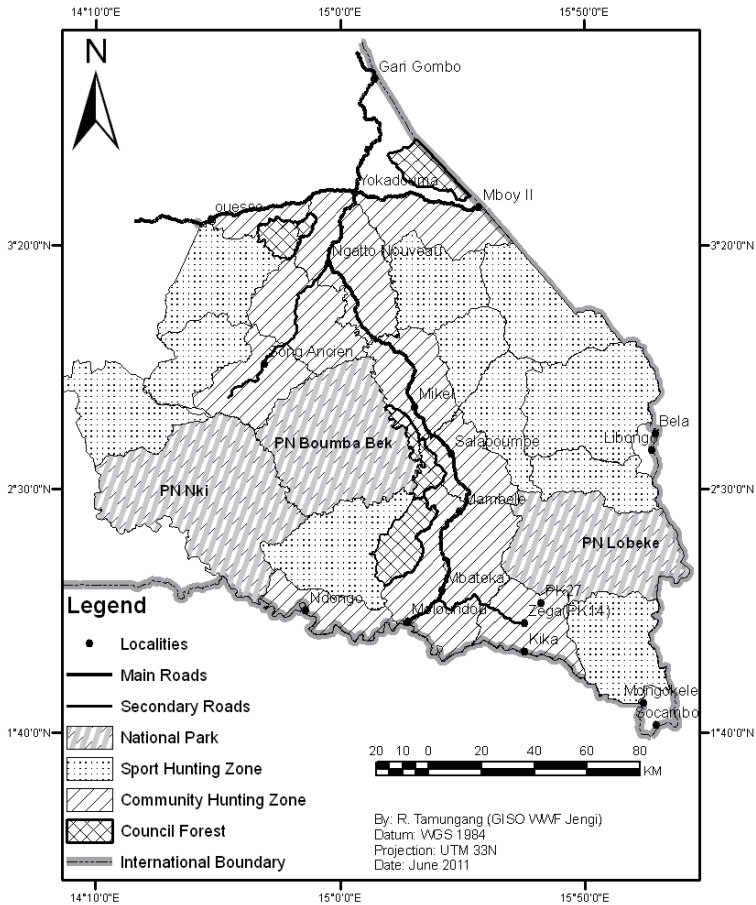


Fig. 2 Land-use classification in southeast Cameroon.

carrying out zoning in an area like southeastern Cameroon, where people live in the forest that is a continuum consisting of farmlands, and hunting, fishing and gathering fields connected by a network of trails (Karsenty & Marie, 1998: 164).

In addition, considering dimensions beyond the zoning code that governs the actual classification of the fields (Decree No. 135/D/MINEF/CAB), we realize that the zoning process did not guarantee an optimal involvement of the Baka in the process. It was difficult for the zoning operation to take into account the specificities of the Baka who hardly understand French, rarely frequent public places, and are less inclined to frankly express their points of view in the presence of their Bantu brethren. Public notices must be written in French and published in the press, posted at the Senior Divisional and Sub-divisional offices, town halls and delegation in charge of forests in the region concerned

(Article 1 of Decision No. 135/D/MINEF/CAB). Letters that convened awareness raising meetings with the local people must be addressed to village chiefs, who are the Bantu or other farmers. Despite efforts of the field teams to involve Baka people in the zoning process, given the above procedure of regulatory framework, the participation of Baka in the zoning process was very small. Indeed, as previously stated, the creation of national parks implies a significant restriction of the rights of people in the space concerned, laying down detailed rules for application of wildlife laws. Article 2 of Decree No. 95/466/PM declared the prohibition of any intervention that can alter the appearance, composition and evolution of the protected area, including hunting, farming, and logging.

In this situation, the Government of Cameroon proposed to develop a management plan which recognizes the customary rights of the Baka and to ensure their participation in the planning and management process. As mentioned above, this process includes mapping of Baka's land and resource uses, which will be a scientific basis for negotiations with other stakeholders and advocacy of their customary rights.

## METHODS

We collected data on Baka land and resource uses in the field research for a total of 216 days between March 2006 and July 2007. Methods used to collect data included participatory mapping, focal group discussions, interviews, and direct observation.

Twenty-one semi-sedentary settlements located near major roads, usually at the end of the Bantu villages, in the study area were visited by the research team. The team explained to the Baka the aim of the research, and sought their consent to facilitate the participatory mapping process, then carried out a census of the population, discussed their activities, some momentous historical events and social organization or any other information that was related to the use of land and resources in the forest, in particular in the national park area. When trekking with the Baka into the forests, given the close relationship between Baka and their Bantu neighbors, the Bantu people designated by the Baka accompanied the team in the participatory rapid appraisal mapping and expeditions in the forest.

For each camp, field research was organized between 6 to 11 days per settlement depending on the distance and resource space covered, and we obtained geo-referenced data on Baka land and resource use using Global Positioning System (GPS) and/or the Cyber Tracker, in particular in the forest on the side of national parks. The Baka people accompanying us explained to us the importance of each land and resource visited, and we tape recorded these accounts, or wrote them down in a notebook. At the end of each day, a group discussion enabled us to clarify any misunderstanding and to correct errors.

Then, we estimated the degree of penetration in the following way: (1) We recorded the signs of activities on the trail from the departure point towards

the interior of the forest, including hunting camps, fishing camps, places for gathering non-timber forest products such as honey, *Irvingia gabonensis* nuts, *Baillonella toxisperma* fruits, medical plants, etc., using the GPS, guided by a participatory map previously drawn in cooperation with the Baka in the village. (2) We classified signs of activities and transferred the recorded geo-referenced data into ArcView software, and processed to generate thematic maps. (3) We then estimated the area of the penetration by Baka activities, clipping the forest into two areas mechanically by distance from the nearest sign of activities, namely areas in extents of 0–3 km from the nearest signs, which we will call the “high penetration area,” and areas within 3–9 km from the nearest signs, which we will call the “low penetration area<sup>(3)</sup>.”

Adding to this geographical analysis, we strove to understand the history of the exploitation and use of land and resources. One of our major focuses was the continuity and change in the Baka use of forest land and resources: for example, why one space is no longer used while other space is still used, why a certain trail is more frequently used than other trails. Through these attempts, we tried to understand how Baka communities could organize themselves in order to use the forest resources in a better way. The results of these informal interviews will be shown in the Discussion section to compliment the abovementioned geographical analysis.

## RESULTS

The places the Baka stay in the forest are not haphazardly chosen. Around the forest camps, we generally found a watercourse from which they fetched water. Staying at one such camp, they go to hunt, fish, and gather other non-timber forest products. The same area is used for other activities simultaneously or successively, whereas others are subjected to a single activity. Figs. 3 & 4 reflect the different but overlapping distribution of different forest resources used by the Baka.

The total surface area of strong penetration area was estimated to be about 3,420 km<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 4; Table 1). In this area, trails connect different forest camps to others, and to their settlements situated along the main roads. Along these networks of trails, forest camps are set, from which Baka manage resources and space through a variety of activities. The Baka there conduct various land and resource use, sometimes interwoven and or superimposed, such as camping along rivers and stream, hunting small and medium-sized games, gathering non-timber forest products, and fishing, as well as conducting agricultural activities in the fields and conducting rituals in the sacred sites.

Snare hunting is very often practiced in this area. The penetration into the remote areas from the settlements may be caused in certain cases by the decline of wild animal population in the nearby forests. Increase in number of migrants from different regions may have also deepened the penetration into the forest.

In the area near the settlement along the motor roads, there is a competition between hunting-gathering and agricultural activities. Therefore, the Baka, and

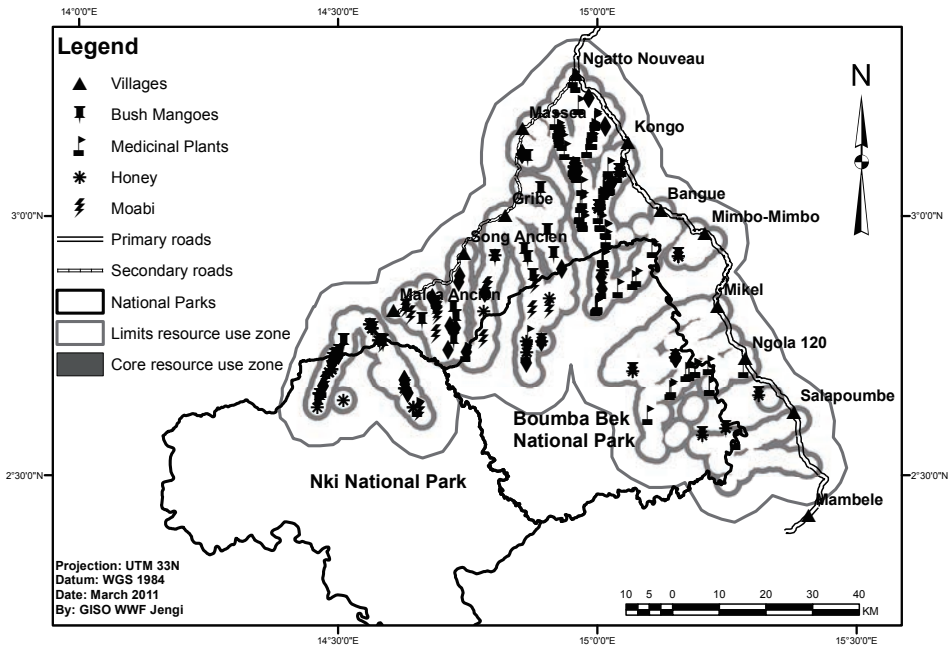
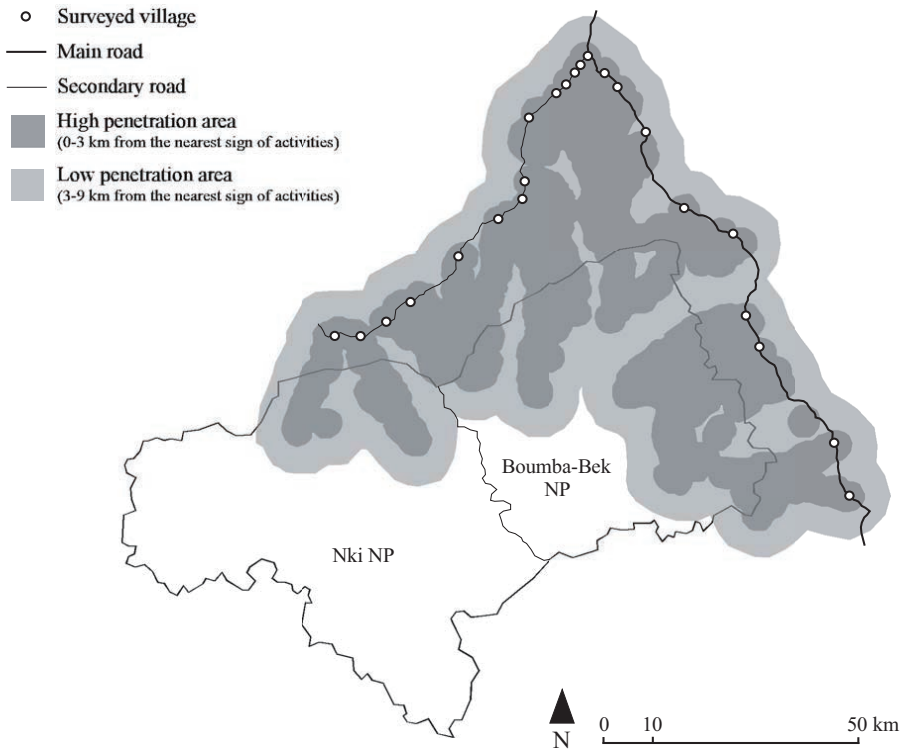


Fig. 3. Mapping of the land and resource use of the Baka inside and around Boumba-Bek and Nki NPs.

the Bantu cultivators in particular, who find themselves in a dilemma, for example, whether to reserve the bush mango trees (*Irvingia* spp.) and moabi trees (*Baillonella toxisperma*, producing edible fruit and oil) for gathering resources, or to clear them for cultivation. Much of the land in this area is now devoted to cultivation and dwelling spaces, such as cocoa and food crops plantations and farmers' houses along the trails leading to the forest.

The total surface area of low penetration area was estimated to be about 2,770 km<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 4; Table 1). This area is located further inside the forest, and the degree of penetration by the Baka in this portion or land is relatively low for two reasons. First, the surveillance by game rangers instills a bit of fear in the Baka who stay in the deeper part of the forest. The long distance one must travel to the villages may be another reason. While the Baka do not regularly visit this area, it is necessary for them to cover this area for various reasons from a long-term point of view. They even go into both national parks to carry out various activities, and then about one third of the penetration area is included within the two national parks (Table 1). The Baka visit this part of the forest occasionally, for example, during long-term forest expeditions (*molongo*) for gathering wild yams, in particular, in the major dry season (Yasuoka, 2006a; 2009a), or they visit other villages that share a common ancestral relationship through the forest. And sometimes they conduct big game hunting or searching for medicinal plants in the deeper parts of the forest. As both game and useful



**Fig. 4.** Penetration area of Baka activities and national parks. This map is a trace of Fig. 3 created with ArcView software.

**Table 1.** Estimate of penetration area of Baka activities by distance from the nearest signs of activities

Zone	Distance from the nearest sign of activities	Penetration area (km <sup>2</sup> )		
		Total	Inside of NPs	Outside of NPs
High penetration area	0–3 km	3,420	1,230	2,190
Low penetration area	3–9 km	2,770	1,160	1,610
Total	0–9 km	6,190	2,390	3,800

**Table 2.** Penetration area of Baka activities into the national parks

	Total NP area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Penetration area (km <sup>2</sup> )		
		Total	High penetration	Low penetration
Boumba-Bek NP	2,382	1,720	970	750
Nki NP	3,093	670	260	410
Total	5,475	2,390	1,230	1,160

plants become rarer in the nearby agro-forestry areas, the low penetration area could become more important for their hunting and gathering life.

As shown in Table 2, large parts of the two national parks are penetrated by Baka while carrying out their activities. It should be noted that, in Boumba-Bek NP, 40% of its surface was estimated as high penetration area, and 78% as the total penetration area. Those in Nki NP were calculated to be only 8% as high penetration area, 22% as the total penetration area, although people living in the southern and western parts of the park, who are out of the scope of this paper, may penetrate this part of the forest. These figures clearly show that forest included in national parks, especially in Boumba-Bek NP, are very relevant to Baka life in this region.

## DISCUSSIONS

### I. Forest, the Continuous Entity

While many biologists and foresters believed that Baka had been living along the main roads since the 1960s, without carrying out much activity in deep forest that is today designated as the protected area, social scientists and activists, in particular, have demonstrated that the use of forest is very important to the Baka (Hattori, 2006; Yasuoka, 2006b). To identify the area exploited by the Baka, we should not limit ourselves to studying a parcel of forests that has been encroached upon. That is to say, there are different degrees of signs of transformation, material and symbolic exploitation of space. As emphasized by Serge Bahuchet (1997), the vast stretch of forest is a very important area to the Baka who need it as actual as well as potential ground to obtain foodstuff, medicines, materials for handicrafts, and other essential materials of their life. Moreover, the area where Baka in a certain village carry out their socio-economic and cultural activities extends beyond the agro-forestry area and penetrates almost 10 km into the Boumba-Bek NP.

Even though the zoning plan designed by the Cameroon forestry administration classified the forestland into agro-forestry areas and protected areas, the Baka recognize no meaning in the distinctions. The carving out of a protected area does not mean to them that the park is a separate entity with specific regulations. For the Baka, the difference between the two areas is just an affair of the state. "We do not differentiate between mangoes or yams on this side and those on the other side of the Boumba [River] because they are the same," commented an elderly Baka. He also says, "The forest is the same, and we see no boundaries in it." There is neither the difference, for them, between natural resources found in the park and in the agro-forestry area. The Baka put importance on the "content," such as honey, wild yams, and various other foods. In contrast, the policy makers who divide the land place their attention on the "container," applying the "model of industrial division of labor and occupation of space" (Karsenty & Marie, 1998: 3). The Baka regard the forest as a wide and continuous entity, rather than an area made up of divided

parts. Therefore, they do not easily understand why harvesting certain resource is permitted on the outside of the protected area and not inside.

## II. Nomadism and Vague Ownership of Land and Resources

The social regulation underlines the use of land and resources. Each Baka band, or a residential group consisting of one or several kinship groups, has a specific forest area in which they can use resources and lay claim to them. Members of the same kinship usually construct huts in specific areas inside the forest, from where they go hunting and gathering for different forest products. Thus, the boundaries of the forest area of each band are well known. An elderly Baka in the village of Gribe, who accompanied us into the forest, said, "This stream serves as boundary between us and the Baka in the village of Mikel." Such a spatial boundary is usually recognized by a tree, a hill or a river. The Baka avoid using land belonging to the neighboring band without prior authorization.

In spite of these rigorous boundaries of land use on the inter-band level, their actual resource use in their daily life is very flexible. Traditionally, the Baka do not attach any importance to the individual ownership of the land and forest. No member of a camp can claim exclusive ownership of land and resources. Although the first comers are entitled to using the forest resource in the area, others do not need any authorization to enter into the forest and use the resources<sup>(4)</sup>. Moreover, if someone maintains a friendly relationships with the people of other bands, they can go together into the heart of the forest to hunt or gather other forest resources. Therefore, in their daily life, they can acquire forest resources as if there is no restriction rule. It is only the availability of the resources concerned that influences their movement in the forest.

Moreover, the land within which their activities take place are hazy and always in flux, with their semi-nomadic life adapted to seasonal change of the available forest resources. Consequently, the sense of belonging to specific territory is of secondary importance. Given that the Baka way of life is predicated on free movement, or nomadism in the forest, the greatest obstacle for the Baka activities is the mutually exclusive territoriality that would restrict their movement in the forest milieu.

## III. Customary Rights and Forest Management

Even before the official zoning of Boumba-Bek NP in 2005, there was some controversy in 2001 concerning the appreciation for Baka customary rights to resources (Ndameu, 2003). This included the topics in common with the globally discussed debate that has been going on for almost a decade about the impacts of protected areas on the local peoples' livelihood (Nelson, 2003; Schmidt-Soltau, 2003; 2004; 2009; Schmidt-Soltau & Brockington, 2004; 2007). The debate focuses mainly on the following two points: ways of adequate participation by the indigenous peoples in the zoning process and management of natural resources, with regard to the indigenous peoples' access rights to



resources in the protected areas (Ndameu, 2003; Nelson et al., 2001; Barume, 2005).

Our research results shown above demonstrate that Baka's traditional activities impact on 40% of the surface of the two national parks. The area has in no way been a "no human's land," but has been used by the hunter-gatherers for a long time. To emphasize the abovementioned points, we can probably blame the actors for having failed to consult the Baka, without carrying out consultation properly adapted to their culture. The shortcomings of this approach is evident when one considers the land zoning model that classifies lands based on the logic of sectioning the forest into areas for exclusively different use, which may take account of only the activities of agrarian civilizations, but ignores the mode of land use by the hunter-gatherers. The Baka use certain areas for several activities simultaneously or successively. As an example of such cases, there is a big game hunting area, which is often considered sacred, and in which some non-timber forest products are highly concentrated. Since the spaces where the Baka conduct their important foraging activities overlap, there is super-imposition of legitimacy in the use of resources. Thus, if the land use is prescribed in certain area in accordance only with a single purpose such as hunting, their use of non-timber forest products, such as honey, wild yams and medical plants in the remote area will be practically impossible. Needless to say, such a zoning and management model carved out in favor of the administrative and political concerns is in contradiction with the Baka's view of the forest as a continuous entity and their flexible use of land and resources.

The results from our study, that the Baka carry out activities well beyond the agro-forestry area and that they penetrate into the protected areas, demonstrate vividly that the management plan for Boumba-Bek and Nki NPs should be adjusted sufficiently to the actuality of traditional use of land and resources by the Baka, and their customary rights. In fact, Article 4 of the Decree creating Boumba-Bek NP clearly states that the user rights of local residents will be regulated under the development plan to be elaborated in a participatory process, although only the practices that are compatible with the objectives of sustainable use of natural resources concerned will be allowed (Decree No. 2005/3284/PM). Under this provision, it is clear that the access rights of Baka and their participation in the planning and management is far from proscribed, but simply limited. One of the biggest challenges will be to propose measures in tune with the perception and the representation of the local peoples, their traditional way of using resources and in compatibility with the exigencies of sustainable management<sup>(5)</sup>.

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## NOTES

- (1) WWF Jengi unpublished data.
- (2) Until recently, mining in the area was conducted in a rudimentary way but industrial mining is starting in the area.
- (3) According to Yasuoka (2006a; 2006b; 2009), the Baka mostly use areas within 3 km from the forest camps. This assumption is not far from the truth.
- (4) In the Baka community, it is the first visitor to a place that is entitled to use the resources there. The resources are marked by a scratch on the tree girdle, breaking twigs in the surrounding small shrubs, or a scrape on the ground. Following this logic of “first come, first served,” if a particular Baka group originally visits mostly the western part of Boumba-Bek NP, its members seldom visit, for example, the eastern part of the park. They have little knowledge of the resources in a forest that they do not often visit.
- (5) It should also be noted that the Baka share a huge part of these resources and space with their Bantu neighbors, who are also forest-living people in the region, whereas the access to the forest resources by peoples from other areas is regulated by state laws and regulations on the management and use of forest (Law No. 94/01 20 January 1994; Decree No. 95/466/PM 20 January 1995; Decree No. 95/531/PM 23 August 1995).

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## Summary of correspondence between WWF and Survival International

2014-2016

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- 17 March 2014 Survival writes to WWF-Cameroon, saying that:
- a Baka man recently died in Ndongo village;
  - Ministry of Forests and Fauna (MINFOF) official reportedly regards torture as unobjectionable;
  - WWF consultant witnessed a serious beating in Ngatto Ancien;
  - WWF should organise an independent enquiry and establish a grievance mechanism;
  - and ask which offices fund the Jengi projects on Baka land.
- 31 March 2014 WWF-Cameroon replies:
- it does not ask Survival for more information and ignores the suggestion of an enquiry, as well as the question about funding;
  - it calls on Survival to work with it in setting up a grievance mechanism.
- 7 April 2014 Survival replies, saying that:
- an enquiry is essential, and it is disappointed that WWF has ignored the suggestion;
  - it would need to know more about financial/human resources WWF is able to dedicate to the grievance mechanism before any discussions;
  - and asking for management plans and funding details again.
- 16 April 2014 WWF-Cameroon says that these issues cannot be resolved through mail, asks Survival to suggest dates for a meeting.
- 17 April 2014 Survival replies, saying it is based in London and asking whether WWF has a representative there.
- 6 May 2014 Having received no reply, Survival asks again.
- 6 May 2014 WWF-Cameroon says it would love for local NGOs to be involved in any discussions, and that its director will be waiting for Survival's call the following week.
- 8 May 2014 Survival suggests Wednesday 14 May.

- 15 May 2014 Having received no reply, Survival forwards the last email again. WWF replies at 17.57 BST, suggesting a conversation the following day at 10.00 GMT.
- 16 May 2014 Survival tells WWF-Cameroon it is not able to talk this day and suggests speaking after the weekend.
- 16 May 2014 WWF-Cameroon asks Survival to give it two days' notice.
- 20 May 2014 Survival suggests 22 May for a telephone conversation.
- 22 May 2014 Telephone conversation between Survival staff, Hanson Njiforti and Marc van Boekel at WWF:
- WWF proposes that the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS) lead a commission of enquiry that includes the Ministry of Forests and Fauna (MINFOF) and WWF;
  - Survival's letter will be used as a background for the investigation; the mission will go to the communities that "have been highlighted as places where possible misdeeds or possible problems have occurred";
  - majority of the mission will be MINFOF and MINAS staff;
  - results are not to be published, at least not immediately;
  - WWF recommends that Survival send its concerns to the ministries, and says it will provide Survival with the relevant contact details for the commission;
  - Survival points out that the problem is not confined to the two villages mentioned in the letter;
  - Survival says there is more information to be collected, and suggest WWF ask a Baka NGO to gather information for the commission to consider. WWF says perhaps it will do this further in the future.
- 5 June 2014 Survival writes to WWF explaining that WWF must do more, that this investigation would be useless if it were restricted to the two villages Survival has mentioned, if there were no independent observers, and if the results were not to be published. Survival asks for the contact details of the commission again. Having received no reply, Survival writes again to WWF-Cameroon, as well as WWF UK, US, NL, International Secretariat and HRH Prince Philip saying that:
- the investigation cannot involve MINAS or MINFOF;
  - Survival has received a suggestion that the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (CNDHL) would be more suitable;

- until there are measures in place to protect Baka victims and witnesses Survival is unable to contribute further details.
- 24 July 2014 WWF-Cameroon replies saying that:
- “We have repeatedly sought more information from you as they would allow us to make informed decisions”;
  - it agrees with the suggestion about the CNDHL but says Survival must launch the complaint itself;
  - it is concerned at the amount of time it has spent on letters, telephone and Skype calls (the only Skype call, on 22.05.14, lasted approximately 5 minutes, before technical problems forced the participants to switch to phone)
- 28 July 2014 Reply from WWF-UK saying that WWF-Cameroon is in the best position to answer questions.
- 1 October 2014 Survival staff speak to Isabella Pratesi, head of international conservation at WWF Italy, who says she is unaware of the entire situation and is shocked.
- 2 October 2014 Survival writes to Marco Lambertini, Director General of WWF International, pointing out that WWF has had ample information to act, reminding it of its responsibilities, and telling them that it will be putting out a press release.
- 6 October 2014 Survival issues a press release about the abuse of Baka by anti-poaching squads supported by WWF.
- 10 October 2014 Survival writes to Marco Lambertini, asking him to confirm that WWF will suspend funding for wildlife law enforcement, as WWF Italy suggested on its website on 8 October 2014.
- 16 October 2014 Marco Lambertini replies, saying that funding will not be suspended.
- 28 October 2014 Survival replies to Marco Lambertini, asking for past documentation concerning the creation of the conservation zones on Baka land, and past complaints about violent anti-poaching squads.
- 4 November 2014 WWF sends Survival the letter it sent to CNDHL, in which it expresses its support for an investigation.
- 6 November 2014 Survival asks again to see relevant documentation.
- 26 January 2015 WWF says that it will make relevant information available to CNDHL.

- 27 March 2015 Survival writes to WWF, asking how WWF has honoured the principles on indigenous peoples and conservation that it has adopted, in particular its promise to respect the Baka's rights to free, prior and informed consent.
- 10 April 2015 Survival writes to WWF, asking for information about specific past complaints about violent anti-poaching squads. This includes one case in which WWF allegedly received evidence that drew into question the veracity of one complaint. WWF has never released this evidence, despite saying it would do so.
- 12 May 2015 Phil Dickie, Head of Issues Management at WWF, emails a "personal note" to a Survival staff member.
- 27 May 2015 WWF replies, reaffirming its commitment to the CNDHL investigation, outlining ways in which it believes Baka can report grievances about anti-poaching squads, and stating that "Baka have had the opportunity to be involved in an extensive consultative and consent process."
- 10 June 2015 Survival replies, saying that it has found no evidence that the Baka's consent was sought or obtained and pointing out that WWF in its letter does not claim that it was.
- 19 August 2015 Having heard that WWF has commissioned an investigation into the impact of its work on the Baka, Survival writes to WWF to request a copy of the report.
- 14 September 2015 Phil Dickie writes to Survival staff, claiming that WWF does not have the authority to release the management plans Survival requested, since these are government documents.
- 1 October 2015 Survival replies to WWF, pointing out that WWF had already sent draft versions of the same management plans, and drawing attention to another region where ecoguard violence has been reported.
- 7 December 2015 Phil Dickie writes to Survival having looked into a past incident of torture carried out by ecoguards. It suggests Survival write to two MINOF officials asking for the management plans.
- 14 December 2015 Survival replies to WWF, saying that it has written to these officials and emphasizing that it is WWF's duty to establish robust and working systems to ensure its programmes do not lead to further human rights abuses.





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**We help tribal peoples  
defend their lives, protect  
their lands and determine  
their own futures.**

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17 March 2014

Dear Mr Njiforti,

In and around the Boumba Bek, Nki and Lobeke National Parks, the Baka people are a routine target of violence and intimidation, and sometimes of murder. They are victims of extortion. Their forest camps are regularly demolished and their belongings seized. Many live in constant fear, especially in the forest. They expect no help from the forces of law and order because their oppressors are often members of these forces – and especially of the Park ecoguards, aided and abetted by the Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide (or BIR). It is only a few months since one Baka man, detained by ecoguards in Ndongo village, died from injuries sustained during his “interrogation.”

Survival International, which has recently conducted field research in southeast Cameroon, is not the first organisation to note that the “protection” of the National Parks in the region is often thought to justify the violation of Baka rights. Over the last five years or so, however, the situation has significantly deteriorated. Ecoguards and the BIR have come to believe that almost anything goes in the war against poachers. They have perhaps been encouraged in this view by the former head of Fauna and Protected Areas in the Ministry of Forests and Fauna,

Founded 1969  
Right Livelihood Award 1989

Survival International  
Charitable Trust  
Registered Charity 267444  
Company registered in England  
no. 1056317  
Registered office as **105**e

who has not only openly admitted to the use of violence by his staff but appears to regard it as unobjectionable.

None of the three Parks would have been created or would have survived, certainly in their present form, without WWF's active support and management. This does not mean, we were repeatedly assured by your local representatives, that WWF bears any responsibility for the conduct of the ecoguards who patrol the Parks. They are employed by the Ministry, we were told, and it alone is accountable for their conduct.

This is not a tenable position. WWF is apparently the Ministry's most important source of funds. Ecoguards and the BIR are able to violate Baka rights only with the technical, logistical and material support that WWF provides. Baka prisoners are transported in WWF vehicles, driven by WWF drivers on fuel that WWF has paid for. WWF's post near Ndongo is used for interrogations, and WWF is aware of the brutal manner in which these are sometimes conducted.<sup>1</sup> It rewards ecoguards with a bonus for the trophies they seize.

WWF's failure to take effective steps either to stop the abuse of the Baka or to withdraw its support for the Ministry appears to be in violation of many of the commitments it has made to its own supporters. These included undertakings:

- (1) To make "special efforts" to respect and "protect the basic human rights" of indigenous peoples, as well as their customary and resource rights<sup>2</sup>
- (2) To "ensure" that its partnerships with other organisations do not undermine, and if possible serve to actively promote, the basic human rights and customary resource rights of indigenous peoples.<sup>3</sup>

WWF has thereby explicitly acknowledged that it is not enough to comply with local law, or to rely upon national authorities to protect indigenous rights. In a country like Cameroon, whose

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<sup>1</sup> We have a statement from one witness who visited another village, Ngatto Ancien, inside Nki Park, in the course of her duties as a WWF consultant. She saw a serious beating in the village herself, and was told about many

<sup>2</sup> WWF Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation §5. See also Mainstreaming WWF Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation in Project and Programme Management

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, §32

dismal record in this area has just been confirmed in the US Department of State Human Rights Report for 2013, this principle assumes special importance. There is no independent body to which the Baka could complain about the ecoguards or the BIR, and they have no access to the courts.<sup>4</sup>

WWF must take steps to plug the gap, not only in the interests of common decency but to discharge commitments it has voluntarily made and to avoid the reputational damage to which it will otherwise be exposed. However hard the battle against the poachers, however important it may be to protect the Parks, WWF knows that it cannot be seen to countenance the systematic abuse of the Baka people.

We believe that WWF should take at least two steps as a matter of urgency:

- (1) It should establish an independent enquiry into the causes and effects of the human rights violations now committed against the Baka by ecoguards at Boumba Bek, Nki and Lobeke, and should pass its findings to the public prosecutor for further action<sup>5</sup>; and
- (2) It should put in place an effective mechanism to resolve the grievances that will undoubtedly continue to arise between the Baka and the ecoguards and military patrols.

WWF cannot discharge its duty to respect the human rights of the Baka until it has first assessed the impact of its activities on them, and devised a plan to avoid or mitigate this impact.<sup>6</sup> We do not see how it can now do this without an independent and properly resourced enquiry. If this leads to successful prosecutions, ecoguards and members of the BIR may become more circumspect in their dealings with the Baka.

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<sup>4</sup> WWF staff told us that anti-poaching committees can and sometimes do ‘pass on’ Baka complaints, but we understand that these committees have no powers to discipline ecoguards or to compensate complainants.

<sup>5</sup> See, eg, WPC Recommendation 5.24 to “establish and implement mechanisms to address any historical injustices caused through the establishment of protected areas, with special attention given to land and water tenure rights and historical/traditional rights to access natural resources and sacred sites within protected areas”

<sup>6</sup> These are essential components of the duty of due diligence spelt out in GP 17.

Criminal prosecutions, however, are obviously a last resort. What is required is a simple and accessible mechanism to resolve grievances before they get out of hand. The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights show how this can be done.

The effectiveness of both steps will obviously depend on the co-operation of the Cameroon authorities.<sup>7</sup> If this is withheld WWF should reconsider its Country Programme, and in particular the future of the Jengi TNS and TRIDOM Programmes, all of which give WWF considerable influence.

As the Guiding Principles confirm, the greater its leverage the greater the responsibility an enterprise assumes to prevent further abuse. If national authorities refuse to play their part, the enterprise must consider whether to terminate its relationship with them. It does not matter that the enterprise has not itself contributed to the violation of human rights, as long as the violations are linked to its operations. In the present case, the link is undeniable.

Survival does not doubt that the wildlife of southeast Cameroon is under serious threat or that WWF has done important work not only to address this threat but to support the Baka people as a whole. We are greatly concerned, however, that senior management appears to be ill-informed about the direct and indirect impact of WWF operations on the basic rights of the Baka. It should have been the first to recognise that their continued persecution must stop if WWF is to form the “trust-based relationship” with the Baka that it rightly regards as crucial to its conservation efforts.

We have highlighted only two of several measures that will need to be taken before this relationship can develop. We are ready to discuss others, including acceptable hunting practices, if and when the opportunity presents itself. We are keen to put our evidence of human rights violations before the enquiry that we hope you will now instigate, and to discuss any other way in which our two organisations can help to secure justice for the Baka people.

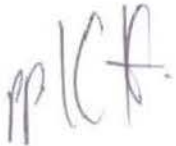
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<sup>7</sup> Only they, e.g., could require ecoguards make themselves available to answer questions, and ensure the dismissal of any found to have assaulted Baka or destroyed their property.

We come at the problem from different perspectives, of course, but ought at least to be able to agree that doing nothing is not an option.

We propose to forward copies of this letter to the WWF headquarters in Switzerland and the UK national office. Please let us know which other WWF office or offices fund the Jengi TRIDOM and Jengi TNS projects, so that we may also copy them into this correspondence.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Corry'.

Stephen Corry  
Director

Cc: Gilles Etoga, Louis Ngonu, Mark van Boekel

M Hanson Njiforti  
WWF Central Africa Regional Programme Office  
Immeuble Panda  
Route « La Citronelle »  
B.A.T. Compound  
Bastos  
B.P. 6776  
Yaounde  
Cameroon

Londres, le 17 mars 2014

Monsieur Njiforti,

Dans les parcs nationaux de Boumba Bek, Nki et Lobeke et les environs, le peuple baka est souvent la cible d'actes de violence et d'intimidation, et parfois de meurtre. Ils sont victimes d'extorsion. Leurs campements dans la forêt sont régulièrement détruits et leurs effets personnels sont saisis. Bon nombre d'entre eux vivent dans une peur constante, surtout dans la forêt. Ils n'attendent aucun secours des forces de l'ordre parce que leurs oppresseurs sont souvent membres de ces forces – et surtout des écogardes, avec l'appui et la bénédiction du Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide (BIR). Il y a quelques mois, un homme baka, détenu par des écogardes dans le village de Ndongo, est décédé à la suite des blessures subies pendant son « interrogation ».

Survival International, qui a récemment mené des recherches sur le terrain dans le sud-est du Cameroun, n'est pas la première organisation à noter que la « protection » des parcs nationaux dans la région justifie supposément la violation des droits des Baka. Au cours des cinq dernières années, la situation s'est fortement détériorée. Les écogardes et les équipes du BIR en sont arrivés à croire que presque tout est permis dans la guerre contre les braconniers.

L'ancien chef de la Section Faune et Aires Protégées au Ministère des Forêts et de la Faune les a peut-être encouragés sur ce point, puisqu'il a non seulement avoué que son personnel fait usage de la torture mais semble même la considérer tout à fait acceptable.

Aucun des trois parcs n'aurait été créé et n'aurait survécu dans leur forme actuelle sans l'appui et la gestion active du WWF. Cela ne veut pas dire, vos représentants locaux nous ont-ils assurés à plusieurs reprises, que le WWF est responsable du comportement des écogardes qui patrouillent les parcs. Le ministère qui les embauche, nous a-t-on dit, est le seul responsable de leur comportement.

Cette position n'est pas soutenable. Le WWF est un des bailleurs principaux du ministère. Les écogardes et le BIR ne peuvent violer les droits des Baka qu'avec l'assistance technique, logistique et matérielle que fournit le WWF. Les détenus baka sont transportés dans des véhicules WWF, conduits par des chauffeurs WWF et alimentés en essence grâce au WWF. Des interrogations ont lieu dans le poste du WWF près de Ndongo et le WWF est conscient du fait que ces interrogations sont souvent menées d'une façon brutale.<sup>1</sup> Le WWF récompense les écogardes par un bonus pour les trophées saisis.

En omettant de prendre des mesures efficaces soit pour mettre fin à l'abus des Baka, soit pour retirer son soutien au ministère, le WWF semble violer plusieurs des engagements qu'il a pris à l'égard de ses adhérents. Ces engagements comprennent :

- (1) 'réaliser des efforts spéciaux pour le respect, la protection et l'observation des droits collectifs et individuels, notamment les droits coutumiers et les droits aux ressources dans le contexte d'initiatives de conservation.'<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Nous avons une déclaration d'un témoin qui a rendu visite à un autre village, Ngatto Ancien, dans le parc de Nki, dans l'exercice de ses fonctions de consultant pour le WWF. Elle a été témoin de graves sévices dans le village, et on lui a parlé de plusieurs incidents semblables. Il lui semblait que la violence était utilisée presque systématiquement, non seulement contre les braconniers présumés mais contre ceux qui détiendraient des informations pouvant conduire à la capture de braconniers présumés.

<sup>2</sup> Les peuples autochtones et la conservation: déclaration de principes du WWF, §5. Voir également Mainstreaming WWF Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation in Project and Programme Management

- (2) ‘assurera’ que la coopération avec les autres organisations ‘ne sape pas et, si possible, qu’elle encourage la promotion active des droits de l’homme fondamentaux et du droit coutumier relatif aux ressources des peuples autochtones.’<sup>3</sup>

Le WWF a ainsi reconnu explicitement qu’il ne suffit pas de se conformer aux lois locales, ni de compter sur les autorités nationales pour protéger les droits autochtones. Dans un pays tel que le Cameroun, dont le Département de l’Etat des Etats-Unis vient de confirmer le bilan lamentable à cet égard dans son rapport sur les droits de l’homme en 2013, ce principe revêt une importance particulière. Il n’y a aucun organisme indépendant auprès duquel les Baka pourraient porter plainte contre les écogardes ou le BIR et ils n’ont aucun accès aux tribunaux.<sup>4</sup>

Le WWF doit prendre des mesures pour combler le fossé, non seulement pour des raisons de déontologie mais aussi pour s’acquitter des engagements qu’il a pris volontairement et pour éviter de ternir sa réputation, ce à quoi, autrement, il serait exposé. Aussi dure la lutte contre les braconniers soit-elle, aussi important qu’il soit de protéger les parcs, le WWF sait qu’il ne peut pas se permettre d’accepter l’abus systématique du peuple baka.

Nous estimons que le WWF devrait prendre de toute urgence au moins deux mesures :

- (1) Il devrait entreprendre une enquête indépendante sur les causes et les effets des violations des droits de l’homme commises contre les Baka par les écogardes à Boumba Bek, Nki et Lobeke, et faire connaître ses conclusions au procureur général en vue de mesures ultérieures<sup>5</sup> ; et
- (2) Il devrait établir un mécanisme efficace pour résoudre les griefs qui sans aucun doute continueront de survenir entre les Baka et les patrouilles des militaires et écogardes.

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, §32

<sup>4</sup> Le personnel du WWF nous a signalé que les comités de lutte contre le braconnage (COVILAB) peuvent ‘transmettre’ les plaintes, ce qu’ils font parfois. Nous croyons cependant comprendre que ces comités ne disposent d’aucun pouvoir pour discipliner les écogardes ou pour dédommager les plaignants.

<sup>5</sup> Voir par exemple, la recommandation 5.24 de la WPC “d’établir et d’appliquer des mécanismes pour remédier à toute injustice historique causée par l’établissement d’aires protégées, en accordant une attention particulière aux droits fonciers sur la terre et sur l’eau et aux droits historiques /traditionnels d’accès aux ressources naturelles et aux lieux sacrés se trouvant dans les aires protégées;”



Le WWF ne peut s'acquitter de son obligation de respecter les droits de l'homme des Baka avant d'évaluer l'impact provoqué par son activité sur les Baka et d'élaborer un plan afin d'éviter ou d'atténuer cet impact.<sup>6</sup> Nous ne voyons pas comment cela est possible sans une enquête indépendante et suffisamment pourvue en ressources. Si cette enquête conduit à des poursuites judiciaires, les écogardes et les membres du BIR feront peut-être preuve d'une plus grande circonspection dans leurs relations avec les Baka.

Il va de soi que les poursuites au criminel sont une mesure de dernier recours. Il faut avant tout un mécanisme simple et accessible pour résoudre les griefs avant que la situation ne dégénère. Les Principes Directeurs relatifs aux entreprises et aux droits de l'homme de l'ONU montrent comment cela peut être mis en place.

L'efficacité des deux mesures dépendra bien évidemment de la coopération des autorités camerounaises.<sup>7</sup> Si les autorités la refusent, le WWF devrait reconsidérer son programme national, et en particulier l'avenir des projets Jengi TNS et TRIDOM, qui donne au WWF une influence considérable.

Comme le confirment les Principes Directeurs, plus l'influence d'une entreprise est considérable, plus grande sera sa responsabilité de prévenir la répétition des violations. Si les autorités nationales refusent de collaborer, l'entreprise devra alors se demander la viabilité de l'entretien de ses relations avec elles. Il importe peu que l'entreprise n'ait pas elle-même contribué à la violation des droits de l'homme, tant que les violations sont liées à ses opérations. Dans le cas d'espèce, le lien est incontestable.

Survival ne doute pas que la faune du sud-est du Cameroun est gravement menacée, ni que le WWF a fait des efforts importants non seulement pour faire face à cette menace, mais aussi pour soutenir le peuple baka tout entier. Pourtant nous sommes vivement préoccupés par le fait que la haute direction semble être mal informée des impacts directs et indirects des opérations

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<sup>6</sup> Ce sont des éléments essentiels du devoir de diligence énoncé dans la Principe Directeur 17 de l'ONU.

<sup>7</sup> Seulement les autorités pourraient par exemple exiger que les écogardes demeurent disponibles pour répondre aux questions et garantir le licenciement de tout agent reconnu coupable de violence contre un Baka ou d'avoir détruit les biens d'un Baka

du WWF sur les droits fondamentaux des Baka. Le WWF aurait dû reconnaître en tout premier lieu que cette persécution continuelle doit cesser si le WWF veut établir la « trust-based relationship » avec les Baka qu'il considère avec raison comme déterminant pour ses efforts de conservation.

Nous n'avons souligné que deux mesures parmi d'autres que le WWF devra prendre afin de faciliter ces relations. Nous sommes disposés à discuter des mesures supplémentaires, y compris les pratiques de chasse acceptables lorsque l'occasion se présentera. Nous espérons que vous initierez cette enquête et nous souhaitons mettre à sa disposition les preuves de violations des droits de l'homme dont nous disposons et discuter avec vous toute autre manière dont nos deux organisations peuvent aider à obtenir justice pour le peuple baka.

Nous partons de points de vue différents, bien sûr, mais nous devrions tout au moins convenir que ne rien faire n'est pas une option.

Nous proposons de transmettre une copie de cette lettre au secrétariat du WWF à Gland et aux bureaux nationaux aux Etats-Unis et au Royaume-Uni. Merci de nous indiquer les autres bureaux qui financent les projets Jengi TRIDOM et Jengi TNS, afin que nous puissions également les mettre en copie dans cette correspondance.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de ma haute considération,



Stephen Corry

Director

Copie conforme : Gilles Etoga, Louis Ngono, Mark van Boekel



**WWF** *for a living planet*

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O/ref. CCPO/DN/FY14/372/HH/ann

Yaounde, 31 March 2014

**To:** Mr Corry

**Subject :** Your correspondence dated 17 March 2014

Dear Mr Corry,

Thank you for your letter dated 17 March 2014 in which you raise concerns about the maltreatment of Bakas by Ecoguards and elements of the Rapid Intervention Unit (BIR) in and around Lobeke, Boumba-Bek and Nki National Parks. We are saddened by the loss of life arising from these allegations. WWF unequivocally rejects any form of human rights violations.

We thank you for bringing to our attention insights that can help our teams improve their approach to working with Indigenous People as well as to better prepare those charged with the difficult task of preventing "illegal" commercial exploitation of the country's natural heritage.

With regard to your concerns, combating illegal wildlife trade is indeed a key component of our efforts in Central Africa, and it must be recognized that the Baka traditions and rites are entwined with forest and wildlife. WWF has been working with regional governments to safeguard this age-old tradition and rites of Indigenous Peoples in all its programmes.

In this extremely challenging region, a broad range of powerful actors compete around land resources. WWF has worked in Cameroon with the Government on land-use planning to define protected areas for conservation, concession areas, and community agriculture, forest and hunting zones. WWF is also supporting park management and the establishment of village-based institutions. In line with WWF's Indigenous Peoples and Conservation policy, we remain committed to supporting activities that promote the rights of indigenous peoples.

As part of our country programme in Cameroon, we work with Government Park and forest management authorities and local NGOs for the purpose of improving Baka livelihoods, scholarization, and access to resources in protected areas and surrounding forest lands, aiming at securing formal recognition and protection of Baka forest rights across land uses, including within park management plans developed on a basis of prior informed consent.

In recent years poaching in general and elephant poaching in particular has reached alarming levels. Unfortunately, due to their knowledge of the forest and animal behaviours, the Bakas are increasingly being used by "white collar poachers" as hunters to whom they provide war-grade guns like the AK47 Kalashnikov<sup>1</sup>. Besides being used as hunters, Bakas are also being used for the safe keeping of weapons (see footer 1 for Bakas caught with guns).

.../...

<sup>1</sup> 4 out of 10 AK47 seized by Ecoguards from poacher between 2010 to 2013 were from Bakas involved in elephant poaching

The situation has been worsened by the war in Central African Republic which has resulted in an influx of more AK47s. This has become a national security concern and the response of the Cameroon Government has been to reinforce security in the region by stationing a special unit of the military (Rapid Intervention Unit or BIR) in Yokadouma.

Unfortunately, many park rangers and soldiers have basic levels of education and their attitudes towards indigenous groups are marked by social norms and stereotypes against the Baka. WWF in Southeast Cameroon has provided basic training on human rights and WWF Indigenous Peoples Principles and Policy to eco-guards.

We will continue to leverage and support the government to improve the quality of training to park rangers as well as ministerial ability to monitor their staff. In this regard we plan to reach out to organisations with expertise in how to undertake responsible and ethical law enforcement that respects human rights of local communities. In this regard we will be happy to explore the possibility of partnering with organisations such as yours.

In an effort to mainstream Indigenous Peoples' rights in natural resource management, WWF has been working with its key partners in government and civil society to improve the respect of indigenous peoples' rights. For instance, WWF recently collaborated with the Centre for the Environment and Development and the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) to develop guidelines for Free, Prior and Informed Consent for the Ministry of the Environment Nature Protection and Sustainable Development for the implementation of the national REDD+ strategy.

WWF equally facilitated the signing of a co-management agreement between the Bagyeli (an indigenous group) and the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife in the Campo Ma'an National Park. We also negotiated for the delineation of a special access area for local communities including Baka in the Lobeke National Park, which is part of the Dzanga Tri-National-UNESCO World Heritage site. Ensuring access rights of indigenous populations was a prerequisite for obtaining the World Heritage status. Also, and thanks to financial and technical support from WWF, the first ever Baka community forest became operational in 2010. These community forest (ASDEBYM) groups Baka communities from Yenga and Mambele villages, and is generating financial resources which are being used to help realise basic rights for Baka children including education and safe drinking water. WWF also worked with local NGOs who are defending the rights of Bakas ASBAK, ORADER, RACOPY, PERAD, CEFAID, AFEFEN, CED) to define access rights for the Bakas in Boumba-Bek, Nki and Lobeke National Parks.

The reality, however, is that these measures take a long time to bear full fruits and are hampered by the fact that indigenous people's rights have yet to be adequately embedded in national legislation and legal framework to provide a basis for efficient inclusion of how to address their specific needs and rights in Government plans and institutional practice.

WWF continues to engage the Government of Cameroon in meaningful dialogue and collaboration to improve its policy and practice on (indigenous) community rights. We welcome your interest in finding a solution to any violation of Baka rights, and will like to call on you to work with us in setting up a mechanism to address grievances as you recommend. We clearly need deeper collaboration with other entities to effectively work with the Government to tackle poaching in ways that are smart and respectful of the human rights of local communities and Indigenous People.

Sincere regards,

  
Dr Hanson Njiforti  
Country Director





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**We help tribal peoples  
defend their lives, protect  
their lands and determine  
their own futures.**

7 April 2014

Dear Dr Njiforti,

Thank you for your letter of 31 March 2014.

You attribute the violent and oppressive treatment of the Baka we have described, and which you do not dispute, to the "basic levels of education" of the ecoguards and Rapid Intervention Unit (BIR) and "their attitudes to indigenous groups."

It is has obviously not been enough to rely on the "basic training on human rights" and WWF principles to which you also refer. Something more has to be done. The question is: what?

I continue to believe that the answer can only be found through a proper enquiry, and am disappointed that you have not responded to my proposal on this. Without an enquiry, WWF cannot hope to discharge its duty of due diligence to the Baka communities or to identify the measures needed to protect them from further abuse. I urge you to reconsider your position.

I am pleased to learn that you are keen in principle to establish a grievance mechanism. I would need to know more about the financial and human resources that you are able to dedicate to this, and to the situation on the ground generally, before I could offer any practical advice.

No matter how well it is designed and resourced, a grievance mechanism can only respond to specific complaints. It cannot look at the system as a whole, or at the kind of endemic abuse that appears to occur in Boumba Bek and other parks. The mechanism is unlikely to deal properly even with individual cases unless the people who have to use it trust the people who set it up and administer it.

This brings me back to an enquiry, which can look at the system as a whole, and will offer the best proof to both the Baka and others that WWF is serious about human rights.

When you reply, I would be grateful if you could also provide us with the management plans for the three parks. Could you please also respond to my request for information about the WWF offices that fund the Jengi projects? They may well have a view on the issues I have raised, and should have a chance to express them.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Corry  
Director

Founded 1969  
Right Livelihood Award 1989

Survival International  
Charitable Trust  
Registered Charity 267444  
Company registered in England  
no. 1056317  
Registered office as 117ve

**From:** Stephen Corry [mailto:[director@survivalinternational.org](mailto:director@survivalinternational.org)]

**Sent:** Monday, April 07, 2014 4:04 PM

**To:** [hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org)

**Subject:** Reply to your letter of 31 March 2014 with subject Ecoguard abuse and the Jengi TNS and TRIDOM projects.

Dear Dr Njiforti,

Please see the letter attached,

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Corry  
Director

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**From:** Hanson Njiforti <[hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Reply to your letter of 31 March 2014 with subject Ecoguard abuse and the Jengi TNS and TRIDOM projects.  
**Date:** 16 April 2014 12:16:00 BST  
**To:** Stephen Corry <[director@survivalinternational.org](mailto:director@survivalinternational.org)>  
**Cc:** Yemi Katerere <[YKaterere@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:YKaterere@wwfcarpo.org)>, Frederick Kumah <[Fkumah@wwf africa.org](mailto:Fkumah@wwf africa.org)>, Jane Ganeau <[jganeau@wwfint.org](mailto:jganeau@wwfint.org)>

Dear Mr Corry,

Thank you very much for your prompt reply to my last letter dated 31 March 2014. As stated in that letter, we are keen to work with you to find a solution to the issues raised in your letter dated 17 March 2014. It is clear that the issues at stake cannot be resolve through mail, and we will be happy to meet and discuss the way forward with you at your earliest convenience. In this respect, we are waiting for your suggestions on possible dates for this meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Hanson Njiforti (PhD) | Country Director | WWF Cameroon Country Programme | P.O. Box 6776, Yaounde, Cameroon | Tel: [+237 22 217083](tel:+23722217083) +237 77500035 Direct: [+41 22 364 9038](tel:+41223649038) | E-mail: [hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org) | Skype: hnjiforti

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**From:** Stephen Corry <[director@survivalinternational.org](mailto:director@survivalinternational.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Reply to your letter of 31 March 2014 with subject Ecoguard abuse and the Jengi TNS and TRIDOM projects.  
**Date:** 17 April 2014 11:44:35 BST  
**To:** "[hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org)" <[hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org)>

Dear Dr Njiforti,

Thank you for your email and suggestion of a meeting. We are based in London, so I wonder if you have a suitable representative here we could meet with. We are, obviously, anxious to have a response to the points we are raising as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Corry  
Directo



**From:** Stephen Corry [mailto:[director@survivalinternational.org](mailto:director@survivalinternational.org)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 06, 2014 10:46 AM  
**To:** [hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org)  
**Cc:** [YKaterere@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:YKaterere@wwfcarpo.org); [Fkumah@wwfafrica.org](mailto:Fkumah@wwfafrica.org); [jganeau@wwfint.org](mailto:jganeau@wwfint.org)  
**Subject:** Ecoguard abuse

Dear Dr Njiforti,

Following my email of 17 April, I would again like to ask whether you have a representative here in London that we could meet with. Alternatively, would it be possible to arrange a meeting by Skype? As I said in my last email, we are keen for this urgent and extremely serious situation to be addressed as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Corry  
Director

**From:** Hanson Njiforti <[hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org)>

**Subject:** RE: Ecoguard abuse

**Date:** 6 May 2014 18:14:16 BST

**To:** Stephen Corry <[director@survivalinternational.org](mailto:director@survivalinternational.org)>

**Cc:** Yemi Katerere <[YKaterere@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:YKaterere@wwfcarpo.org)>, Frederick Kumah <[Fkumah@wwfafrica.org](mailto:Fkumah@wwfafrica.org)>, Jane Ganeau <[jganeau@wwfint.org](mailto:jganeau@wwfint.org)>

Dear Mr Corry,

As you must have noticed from my autoreply, I am presently in Brazil for the WWF annual conference and can only Skype with you next week. We do not have a representative in the UK and I had been hoping that you were traveling to Cameroon again. As I informed you in my earlier mails, we are presently working with a number of local NGOs on Baka related issues (ASBAK, ORADER, RACOPY, PERAD, CEFAID, AFEBEN, CED) and I will love that some if not all of them get involve in our discussions on the way forward. My Skype ID is given below and I will be waiting for your call next week.

Best regards,

Hanson Njiforti (PhD) | Country Director | WWF Cameroon Country Programme | P.O. Box 6776, Yaounde, Cameroon | Tel: [+237 22 217083](tel:+23722217083) +237 77500035 Direct: [+41 22 364 9038](tel:+41223649038) | E-mail: [hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org) | Skype: hnjiforti

<[image001.jpg](#)>

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**From:** Stephen Corry  
<[director@survivalinternational.org](mailto:director@survivalinternational.org)>  
**Subject: Re: Ecoguard abuse**  
**Date:** 8 May 2014 14:46:49 BST  
**To:** "[hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org)"  
<[hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org)>  
**Cc:** "[YKaterere@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:YKaterere@wwfcarpo.org)"  
<[YKaterere@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:YKaterere@wwfcarpo.org)>,  
"[Fkumah@wwfafrica.org](mailto:Fkumah@wwfafrica.org)" <[Fkumah@wwfafrica.org](mailto:Fkumah@wwfafrica.org)>,  
"[jganeau@wwfint.org](mailto:jganeau@wwfint.org)" <[jganeau@wwfint.org](mailto:jganeau@wwfint.org)>

Dear Dr. Njiforti,

Would it be possible for you to speak with those in Survival best briefed on the issue, and able to represent our views, by Skype on Wednesday 14 May, at a time between 9am and 12pm (UK time)?

Your sincerely,

Stephen Corry  
Director

**From:** Stephen Corry [mailto:[director@survivalinternational.org](mailto:director@survivalinternational.org)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 15, 2014 12:16 PM  
**To:** [hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Ecoguard abuse

Dear Dr. Njiforti,

I am forwarding you my email of 8 May as I do not seem to have received any acknowledgement. I'd be grateful if you'd confirm receipt and let us know which time suits you for a Skype conversation.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Corry  
Director

**From:** Hanson Njiforti <[hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Ecoguard abuse  
**Date:** 15 May 2014 17:57:34 BST  
**To:** Stephen Corry <[director@survivalinternational.org](mailto:director@survivalinternational.org)>

Dear Mr Corry,

I am now back in Cameroon with a very charged daily program. Please let us Skype tomorrow May 16 at 10am GMT. My Skype is hnjiforti

Regards,

Hanson Njiforti (PhD) | Country Director | WWF Cameroon Country Programme | P.O. Box 6776, Yaounde, Cameroon | Tel: [+237 22 217083](tel:+23722217083) +237 77500035 Direct: [+41 22 364 9038](tel:+41223649038) | E-mail: [hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org) | Skype: hnjiforti

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-----Original Message-----

From: Stephen Corry [<mailto:sc@survivalinternational.org>]

Sent: Friday, May 16, 2014 11:02 AM

To: [hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org)

Subject: Survival International

Dear Dr Njiforti,

Thank you for your email. I am unfortunately unable to talk today. Might we reschedule to next week?

I have asked two colleagues to speak to you and will try to get them together at a time of your convenience. Say, next Monday or Tuesday.

Anyway, I'll wait for you to suggest a time and day.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Corry

**From:** Hanson Njiforti <[hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org)>  
**Subject: RE: Survival International**  
**Date:** 16 May 2014 11:07:21 BST  
**To:** Stephen Corry <[sc@survivalinternational.org](mailto:sc@survivalinternational.org)>

Dear Mr Corry,

I was waiting for your call. To enable me see if we can Skype next week as you say, please inform at least 2 days in advance. I travel a lot.

Best regards,

Hanson Njiforti (PhD) | Country Director | WWF Cameroon Country  
Programme | P.O.Box 6776, Yaounde, Cameroon | Tel: +237 22 217083 +237  
77500035 Direct:  
+41 22 364 9038 | E-mail: [hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org) | Skype: hnjiforti

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**We help tribal peoples  
defend their lives, protect  
their lands and determine  
their own futures.**

Dr Hanson Njiforti  
Country Director  
WWF Cameroon Country Programme  
P.O. Box 6776  
Yaounde  
Cameroon

5 June 2014

Dear Dr Njiforti,

#### **WWF-funded ecoguard abuse**

Thank you for meeting on Skype with my colleagues at Survival to discuss WWF's involvement in the Boumba Bek, Lobéké, and Nki National Parks, and for sending us the Memorandum of Understanding between the Baka and the Ministry of Forests and Fauna together with the mapping study report. The management plans for Boumba Bek and Nki that you sent appear to be first drafts; could we see the most recent version of these plans? We would also be grateful for a copy of the current management plan for Lobéké.

As discussed during your Skype conversation, this is not the first time that WWF Cameroon has been shown evidence of abuse by ecoguards. Indeed there is a wealth of evidence pointing towards systematic failings in the management of the parks. Whilst we welcome WWF's efforts to encourage the government to investigate these crimes, we would be concerned if this was your only response.

As you know, a thorough government investigation is likely to take a long time, during which the Baka's basic human rights will continue to be violated. As WWF funds and supports the ecoguards through the Ministry of Forests and Fauna, we believe that your organization has a responsibility to take action itself. We therefore urge WWF to take immediate action to cease funding, directly or indirectly, the abuse of Baka men and women by ecoguards, and not simply to wait for the government's investigation.

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Right Livelihood Award 1989  
**Survival International  
Charitable Trust**  
Registered Charity 267444  
Company registered in England  
no. 1056317  
Registered office as at 129

In any event, we would of course be happy to advise on how any investigation might be best conducted from the perspective of guaranteeing tribal peoples rights. For example, the investigation would be of little or no value if it were restricted to the two villages mentioned in our previous letter; if it did not include Baka NGOs and other independent observers such as the National Human Rights Commission; and if its results were not made public. We would be grateful if you would send the contact details of the relevant people involved in the commission, so that we can also share our point of view with them.

I also wish to reiterate that this abuse is only one of many violations of the Baka's rights. As your study shows, much of their land remains unmapped. We are aware that WWF has advocated for the Baka to retain "customary rights" to parts of the park, but we know that many Baka living in and around these parks are still not fully aware of these provisions, and that they are not respected by many ecoguards.

The Baka therefore continue to be denied not only collective land ownership rights but their usufruct rights too. These rights are enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and ILO Convention 169, both of which WWF endorses.

We believe WWF needs to take responsibility for the funds and support it provides the government, and that it obviously cannot wait for the government to take action alone. Similarly, other organisations that fund and support the Ministry of Forests and Fauna need to act, and we are asking them to do so.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Corry  
Director

Dr Hanson Njiforti  
Country Director  
WWF Cameroon Country Programme  
P.O. Box 6776  
Yaoundé  
Cameroon

15 July 2014

Dear Dr Njiforti,

Abuse of Baka 'Pygmies' by ecoguards in Cameroon

Following the skype conversation between you and Survival staff on 22 June and my letter to you of 5 June, we have consulted with various people about the planned investigation into the abuse of Baka 'Pygmies' by ecoguards employed by the Ministry of Forests and Fauna and supported by the 'Jengi' programmes funded by WWF.

We have concluded that the Ministry of Social Affairs is not the appropriate organisation to direct the investigation, and that there would be a conflict of interest if the Ministry for Forests and Fauna, which employs the ecoguards, were to take part in it.

One recommendation we have received is for the National Human Rights Commission, an independent body, to head the enquiry. I hope you will agree that not only must the commission be fully independent, but it must also be seen as such, especially by the Baka.

We are very concerned about the safety of Baka victims and witnesses. Researchers from Survival and other organizations who have either witnessed incidents of abuse or gathered first-hand testimonies, do not feel able to supply more information to the investigation unless effective measures are in place which ensure the safety of the victims and witnesses.

Survival believes that the abuse of Baka by ecoguards is so serious and widespread that it warrants immediate action. Wittingly or unwittingly, WWF has allowed itself to be party to a system in which serious assaults on the Baka are taking place in many communities at the hands of ecoguards who know they can act with impunity.

We would like to know what measures WWF will put in place now, before the investigation is launched and completed, to ensure that it is not funding, directly or indirectly, acts of abuse committed by ecoguards.

As you will be aware, research in many parts of the world increasingly demonstrates that tribal peoples such as the Baka, play a crucial role in the protection of biodiversity and conservation of eco-systems when their land rights are recognized and upheld. These rights are enshrined in ILO Convention 169, the international law on tribal and indigenous peoples, and in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

However, for decades the Baka and other 'Pygmy' peoples have been denied their land rights. Forced from their forest homes, the Baka are now in an impossible and desperate situation. In many of their forests they are forbidden to hunt, an activity that is fundamental to their livelihood. If they do hunt to feed their families, they are frequently treated as criminals and face torture, beatings and harassment. Many today are condemned to a life of poverty, living on the margins of their land in communities where alcohol addiction, prostitution, wage slavery are leading to very poor health, mental illnesses and malnutrition.

Unless their rights to their lands and resources are recognised and upheld by both WWF and the government of Cameroon, we fear that many Baka communities will disintegrate and they will ultimately be destroyed as a people.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Corry  
Director

cc:  
WWF International Secretariat  
WWF UK  
WWF USA  
WWF Netherlands  
HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, President Emeritus, WWF



**WWF**

**for a living planet**

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[www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org)

O/ref. CCPO/DN/FY15/027/HN/ann

July 24, 2014

**Mr Stephen Corry**  
**Director**  
**Survival International**  
6 Charterhouse Buildings  
London EC1M 7ET  
United Kingdom

**Subject :** Your correspondence dated 15 July 2014

Dear Mr Corry,

I am responding on behalf of WWF to your essentially similar recent letters 15 of July 2014 to HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, the President of WWF International, WWF International Secretariat, the CEO of WWF UK, the CEO of WWF USA, and the CEO of WWF Netherlands on the matter of the accusations about Baka rights violations.

WWF has through several exchanges (letters, Skype, telephone) confirmed to you its real concern about these accusations. We have repeatedly sought to have more information from you about such accusations as they would allow us to make informed decisions. You have thus far not provided us with specific information rendering adequate action from us very difficult. We are committed to act on any verified evidence of human right abuses especially in our priority landscapes (including the Eastern Region of Cameroon in this case).

We note your concern about the parties we had proposed for the investigation and would be agreeable for the National Human Rights Commission to carry out the investigation alone as you suggest in my copy of your letters of 15 July 2014. However, it must be noted that the NCHRF can only carry out investigations into formal complaints. We are therefore suggesting that you lunch the former complaint with the facts you have (WWF has insufficient facts and cannot file the complaint). We would be happy to support such efforts with the NCHRF.

We are concerned at the amount of time all of us have spent on letters, telephone and Skype calls without arriving at the way forward for this serious allegation of human rights abuse. Beyond the investigation we both agree is called for, we still would kindly request your support in proposing additional measures such as the setting up of a grievances mechanism for human rights abuse. We believe your expertise may be crucial for us to be successful with such efforts. Please feel assured that we have already communicated your complaints to the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife and that we are ready to act upon the results of the investigation.

.../...

President: Yolanda Kakabadse  
Director General: Marco Lambertini  
President Emeritus:  
HRH The Duke of Edinburgh  
Founder President:  
HRH Prince Bernhard of The  
Netherlands

Registered as:  
WWF-World Wide Fund For Nature  
WWF-Fondo Mondiale per la Natura  
WWF-Fondo Mundial para la Naturaleza  
WWF-Fonds Mondial pour la Nature  
WWF-Welt Natur Fo  
Also known as World Wildlife Fund



The Cameroon National Commission on Human Rights and Freedom can be reached through the following contact address:

The Cameroon National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF)  
SGBC Building 2nd Floor, Opposite Chamber of Agriculture, Yaoundé, Cameroun  
B.P. 20317, Yaoundé, Cameroon  
Tel: (237) 22- 22 61 17  
Fax: (237) 22-22 60 82  
Email: cndhl@iccnnet.cm, cdbanda26@yahoo.fr

Sincere regards,

  
**Dr Hanson Njiforti**  
**Country Director**



CC

- WWF International Secretariat,
- the CEO of WWF UK,
- the CEO of WWF USA,
- the CEO of WWF Netherlands



WWF-UK  
Registered office  
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Tel: +44 (0)1483 426444  
info@wwf.org.uk  
wwf.org.uk

Mr Stephen Corry  
Director  
Survival International  
6 Charterhouse Buildings  
London  
EC1M 7ET

28 July 2014

*Dear Mr Corry,*

Thank you for your letter of 15 July to David Nussbaum, regarding abuse of Baka 'Pygmies' in Cameroon, which he has passed to me for response. I'm afraid that we did not receive the letter of 17 March to which you refer in your opening paragraph.

Your correspondence to date on this subject has been with Dr Hanson Njiforti, Country Director of the WWF Cameroon Country Programme, and I am aware that a similar letter from you has been received by WWF-International and others. I am aware of Dr Njiforti's response to the issues you raise, in his letter of 24 July, which sets out WWF's perspective from the office in the WWF Network most competent to do so.

WWF-UK's funding to projects in Cameroon does not extend to the 'Jengi' projects to which you refer in your letter. I would, however, like to assure you that WWF-UK endorses the WWF Network policy on Indigenous Peoples which, *inter alia*, "...recognizes that indigenous peoples have the rights to the lands, territories, and resources that they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and that those rights must be recognized and effectively protected, as laid out in the ILO Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples".

We treat information alleging malpractice or abuse by individuals or agencies associated with WWF projects or funding seriously. The specific issues you raise are being addressed appropriately by colleagues at WWF-International and WWF Cameroon. Thank you for drawing these matters to our attention as well.

*Yours sincerely,*

Owen Gibbons  
Executive Adviser to the Chief Executive

Cc: David Nussbaum  
Dr Hanson Njiforti, WWF-Cameroon



President: His Royal Highness,  
The Prince of Wales KG, KT, GCB, OM  
Chair: Sir Andrew Cahn KCMG  
Chief Executive: David Nussbaum

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Switzerland

**We are the global movement  
for tribal peoples' rights. We help  
them defend their lives, protect  
their lands and determine their  
own futures.**

2 October 2014

Dear Dr Lambertini,

**Re: Abuse of Baka by wildlife officers in Cameroon**

I write further to my letter of 15 July regarding the abuse of Baka in Cameroon by anti-poaching squads for which WWF provides both financial and logistical support. Despite the serious nature of this letter, we received no response from your office.

In his letter of 24 July 2014, Dr Njiforti, the director of WWF-Cameroon, states:

We have repeatedly sought to have more information from you about such accusations as they would allow us to make informed decisions. You have thus far not provided us with specific information rendering adequate action from us very difficult.

The notion that WWF has received insufficient information to make "informed decisions" is not tenable. WWF has repeatedly been made aware of the problems by other NGOs and by the Baka themselves, as well as by Survival International.

This perhaps explains why, in his reply to our first letter of 17 March 2014, Dr Njiforti did not ask us for any further information. On the contrary he told us by phone (22 May 2014) that, on the strength of our letter, he believed that an investigation should now be conducted by a commission appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

We discussed this proposal with various contacts and wrote again to Dr Njiforti on 5 June. We expressed concern that such an investigation would not be seen to be impartial or independent, and asked for contact details for the commission that Dr Njiforti said he would provide. We emphasised that, in our view, WWF should take immediate steps to ensure its support did not facilitate still further abuse while an investigation was carried out. We received no reply.

We then wrote to Dr Njiforti again (15 July 2014) to reiterate these concerns about the proposed investigation. It was only after we wrote to HRH Prince Philip and others



within WWF did we finally receive a response (24 July 2014). More than four months after our initial letter had, we believed, persuaded Dr Njiforti that the allegations against the anti-poaching guards should be properly investigated, we were now told that it would be “very difficult to take adequate action” on the material we had provided.

Dr Njiforti’s attitude is not an isolated one. There has been a marked reluctance on the part of WWF generally to respond in any practical way to repeated allegations that Baka have been and continue to be abused by the anti-poaching squads that it supports.

As we have previously explained, in 2012 a former WWF consultant witnessed first-hand a violent raid on the village of Ngatto Ancien. Shortly afterwards she told senior WWF staff what she had seen, and of one man’s claim in particular that he been subjected to simulated drowning. We have found no evidence that anything was done.

The same person had also spoken to the head of the Protected Areas Division at the Ministry of Forests and Fauna, which employs the wildlife officers. He had freely admitted to her that “*we torture [individuals accused of poaching] when they do not want to talk.*” She informed the director of WWF Cameroon about this conversation. Once again, nothing seems to have been done.

In 2011 Baka in the village of Yenga made a video about the abuse to which they had been subjected at the hands of wildlife officers. Baka in Yenga have told us and others that this abuse continues. WWF’s only response was to ask the NGO that had hosted the video on its website to take it down, or at least to remove all mention of WWF. You provided no evidence, however, that called into question the content of the video itself.

NGO workers in Cameroon tell us that they have reported similar incidents to WWF time and time again. The Forest Peoples Programme has published reports on the abuse of the Baka by wildlife officers, to which Mr van Boekel specifically referred in our telephone conference in May. WWF has apparently taken no steps in response to these reports either.

This supine approach makes a mockery not only of WWF’s avowed commitment to ILO Convention 169 and UNDRIP, but of its own Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation. We have seen precious little evidence that WWF has applied any of these principles in southeast Cameroon.

WWF has equally ignored the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which apply to conservation organizations as they do to any other business. At the core of these Principles is the duty of due diligence. This requires WWF to have in place a process to identify any adverse impact that its operations may have on the human rights of local communities. Without this, obviously, it cannot hope to discharge its duty to respect those rights.

If WWF Cameroon has created such a process, we have yet to be told what it is. On the contrary, Dr Njiforti apparently thinks that he need do nothing at all until someone else has shown that his support for anti-poaching squads has facilitated the abuse of Baka rights. His conduct betrays an alarming misunderstanding of WWF’s responsibilities.

We have filed a submission to the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms in Cameroon, and hope that WWF finally takes action to ensure that its support does not facilitate further abuses while the Commission investigates. If you are unable to do this, you surely have no alternative but to withdraw your support for the Ministry of Forests and Fauna.

Many Baka have asked us to publicise their predicament as widely as possible, and we will shortly issue a press statement.

Yours sincerely,



**Stephen Corry**  
Director

Cc. Dr Hanson Njiforti, Country Director, WWF-Cameroon  
Ms Isabella Pratesi, Head of International Conservation, WWF-Italy  
Mr Mark Languy, Head of WWF-CARPO  
Jane Ganeau, Assistant to the Director General

# Survival



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Switzerland

**We are the global movement  
for tribal peoples' rights. We help  
them defend their lives, protect  
their lands and determine their  
own futures.**

10 October 2014

Dear Dr Lambertini,

## Abuse of Baka by wildlife officers

I was glad to read on WWF-Italy's website on Wednesday that "WWF has proposed to suspend support to the enforcement of the laws for the defence of protected species in three protected areas (Lobeke, Bouba Bek [sic], and Nki)."

Can you confirm that WWF will in fact be suspending all the support, financial and otherwise, that it provides the Ministry of Forests and Fauna for operations in the East and South provinces, as well as any unmarked budgetary support, which may be misused for these violations? As we emphasised to Dr Njiforti and Mr van Boekel over the phone, these abuses are not confined to the interior or peripheries of the three parks.

For example, we have received reports that wildlife officers have tortured Baka in Assoumindele, near Mbalam, and violently persecuted Baka in the logging concessions connected to Vasto Legno, one of WWF's partners. We have also received reports that Congolese wildlife officers have crossed into Cameroon and beaten Baka.

We urge WWF to ensure that the support it provides the government of the Republic of Congo, including through its WWF-ETIC programme, is not facilitating human rights abuses either.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

**Stephen Corry**  
Director

Cc. **Dr Hanson Njiforti**, Country Director, WWF-Cameroon  
**Mr Mark Languy**, Head of WWF-CARPO

Founded in 1969  
Right Livelihood Award 1989

Survival International Charitable Trust  
Registered Charity 2674139  
Company registered in England number 1056317  
Registered office as above

Mr Stephen Corry  
Director  
Survival International  
6 Charterhouse Buildings  
London EC1M 7ET  
United Kingdom

16 October 2014

Dear Mr Corry,

Thank you for your letter dated 2 October. First of all let me stress very clearly that WWF has a worldwide track record of solid and constructive work with and for local communities and indigenous people, including a long record of assisting and supporting the Baka in South East Cameroon and of assisting and supporting efforts to combat the wildlife crime that is among the most severe threats to their environment and livelihoods.

I personally have been involved with many local communities and indigenous people including the Baka and fully appreciate the fragile status of their human rights in many regions of central Africa.

We also passionately believe that our biodiversity and environmental agenda is a crucial foundation to any solid and long term social development plan, as it addresses the connection between the Baka and the forest and wildlife so crucial to their own livelihood.

Also I want to make very clear that immediately after receiving your letter dated 15 July 2014, I transmitted it to WWF-Cameroon for appropriate follow-up. WWF-Cameroon responded to you on 24 July. WWF is not an office, it is a Network, and we work in an environment of distributed functions and responsibilities. The fact that it was WWF-Cameroon and not me responding to your letter is part of the way we operate with truly empowered national organizations.

I regret that our two organisations seem unable to work together towards resolution of these issues and would point out that Survival International's campaign of denigrating WWF hardly helps foster the collaborative action that will most advance the cause of the Baka.

WWF-Cameroon practice is to take sufficiently grounded allegations to the competent authorities. For instance, concerns raised by a WWF consultant in the field about unacceptable Ecoguard behaviour towards both Baka and Bantu persons was raised directly and in person with the Minister by a then senior WWF-Cameroon officer at a meeting convened for that purpose. This may relate to some of the incidents outlined in your letter.

Survival International has failed to provide detail of allegations on the grounds that the safety of individuals might be at stake and has also castigated WWF for not taking action on incidents for which we have insufficient detail to propose proper investigation.

It has been some months since WWF-Cameroon agreed that these allegations warranted independent investigation by a body that could make recommendations that would add to civil society efforts to address the allegations of abuse and the underlying conditions that allow abuse. WWF nominated one such investigative mechanism but readily agreed to support a submission to the NHRFC as it was your preferred agency of investigation.

It has been difficult for WWF to respond to your letter (October 2) on the submission made to the NHRFC when, to WWF's knowledge, the NHRFC had received no such submission. Now that a submission has been lodged (October 13), WWF-Cameroon has written to the NHRFC indicating its support for this investigation. WWF generally stands behind this commitment.

I would submit to you that it is now time for our two organisations to discuss how to maximise the prospects of a successful investigation. I would like to strongly underline that our commitment for the strictest respect of human rights has always inspired the design and implementation of our field programmes. It would be highly unfortunate if you were to present the beginning of the investigation as a result of a campaign of few hundred emails when, in fact, it has been waiting on your submission.

None of the Baka organisations WWF works with on the ground has requested that WWF cut support for forest and wildlife protection activities pending the outcome of any inquiry or for any other reason. In the face of the current onslaught on forests and resources in Cameroon, it is hard to see how such a course of action would benefit Baka and other communities dependent on Protected Area forests and resources.

WWF has much common ground with Survival International on indigenous peoples and their role in conservation. It is WWF that has been working on the ground in these often very difficult conditions and realities, facing complex and sometimes competing issues to advance a crucial agenda for nature and for people.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marco Lambertini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marco Lambertini  
Director General

# Survival



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Director General  
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for tribal peoples' rights. We help  
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their lands and determine their  
own futures.**

(by email to mlambertini@wwfint.org)

28 October 2014

Dear Dr Lambertini,

**Re: abuse of Baka by anti-poaching squads supported by WWF**

Thank you for your letter of 16 October. We are confused by WWF's reaction to our concerns, and I thought it worth clarifying our position, as well as putting some questions to you. To date, we are hearing at least two different responses from different components of your organization.

- 1) On the one hand, we are told our allegations are "absurd" and "self-serving" etc.
- 2) We are also told that we should provide details about specific cases, so these can be "investigated."

At the same time, no one in WWF actually denies that the anti-poaching squads, who depend on your funding, abuse the Baka, and have been doing so for many years. Indeed, you will be aware that WWF has known this for over 13 years, and it's nearly 25 years since we first raised with your office in Cameroon the problem of planning for national parks which expropriated Baka land. The abuse is ongoing and systematic. It obviously won't be resolved by investigating a few specific cases (though we have given you details of some), or insisting on detailed accounts from named victims who have been seriously intimidated for years, and so are unlikely to collaborate with those they see as their abusers, or (eventually) reprimanding a handful of individual guards.

WWF claims its policies are in line with the international standards on tribal peoples. These acknowledge ownership rights over tribal lands and are clear that nothing should happen on those lands without the proper consent of those who have always lived there. We do not believe WWF actually upholds these policies; we are calling for it to start doing so.

I suggest that, were your organization actually to apply the standards it claims to hold: it would take immediate, and long overdue, steps to tell wildlife guards that abusing Baka will result in (at least) their dismissal, as well as action being brought against them; it would inform the Baka that they have every right to use their forests, as they did prior to the establishment of “conservation” zones, and that WWF will actively support them in exercising this right; it would stop all collaboration with loggers and others who are destroying the Baka forests; and, it would stop supporting safari hunting concerns operating on tribal lands in violation of your stated policies.

We are well aware that such an agenda may appear “unrealistic” to you, that it would affect your income, and that WWF will argue that the reality on the ground is too “complicated” to pursue it.

Our view is that if you are unable to uphold your policies, you should at the very least not yourselves be funding those operations which violate them, particularly when they are in breach of international law and hurt, and even kill, people. Our objective however has nothing to do with whether or not you stop your funding of wildlife guards, it is simply to stop the violation of Baka rights. (I would point out, as an aside, that it was widely reported in Italy that you *would* halt funding pending an investigation. I now note that this was never your intention.)

I am copying this letter to the heads of WWF components we have been in touch with over this important matter, and would be grateful if you would take steps to ensure our concerns are not further belittled.

If you are indeed willing to work together over this, we would like to look into how WWF has handled the various submissions it has received on this topic over the years, as well as how Baka rights were considered during the creation of the conservation zones. To do this properly requires an examination of original documents, and I wonder whether your office would be willing to send us copies of relevant archives, or at least say where we might see them. We will be making the same request of WWF-Cameroon and anything you could do to expedite this would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

**Stephen Corry**

Director

Cc.

Ms Isabelle Autissier, President, WWF-France

Mr Eberhard Brandes, Managing Director, WWF-Germany

Mr Pedro Calderón Antuñano, President, WWF Spain

Mr Luigi Epomiceno, Director, WWF-Italy

Ms Jane Ganeau, Assistant to the Director General  
Mr J. A. Van de Gronden, CEO, WWF-Netherlands  
Ms Yolanda Kakabadse Navarro, President, WWF-International  
Mr Johannes Kirchgatter, Africa Expert, WWF-Germany  
Mr Mark Languy, Head of WWF-CARPO  
Mr Tony Long, Director of WWF European Policy Office  
Dr Hanson Njiforti, Country Director, WWF-Cameroon  
Mr David Nussbaum, CEO, WWF-UK  
Ms Isabella Pratesi, Head of International Conservation, WWF-Italy  
Mr Carter S Roberts, CEO, WWF-US

Founded in 1969  
Right Livelihood Award 1989

Survival International Charitable Trust  
Registered Charity 267444  
Company registered in England number 1056317  
Registered office as above



Mr Stephen Corry  
Director  
Survival International  
6 Charterhouse Buildings  
London EC1M 7ET  
United Kingdom

4 November 2014

Dear Mr Corry,

For your information I attach the letter sent to the Cameroon Human Rights and Freedom Commission informing them of WWF-Cameroon's support for the investigation requested 13 October by Survival International.

The commitment of support includes WWF-Cameroon and the WWF Network providing the Cameroon Human Rights and Freedom Commission with any information the Commission requests that is in WWF's possession that pertains to the allegations raised by Survival International and the underlying issue of whether Baka face systemic abuse from Ecoguards or others.

I can also assure you that, while the investigation is in progress, WWF-Cameroon will have the support of our Network in improving the relation between Ministry of Forests and Fauna Eco-guards and communities, including Baka, when undertaking law enforcement and other activities they are in charge of.

We will also continue working towards protecting the forests Baka depend on from increasing threats of forest conversion. While doing that, we will be continuing to work collaboratively with Baka and other concerned organisations on the ground in Cameroon in having Baka rights to forest occupation and access better established, secured and protected.

Yours sincerely,



Marco Lambertini  
Director General



for a living planet®

WWF Central Africa Regional Programme Office, CARPO Cameroon Country Programme Office Immeuble Panda, Rue La Citronnelle, BAT Compound, Bastos BP 6776 Yaounde Republic of Cameroon

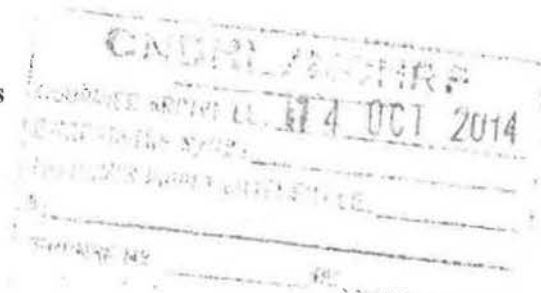
Tel: (237) 22 21 70 84 / 83 22 00 77 03 77 50 00 35 99 50 36 21 Fax: (237) 22 21 70 85 22 21 42 40 hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org www.panda.org

O/Ref: CCPO/DN/FY15/085/RS/ann

Handwritten signature: Essenyé Zom / ENDAH 15/10/2014

Yaoundé, 15 October 2014

To: The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms Yaoundé Cameroon



Dear Sir,

DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FOR INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE OF BAKAS AS REQUESTED BY SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL

Through its Cameroon Country Program Office in Yaoundé, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) supports the' Cameroonian Government in the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources to the benefit of the Cameroonian society in general and the local people, dependent on such resources, in particular.

This support includes capacity development for staff of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF), technical advice for the management of National Parks and their surrounding areas and the co-financing and logistical support of anti-poaching patrols conducted by MINFOF eco-guardians in and around National Parks.

However, and in accordance with our mandate as an international NGO, WWF does not carry out anti-poaching operations or any other law enforcement activity on its own.

In all our conservation activities the local population plays a crucial role as only with their support can our conservation work be effective and sustainable. Ethnic minorities, such as the Baka Pygmies, are of particular concern to us as their livelihoods are closely linked to the use of forests and wildlife.

Consequently, WWF has established and remains committed to a policy framework that aims at preventing negative socio-economic impacts, respecting cultures and traditional rights and promoting participation of and benefit sharing with local people. Such principles are put into practice as core components of ongoing conservation projects and through specific livelihood, education and health support projects implemented in communities around protected areas.

Most of all, WWF human rights policies and related codes of conduct are to ensure the protection of human rights, the prevention of discrimination and the equal and just treatment of all people, irrespective of their nationality, ethnic affiliation, level of education, sex or age. As such, WWF is categorically opposed to any violation of human rights of Bakas, Bantus or any other ethnic group, including the abuse of any individual that has been arrested, is interrogated or in any other way affected by law enforcement activities. Since 2006 WWF has supported the provision of human rights training for staff of the Ministry of Forest and Wildlife (MINFOF) and is currently examining ways to extend this training.

.../...

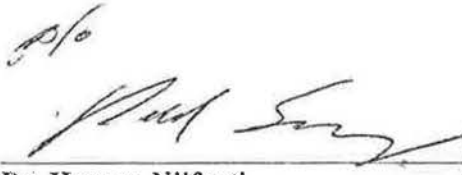
President: Yolanda Kakabadse Director General: Marco Lambertini President Emeritus: HRH The Duke of Edinburgh Founder President: HRH Prince Bernhard of The Netherlands

Registered as: WWF-World Wide Fund For Nature WWF-Fondo Mondiale per la Natura WWF-Fondo Mundial para la Naturaleza WWF-Fonds Mondial pour la Nature WWF-Weit Natur Fonds Also known as World Wildlife Fund

WWF took up a set of allegations brought to its attention by field staff engaged in programmes to assist the Baka directly with the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife in 2012. WWF has been in contact recently with Survival International, which has brought forward allegations, some of which may relate to the matters taken up by WWF previously and some of which are not known in any detail by WWF.

WWF-Cameroon wishes to inform the Commission that WWF fully supports the investigation of the issues raised by Survival International by the Commission. WWF-Cameroon notified Survival International that it would support a NHRFC investigation into the allegations on July 24. Please contact me in relation to any matter where I may be able to assist with this investigation.

Yours faithfully,



**Dr. Hanson Njiforti**  
**WWF Country Director**  
**Cameroon**



**Survival**



**Survival International**  
6 Charterhouse Buildings  
London EC1M 7ET  
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Dr Marco Lambertini  
Director General  
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Switzerland

**We are the global movement  
for tribal peoples' rights. We help  
them defend their lives, protect  
their lands and determine their  
own futures.**

(by email to mlambertini@wwfint.org)

6 November 2014

Dear Dr Lambertini,

**Re: abuse of Baka by anti-poaching squads supported by WWF**

Thank you for your letter of 4 November. Your support for an investigation into the abuse of Baka by the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms is encouraging.

I note that you have not responded to many of the points raised in my correspondence of 27 October, and would like to draw your attention, in particular, to my questions from the end of that letter. Will WWF make available, or let us see, historical documentation relating to how Baka land use and rights were dealt with when the national parks and safari hunting zones were originally planned? Will it also let us see historical documents relating to how it dealt with earlier reports of abuse?

I hope you agree that it is in the interests of all parties, and of the public at large, for there to be the most complete transparency possible over such matters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stephen Corry'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Stephen Corry**

Director



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**panda.org**

Mr Stephen Corry  
Director  
Survival International  
6 Charterhouse Buildings  
London EC1M 7ET  
United Kingdom

26 January 2015

Dear Mr Corry,

My apologies for the delay in responding to your letter of 6 November 2014.

As previously noted, WWF-Cameroon and WWF generally have committed to assist the Cameroon National Commission on Human Rights and Freedom in the matter of the investigation requested by Survival International into allegations raised by Survival International.

In response to your query regarding access to WWF records, I agree with the need for complete transparency and would simply reiterate that we have committed to making WWF staff and all requested documentation available to the Commission.

Yours sincerely,

Marco Lambertini  
Director General

Dr Marco Lambertini  
Director General  
WWF-International  
Avenue du Mont-Blanc  
1196 Gland  
Switzerland

27 March 2014

Dear Dr. Lambertini,

### **Abuse of Baka by anti-poaching squads in Cameroon**

It has now been over a year since we contacted WWF regarding the anti-poaching squads it funds in Cameroon that are abusing the Baka and their neighbours. This problem has been repeatedly documented and brought to WWF's attention for over 13 years.

As we emphasised before, this is not confined to the Boumba Bek, Nki and Lobeke national parks. Baka have been tortured in the Ngoyla-Mintom-Kom-Mengame landscape, where WWF also funds wildlife officers.

Baka have also been beaten by Congolese wildlife officers, funded by WWF, who have crossed into Cameroon. There is a risk of this type of abuse happening to Baka in Northern Congo, since there are no safeguards in place to prevent it there either.

The investigation by the Cameroonian Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms has still not got off the ground, more than five months after the complaint was lodged. We have been told that it only intends to visit four villages and publish its findings only at the end of the year.

We do not believe it is acceptable for WWF to sit by and allow more of the Baka and their neighbours to be abused, tortured and even killed using WWF's support whilst an investigation drags on. It is still virtually impossible for Baka to inform WWF of any abuse.

What immediate steps is WWF taking to ensure it is not funding human rights violations?

We note that a recent public statement by WWF says that “[t]he communities we work with are not asking us to suspend support for the protection of the forests.” However, Baka from Ndongo (the village in which WWF has its South East Project base<sup>1</sup>) did in fact ask WWF in November last year to stop financing anti-poaching squads.

WWF stated recently that it “is reviewing field experience and [its] activities in support of the Baka and forest protection in Cameroon.” This is encouraging, especially since Baka are still complaining that WWF is not applying its principles on conservation and indigenous peoples to its work in Cameroon.

For instance, WWF has vowed not to support the creation of protected areas or the imposition of restrictions on subsistence resource use unless these have received the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of affected indigenous communities.

I would be grateful if you answered the following questions:

1. How has WWF determined that the Baka have given their FPIC to the “protected areas” that have been created on their lands?
2. How has WWF determined that the Baka have given their FPIC to the 1994 Forest Code and associated decrees that often class them as criminals when they hunt for subsistence?
3. May we please see copies of the strategic, monitoring and operational plans and workplans that have been produced as part of WWF’s work in Cameroon and Northern Congo?

Yours sincerely,



**Stephen Corry**  
Director

Cc. **Mr Phil Dickie**, Head, Issues Management, WWF  
**Mr Frederick Kumah**, Director, Africa, WWF

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<sup>1</sup> Please see [http://wwf.panda.org/what\\_we\\_do/where\\_we\\_work/congo\\_basin\\_forests/the\\_area/ndongo/](http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/where_we_work/congo_basin_forests/the_area/ndongo/)



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for tribal peoples' rights. We help  
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Dr Marco Lambertini  
Director General  
WWF-International  
Avenue du Mont-Blanc  
1196 Gland  
Switzerland

10 April 2015

Dear Dr Lambertini,

### **Abuse of Baka by anti-poaching squads in Cameroon**

Further to my letter of 31 March, I understand that Frederick Kumah, your Africa Director, is saying that WWF has been taking "issues of alleged and probable abuse [of Baka and their neighbours] that have come to [its] attention up directly with the Minister and Ministry of Forests and Fauna."

As funder of the ecoguards responsible for the violence, your responsibility surely goes beyond merely informing the government, and in any case doing so does not seem to have had the desired effect.

Moreover, in some cases WWF seems not to have taken any action at all. We may of course be mistaken, which is why we asked you on 28 October and 6 November 2014 to provide us with material showing how WWF dealt with past incidents of abuse. To date we have had no response.

Specifically, we would like to ask whether we might

- (1) see a copy of the report that led WWF to believe that the Baka who made a video in 2011 to complain about this problem (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22O1b9xe2Rk>) had been "tricked and persuaded" by a "foreigner" into making false statements. We understand that Dan Forman of WWF-US told Gareth Benest, Director of Programmes at InsightShare, that this report would be released.



(2) know exactly what steps WWF took after it was made aware of an incident in 2010 in which a Baka man was allegedly crippled by an anti-poaching squad. Louis Defo, WWF Jengi Collaborative Management Advisor, was interviewed about this incident for the attached news article.

Yours sincerely,



**Stephen Corry**  
Director

Cc. Mr Phil Dickie, Head, Issues Management, WWF  
Mr Frederick Kumah, Director, Africa, WWF

**From:** Phil Dickie [mailto:[pdickie@wwfint.org](mailto:pdickie@wwfint.org)]

**Sent:** 12 May 2015 15:37

**To:** 'Michael Hurren'

**Subject:** RE: Kamerun: Baka-Indigene: Stellungnahme des WWF

Dear Michael,

Apologies for the delays. We have a lot in process around this and related issues and the priority has been working on the issue rather than responding to letters.

This is a personal note. I would prefer to operate on the basis that our organisations both have the interests of the Baka and other indigenous people at heart. If so, and we can get to a basis of trusting each other we may be able to do some good. If you want to explore the possibilities, let me know.

I am not a stranger to this topic, having worked on indigenous issues as a journalist and consultant in Australia and as a consultant to the UNHCHR during the time that UNDRIP was finally coming forward for endorsement.

Best regards

Phil Dickie



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Mr Stephen Corry  
Director  
Survival International  
6 Charterhouse Buildings  
London EC1M 7ET  
United Kingdom

27 May 2015

Dear Mr Corry,

Thank you for your letter of 27 March 2015.

The insinuation that WWF has done nothing and is doing nothing for the Baka is both untrue and insulting to the many WWF staff engaged for many years in securing rights for the Baka and supporting Baka communities.

I might remind you that our original suggestion to you in relation to the allegations you have raised was to engage directly with the Ministry of Social Affairs. Investigation by the Cameroon National Human Rights and Freedom Commission (NHRFC) was Survival's choice and if you are discontented with that choice, we suggest you take it up directly with the NHRFC.

WWF wrote to the NHRFC in October 2014 to inform them of our support for any investigation they might conduct into the issues and allegations raised by Survival International. We stand by that commitment. To date, we have not heard back from the Commission. As we do not know what issues and supporting material you brought before the Commission as a basis for their investigation, we have no ability to comment on the adequacy of the Commission's response.

Many of the issues you raise on land use decisions, recognition of indigenous rights and the behaviour of government employees are most directly matters for the Government of Cameroon.

WWF has long accepted obligations to negotiate and intercede with the Government on such issues, and in the process has won many concessions for the Baka and other communities. WWF would be prepared to assist arranging meetings between Survival and relevant Cameroon Government offices, if Survival wishes to take up its concerns directly with responsible agencies.

In south east Cameroon, Baka have had the opportunity to be involved in an extensive consultative and consent process around the zoning of the Jengi landscape which has seen the Baka achieve rights and recognition unavailable to Baka and other indigenous peoples in Cameroon.

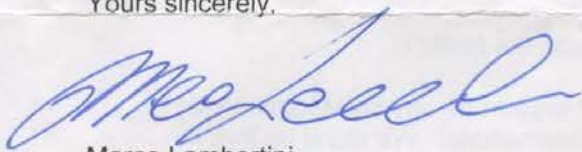
Currently, the most promising avenues for extending rights and recognition to more of Cameroon's indigenous peoples are associated with Cameroon Government reviews of some policies and with UN requirements for projects to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+). WWF is significantly engaged in these processes, including for instance in being a major contributor and facilitator of community inputs into Cameroon's first guidelines for implementation of Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC). \*

We also believe, as do others, that discrimination and mistreatment of the Baka have been exacerbated since 2009 by the linkages between increased abundance of military weaponry, armed conflict over nearby borders, a refugee influx increasing demands on forest resources, an upsurge in organised poaching and a greater military presence in this sensitive border area. We do not, however, accept that there are no means for Baka or others to report abuse – there is a MinFoF hotline, community chiefs have a number of avenues open to them, our experience is that WWF employees and consultants, particularly those working with the communities on social programmes, are readily approached, as are NGOs in the community. We do agree that mechanisms for communities and individuals to provide information of abuse from any quarter need to be formalised and are working on this quite complex issue – not least by ensuring that communities know of available mechanisms. WWF also has its own independent mechanisms for staff or others to raise issues with the conduct of WWF or WWF staff, and we are reviewing how these can be made more readily accessible in regions such as south east Cameroon.

As you may now appreciate, the indigenous rights situation in Cameroon is complex and evolving. The option of removing WWF's proportion of funding for forest protection is both simplistic and likely to cause greater harm to the Baka themselves. The Ecoguard service is providing the services it was intended to, which significantly includes protecting forests, wildlife and access important to Baka culture, livelihoods and welfare. Baka communities we work with are not asking us to suspend protection of forests – indeed, a common key ask of communities during the consultation and consent process for the protected areas in south east Cameroon was for stronger action on poaching.

Survival International appears to have a practice of posting its correspondence to other organisations on its site but not of posting their replies. We also note that you include no facility for comment on your website, which does not allow for any correction of incomplete information or misinformation. Once you remedy this situation, we can return to the discussion of collaborative action to benefit the Baka.

Yours sincerely,



Marco Lambertini  
Director General

\* Operational Guidelines for Obtaining Free, Prior and Informed Consent in REDD+ Initiatives in Cameroon - including Principles, Criteria and Indicators.

[http://loggingoff.info/sites/loggingoff.info/files/062014\\_Cameroon%20National%20FPIC%20Guidelines\\_EN.pdf](http://loggingoff.info/sites/loggingoff.info/files/062014_Cameroon%20National%20FPIC%20Guidelines_EN.pdf)

# Survival



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WWF International  
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**We are the global movement  
for tribal peoples' rights. We help  
them defend their lives, protect  
their lands and determine their  
own futures.**

10 June 2015

Dear Dr Lambertini,

## **Abuse of Baka by anti-poaching squads in Cameroon**

Thank you for your letter of 27 May. We note that you have consistently ignored our repeated requests to make available to us details of the agreements with the government which have restricted Baka access to their ancestral lands. We believe you played, and play, an important role in those arrangements, both when Baka land was "zoned" into hunting and logging concessions, national parks and so forth, as well as concerning its current management.

Without providing any details, you simply claim there was "an extensive consultative and consent process" that the Baka "have had the opportunity to be involved in." However, nothing we have seen or heard leads us to believe that the proper consent of the Baka to their removal from their ancestral land or to restrictions concerning its use was sought or obtained, and I note you don't even claim it was.

If that is so, and if WWF played, and/or continues to play, a role in this, then we believe it is in violation both of international standards concerning indigenous peoples' rights and of the commitment WWF made nearly 20 years ago to uphold them.

Concerning specifically the abuse of Baka by WWF-supported guards, your employees are aware that this is continuing, as they have known for many years. Your attempt to pass sole responsibility to the government authorities – which you are supporting – is we believe neither appropriate nor adequate.

We will continue to press WWF on these points, both directly and more widely.

Yours sincerely,

**Stephen Corry**  
Director

Founded in 1969  
Right Livelihood Award 1989

Survival International Charitable Trust  
Registered Charity 267447  
Company registered in England number 1056317  
Registered office as above

**De:** Frederick Kumah [mailto:[fkumah+canned.response@wwf.panda.org](mailto:fkumah+canned.response@wwf.panda.org)]

**Enviado el:** jueves, 09 de julio de 2015 12:50

**Para:**

**Asunto:** Re: Detenga el apoyo del abuso a los bakas en nombre de la conservación

We share your concerns about the plight of the Baka in South East Cameroon. They do suffer from significant disadvantage and discrimination and WWF has sought to counter this over many years by arresting the destruction of their forests, helping them secure community, forest and hunting rights and providing direct support to their communities. WWF insisted on a high level of informed community consent for the creation of the three National Parks in south east Cameroon, and it should be noted that for many communities, including Baka communities, stronger action against poaching was one of their key priorities.

In the main, the ecoguards have been and are performing their designated function of protecting the forests and securing the access and areas of forest communities, including those of the Baka. Some dealings between Baka and Ecoguards unfortunately reflect the deep seated discrimination faced by the Baka. In recent years, this sensitive border area has also been afflicted by dramatic increases in organised poaching and the availability of military grade weapons. This has meant an increased military presence to counter weapons trafficking and increased casualties among the ecoguards. Communities have also become more subject to tensions, from increased fear and having to deal with threats or inducements from criminal interests. There have undoubtedly been incidents of utterly unacceptable behaviour towards Baka and others by ecoguards and/or police and military – some appear to relate to underlying discrimination being taken to extremes and some to the more militarised dynamic intruding into the area. When unacceptable behaviour has come to WWF's attention and can be verified to some extent, WWF has taken the issue up directly and emphatically with the Cameroon Ministry of Forests and Fauna and improved behaviour has seemed to follow. **Incidents appear to be less in areas where WWF is currently active.**

WWF has considered the suggested approach of just cutting the funding to the Ecoguard service and has concluded it would be highly likely to weaken, not improve, the position of the Baka. Removal of forest protection would place Baka communities back in the situation they faced before the creation of protected areas - at risk of loss of the forests and their resources with no practical recognition or rights or mechanisms to see them respected and extended. In Cameroon, it is only in the context of these few protected areas that the Baka have any practically recognised rights in respect of forests. WWF is also only a part-funder of the service, and it would most likely continue with less emphasis on observance of human rights. WWF realises that community and access rights negotiated for the Baka fall well short of the customary rights recognition specified in instruments such as the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Such recognition can only occur through national legislative, regulatory and implementation measures not currently in place or effective in Cameroon. In such circumstances, civil society coalitions of local and other NGOs such as WWF work together to obtain achievable recognition of rights and levels of protection which can then be a platform for obtaining higher levels of recognition. The emphasis currently is to increase recognition of Baka and other community rights over a greater expanse of Cameroon under the framework of UN climate action related programmes for reduced deforestation (REDD+). Another incremental process important to all forest

communities is the continuing effort to expand the scope for community management of resources.

Please rest assured that WWF has been and remains committed to improving indigenous welfare in south east Cameroon and other areas where we work over the long term

Yours sincerely,

Frederick Kumah  
Director, Africa  
WWF Regional Office for Africa

# Survival



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Dr Marco Lambertini  
Director-General  
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1196 Gland  
Switzerland

19 August 2015

Dear Dr Lambertini,

## Investigation into the impact of WWF's work in Cameroon on the Baka

We understand that WWF commissioned an investigation into the impact of its work on the Baka. Please may we see a copy of the report?

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Corry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Stephen Corry**  
Director

**We are the global movement  
for tribal peoples' rights. We help  
them defend their lives, protect  
their lands and determine their  
own futures.**



----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Phil Dickie** <[pdickie@wwfint.org](mailto:pdickie@wwfint.org)>

Date: Mon, Sep 14, 2015 at 10:00 AM

Subject: Furthering Baka interests in south east Cameroon

To: Michael Hurrin <[mh@survivalinternational.org](mailto:mh@survivalinternational.org)>

Dear Michael,

To the best of my awareness, you have yet to respond to my note exploring the possibilities of working together on furthering the interests of the Baka. That offer still stands and I have put forward a concrete initial suggestion below.

WWF will also be standing by its commitments to support the Cameroon Human Rights and Freedom Commission investigation initiated by Survival, and our more recent offer to try to facilitate meetings between Survival and relevant Cameroon government ministries.

Our most recent correspondence from your director makes no reference to these offers or other requests for equivalent online publication of past WWF responses to his letters or to provide a comment facility on your website for the correction of misleading or incomplete information.

We do, however, wish to keep the lines of communication open for correspondence that could conceivably lead to actions that further Baka interests. There is a lot our organisations have in common. We agree on the degree and unfortunate impacts of Baka marginalisation and are both committed to improving Baka welfare, to the recognition of Baka rights and to the Baka being able to secure a more substantial voice in the management of their resources. It is possible that our organisations have different strengths and face differing limitations, widening the scope for effective joint action.

To explore this possibility could I ask you to forward what detail you have of the most recent episode of alleged Ecoguard abuse of Baka in south east Cameroon that you are aware of to me and we will endeavour to investigate it from our end. I would ask that you do this with further incidents coming to your attention. Where incidents can be sufficiently verified, we can jointly consult on an appropriate and mutually agreeable course of action.

Best regards

Phil Dickie

From: **Phil Dickie** <pdickie@wwfint.org>  
Date: Mon, Sep 14, 2015 at 12:22 PM  
Subject: RE: (request of SI for) Lobeke management plan  
To: fw2@survivalinternational.org

Dear Freddie,

WWF does not see a reason why the management plans should not be public documents, and thus shared with Survival and any other interested parties. However, these are Government of Cameroon documents – we are not able to pass them to you, but would be willing to support your request to the Ministry of Forests and Fauna for them, or to seek permission from MinFof to pass them to you. I believe some of the management plans are under review, with Lobeke likely to be the first to be reissued.

Let me know what your preference is. Feel free to approach me on related issues, we are open to discussion of collaborative action that would materially assist the Baka.

Best regards  
Phil Dickie

WWF International  
[+41 79 7031952](tel:+41797031952)

**From:** [johannes.kirchgatter@wwf.de](mailto:johannes.kirchgatter@wwf.de) [mailto:[johannes.kirchgatter@wwf.de](mailto:johannes.kirchgatter@wwf.de)]  
**Sent:** 16 July 2015 17:27  
**To:** [pdickie@wwfint.org](mailto:pdickie@wwfint.org); [hnjiforti@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:hunjiforti@wwfcarpo.org); [RSprung@wwfcarpo.org](mailto:RSprung@wwfcarpo.org)  
**Subject:** WG: (request of SI for) Lobeke management plan

Dear Phil and Hanson,

As discussed, SI keeps coming back on me with the request on the management plans (see mail below) As these should be public documents (as elsewhere) I think we should send them or -even better- ask the ministry to send them officially. Please let me know what you think and how to answer to SI,

Thanks and best  
Johannes

Gesendet von meinem BlackBerry 10-Smartphone.

**Von:** Freddie Weyman < >  
**Gesendet:** Donnerstag, 16. Juli 2015 17:18  
**An:** Kirchgatter, Johannes  
**Cc:** Percy Vogel  
**Betreff:** Re: Lobeke management plan

Dear Johannes,

Would it be possible to see copies of the three current management plans (Lobeke, Boumba Bek and Nki)? As I said on the phone, we asked WWF Cameroon for copies of these but didn't receive them – you said you'd be able to help?

I know you're busy but I would really appreciate it if we could speak again by phone, even if only briefly.

Best wishes,

Freddie



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Dr Marco Lambertini  
Director-General  
WWF International  
Avenue du Mont-Blanc  
1196 Gland  
Switzerland

**We are the global movement  
for tribal peoples' rights. We help  
them defend their lives, protect  
their lands and determine their  
own futures.**

1 October 2015

Dear Dr Lambertini,

**Re: Furthering Baka interests in south east Cameroon**

I refer to the emails of 14 September from Mr Dickie in your office.

As you probably know, we have long since taken up our concerns with the Cameroonian government.

Your office has previously sent us draft management plans for Boumba Bek and Nki National Parks which are presumably just as much “government documents” as the final management plans, which we have been asking to have sight of for many months. We would be grateful if you would expedite this as soon as possible.

We would also be grateful if you would let us know what steps you have taken concerning the many incidents of ecoguard abuse which have been reported to you over the years. If you have taken action over these, nothing you have done seems to have had a lasting effect. For example, we assume you are aware of recent reports concerning attacks by WWF-funded ecoguards and their destruction of at least one Baka camp in, respectively, the southern and western edges of the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve, a conservation zone which you helped to create last year. Please let us know what you have done about these and please let us have sight of the report you commissioned as a result of our concerns about ecoguard abuse.

In a recent discussion on WBEZ Chicago Radio, WWF stated that Survival’s “claims related to the World Wildlife Fund are misguided, misinterpret facts and events and are generally highly inaccurate.” Please either substantiate these allegations or stop making them.

Yours sincerely,

**Stephen Corry**  
Director

Cc. **Phil Dickie**, Head of Issues Management, WWF  
**John Nelson**, Africa Regional Coordinator, Forest Peoples Programme

Founded in 1969  
Right Livelihood Award 1989

Survival International Charitable Trust  
Registered Charity 267444  
Company registered in England number 1056317  
Registered office as above



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**Betreff: Situation der BaAka in Kamerun 2015**

09.10.2015

Sehr geehrte(r) ████████ und ████████

vielen Dank für ihren Brief. Ihre zum Ausdruck gebrachte Sorge und Beunruhigung können wir sehr gut nachvollziehen. Der WWF ist in intensiven Gesprächen mit der Regierung Kameruns, um dafür zu sorgen, dass die staatlichen Wildhüter die Rechte der Indigenen respektieren und im Umgang mit der gesamten Bevölkerung strikte Regeln einhalten. Auf Initiative und mit Unterstützung des WWF wurde eine Delegation der unabhängigen und von der UN anerkannten nationalen Menschenrechtskommission aufgestellt, um alle Vorwürfe zu prüfen und umfassend aufzuklären. Der WWF vertritt eine klare Position: Wir akzeptieren unter keinen Umständen, dass BaAka oder andere indigene Völker Opfer von Gewalt und Einschüchterung werden.

Die Zusammenarbeit mit indigenen Völkern ist für den WWF ein zentrales Element der Naturschutzarbeit. Mit den BaAka arbeiten wir seit Jahren vertrauensvoll und intensiv in verschiedenen Projekten zusammen. So hat der WWF Deutschland einen eigenen Hilfsfond für die BaAka ins Leben gerufen. Hier investiert der WWF jährlich mehr als 120.000 Euro, um deren Ausbildung und Gesundheitsversorgung zu verbessern( <http://www.wwf.de/themen-projekte/projektregionen/wie-wir-fuer-die-baaka-arbeiten/>). Darüber hinaus werden wir mit Partnerorganisationen Rechtsberater in der Region einstellen, die als Anlaufstelle für die BaAka dienen und sie bei der Sicherung ihrer Rechte unterstützen.

In den Naturschutzprojekten des WWF sind außerdem zahlreiche BaAka beschäftigt und an den Schutzkonzepten beteiligt. Ohne sie wäre z.B. ein erfolgreicher Schutz von Gorillas nicht möglich. Auch die staatlichen Wildhüter, die sogenannten Eco-Guards, setzen verstärkt auf das Know-how der BaAka.

Vor diesem Hintergrund treffen uns die erhobenen Vorwürfe gegen die staatlichen Wildhüter in Kamerun in besonderem Maße.

Leider herrscht In Kamerun in vielen Bereichen ein Klima der Gewalt, das sehr häufig ethnisch motiviert ist. Die BaAka werden vielfach marginalisiert und sind im ganzen Land besonders oft brutalen Übergriffen ausgesetzt. Die Wilderei ist ein riesiges Problem, das dazu geführt hat, dass in den Wäldern außerhalb der Schutzgebiete kaum noch Wild lebt. Ein Volk wie das der BaAka, das seit Jahrhunderten im und vom Wald lebt, trifft dies besonders hart. Gerade deshalb legt der WWF großen Wert darauf, die Landrechte der BaAka zu stärken. Das hat u.a. dazu geführt, dass ihnen in verschiedenen Gebieten, darunter auch in allen vom WWF in Kamerun betreuten Nationalparks, Sondernutzungsrechte und -zonen eingeräumt werden. Würden aber die bestehenden staatlichen Schutzgebiete wie Nationalparks einfach aufgehoben, wären die Wälder innerhalb kürzester Zeit von Wilderern leerräumt und die BaAka würden ihrer Lebensgrundlage vollends beraubt.

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**Der WWF Deutschland ist Teil der internationalen Umweltschutzorganisation World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF).**

Registriert als Stiftung WWF Deutschland • Senatsverwaltung für Justiz Berlin, Az: 3416/976/2  
Stiftungsratsvorsitzender / Präsident: Prof. Dr. Detlev Drenckhahn • Geschäftsführender Vorstand: Eberhard Brandes  
Steuer-Nr.: 27/605/58683 • USt-IdNr.: DE114236103  
Spendenkonto: IBAN DE06 5502 0500 0222 2222 22 • Bank für Sozialwirtschaft, Mainz • BIC: BFSWDE33MNZ  
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Sigrid+Peter Schmitt  
Kirchheimer Str. 32  
71032 Böblingen  
Tel. 07081-271252

wahr?

Aufgrund ihrer Kenntnisse werden die BaAka leider zunehmend von kriminellen Wildererbanden rekrutiert, obwohl sie in ihrer Mehrheit unsere besten Verbündeten für den Schutz ihrer Heimat, der Regenwälder, sind. In der Auseinandersetzung zwischen skrupellosen Wilderern und Wildhütern kommt es immer wieder zu gewaltsamen Auseinandersetzungen. Gerade die Eco-Guards (Wildhüter) in Kamerun sind hier immer wieder massiven, mitunter tödlichen Angriffen von Wilderern ausgesetzt. Im vergangenen Jahr wurde ein Wildhüter förmlich hingerichtet, nachdem die vorher von ihm festgesetzten Wilderer wieder frei gekommen waren.

Guyivivi International  
Graßwälder Str. 4

Wir werden auch weiterhin alles dafür tun, die Situation der BaAka zu verbessern und mit und für die Menschen des Kongobeckens die Regenwälder und ihren Artenreichtum zu erhalten. Bitte wenden Sie sich bei weiteren Rückfragen gerne direkt an uns, wir können Sie dann auch gerne mit unserem Afrika Referenten Johannes Kirchgatter verbinden.

BaAka Kamerun

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren

Ihre eckliche finden das Antwortschreiben vom WWF v. 09.10.13 zur Kenntnis. Es geht auf unsere Mail vom 3.8. zurück, das Sie in Kopie erhalten haben.

X C. Faber

Carla Faber  
WWF Infoservice

M. freundlicher Grüßen

Peter Schmitt

Der WWF Deutschland ist Teil der internationalen Umweltschutzorganisation World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF).

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**From:** Phil Dickie <[pdickie@wwfint.org](mailto:pdickie@wwfint.org)>  
**Subject: Re: Furthering Baka interests in south east Cameroon**  
**Date:** 13 October 2015 14:48:38 BST  
**To:** [director@survivalinternational.org](mailto:director@survivalinternational.org)  
**Cc:** Frederick Kumah <[Fkumah@wwfafrika.org](mailto:Fkumah@wwfafrika.org)>, Hanson Njiforti <[hnjiforti@wwfcam.org](mailto:hnjiforti@wwfcam.org)>, [johnnelsonmail@gmail.com](mailto:johnnelsonmail@gmail.com)

Dear Mr Corry

Just confirming that I have received and will be responding to your letter to Dr Lambertini of 1 October.

I would like to assure you that WWF is genuine about the overtures put forward in my emails of May and September on possible collaborative action that could potentially benefit Baka interests in Cameroon.

Best regards

Phil Dickie

WWF International

[+41 79 7031952](tel:+41797031952)

**From:** Phil Dickie <[pdickie@wwfint.org](mailto:pdickie@wwfint.org)>  
**Date:** 7 December 2015 at 14:57:43 GMT  
**To:** [director@survivalinternational.org](mailto:director@survivalinternational.org)  
**Cc:** [johnnelsonmail@googlemail.com](mailto:johnnelsonmail@googlemail.com)  
**Subject:** Response to correspondence

Dear Mr Corry

In response to recent letters to WWF International Director General

Our delayed response resulted from our efforts to investigate incidents matching the details provided by you on October 1 – “reports concerning attacks by WWF-funded ecoguards and their destruction of at least one Baka camp in, respectively, the southern and western edges of the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve.”

We were unable to find any record of any incidents matching this description. You have since published on your website an article *Baka ‘Pygmies’ report more abuse despite WWF assurances* (27 October) which has enabled us to identify an incident in the vicinity of the Seh encampment on 7 April 2014. We are continuing to investigate this incident and would appreciate your confirmation that this is the incident to which you refer.

WWF has offered, in good faith, to investigate any current allegations of abuse that Survival brings to our attention and to give consideration to collaborating in taking action on those issues. For its part, we would appreciate that Survival in equivalent good faith provides the full details of alleged incidents in its possession to facilitate such investigation. A preoccupation with capitalising on incidents is likely to impede rather than assist in resolving them.

It has not been possible to verify the allegations made in the videos published in your article, and we have referred these to the Ministry of Forests and Fauna (MinFoF) for their response. We will share this response if and when we receive it, and take up additional issues with MinFoF if these become apparent from our investigation.

Contemporaneous accounts of the occurrences of 7 April 2004 are confusing and contradictory. Seh encampment is close to Mbalam 2 village in a forestry concession adjacent to the Congo border. A patrol of Ecoguards and one police officer, went to Seh to investigate the reported killing of an elephant and encountered a party of (mainly?) Baka leaving for the forest. Some Baka were armed with machetes and there was allegedly an altercation. There is mention of minor injuries on both sides. Huts were searched and elephant meat discovered. Some arrests were made and these were processed at Mbalam or Ntam. Statements taken included admissions that the elephant had been killed and meat and some ivory had been delivered to a person who had commissioned the hunt and supplied an illegal firearm for the purpose. This person was not Baka, but had a position of some prominence in the community and was able to exert some authority over the Baka. Interviewed at his home, he admitted receiving elephant meat and owning the illegal firearm, but denied commissioning the elephant hunt. He agreed to hand over the weapon, not currently in his possession. The hunter of the elephant was identified as the brother of one of the arrested Baka but was said to be still in the forest with the weapon. The Baka said they had not been paid as promised for the elephant meat and ivory. Some of the elephant meat was transported to a neighbouring village in the DRC.

The Baka were said to be on their way to seek out a second elephant on the commission of the same prominent person when the patrol and the hunting party encountered each other. The incident does have some notoriety, due to the interventions of a gendarmerie officer whose record allegedly included involvement in illegal cross border activities and efforts to involve other gendarmes and at least one Ecoguard in such activities. His record of “interference” was also allegedly linked to him being stabbed by a soldier in 2011. This officer was also allegedly involved in promoting claims of beatings of Baka, on this occasion by noting he would seek the submission of statements that all injuries resulted from beatings by ecoguards rather than in the course of an altercation. As previously noted, however, no contemporaneous references to or documentation in respect of any beatings have come to light in inquiries of any of the agencies involved. It is our understanding that the gendarmerie officer referred to has since been transferred out of the area, allegedly because of his illegal activities.

Although these accounts are largely contemporaneous with the incident, WWF is not in a position to verify them. Although statements were taken, none of the Baka or others involved were charged with any offences and there were no subsequent procedures that can shed any light on the incident. Other information and later developments however make it clear that the rivalry between different agencies was a significant dynamic in the area and that there were pressures on Baka to take sides in these disputes and to participate in illegal activities.

The age of this incident and the conflict between accounts and agencies is likely to make it very difficult to resolve. WWF will, as possible, seek to further clarify what happened and take up issues that can be appropriately verified. If you have further information that could assist, I would



urge you to pass it on and also to facilitate my direct contact with the Survival personnel who collected your material. Very useful information would be identification information on any officers allegedly involved in beatings.

WWF was not involved in this operation in any way and was not providing any funding or support to the ecoguard unit involved.

On other issues raised, the Government of Cameroon has told WWF-Cameroon that Survival International must make its own request for the three current National Park Management plans WWF-Cameroon had requested on your behalf. The requests should be made to the persons nominated below:

M. Denis Koulagna Koutou, Secrétaire Général du Ministère des Forêts et de la Faune, koulagnakdd @ [yahoo.fr](mailto:koulagnakdd@yahoo.fr)

M. Joseph Lekealem, Directeur de la Faune et des Aires Protégées, Ministère des Forêts et de la Faune, lekealemjoseph @ [yahoo.fr](mailto:lekealemjoseph@yahoo.fr)

In future, I would suggest that rather than seeking government action or documentation through WWF, you make your own requests of government and keep us informed on such requests. This would reduce the possibility of our organisations duplicating effort and better assist collaborative action to advance Baka interests. You are invited to forward to us any recent outstanding requests you have made of Cameroon government or other agencies. We may be able to provide further background or support action on those requests.

I have requested documentation on the consultative process for the Ngoyla reserve. At this stage it is apparent that there was a consultative process and that Baka needs were at the very least a substantial focus of the consultations.

I also acknowledge receipt of your letter of 30 November to our Director General. The request concerns information not readily to hand that will take some time and effort to collect and collate. Given the extended period of WWF involvement with indigenous peoples, I would be unable to guarantee that all such instances could be discovered. For the sake of balance and completeness, I will also seek information on steps taken by our offices to ameliorate the impacts on indigenous peoples of government decisions to remove them from or restrict their access to conservation zones, of instances where WWF has been significantly supportive of indigenous peoples' campaigns for conservation zones, or where WWF has been a significant proponent of community based natural resource management programmes for indigenous people in respect to conservation zones. We would seek an undertaking from Survival that it will publish in its entirety any report provided by WWF in relation to this request for information.

We still await Survival action on our request that where you disseminate or publish Survival letters to WWF online you also disseminate and publish WWF responses to those letters, and that you provide an online "comment" mechanism to enable the correction of misinformation or incomplete information,

Best regards

Phil Dickie

WWF International



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**We are the global movement  
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them defend their lives, protect  
their lands and determine their  
own futures.**

Dr Marco Lambertini  
Director-General  
WWF International  
Avenue du Mont-Blanc  
1196 Gland  
Switzerland

14 December 2015

Dear Dr Lambertini,

### **Abuse of Baka by ecoguards in Cameroon**

Thank you for the email of 7 December from Mr Phil Dickie which I assume was written on your behalf.

We are pleased that some attention is being given to the ecoguard abuse which has been going on for years as WWF (sometimes) now admits.

We are however surprised by Mr Dickie's remark, "A preoccupation with capitalizing on incidents is likely to impede rather than assist in resolving them." I do not know why drawing attention to serious human rights abuses should be described as "capitalizing on incidents," nor why this should "impede" their resolution. Of course, you cannot "resolve" abuses which have occurred, merely ensure perpetrators are dealt with and victims achieve as much restitution as possible, as I'm sure you'll agree.

Regarding specific incidents of ecoguard abuse, your account of the one on 7 April 2014 (not "2004" as Mr Dickie has it in one place) differs from the version we have been told. For example, two of the victims were "encountered", as Mr Dickie has it, as they were sleeping in their beds. We were also told that the squad of ecoguards did not include any police officers, contrary to Mr Dickie's assertions.

May we suggest Mr Dickie stops describing Baka going into the forest as "armed" with machetes – everyone in the region routinely uses machetes in forested areas as you will know. Incidentally, Mr Dickie also claims, "Some of the elephant meat was transported to a neighbouring village in the DRC," which is of course geographically impossible.

Anyway, I'd be grateful if you could clarify his remark, "WWF was not ... providing any funding or support to the ecoguard unit involved." Is his claim here that WWF played no role in establishing, training or supporting the ecoguard programme in that area?

It is perhaps too late to investigate this incident with any certainty of obtaining all relevant evidence. This fact of course further illustrates the lack of effective means by which victims of abuse could quickly complain knowing they would be dealt with fairly.

As we've stressed repeatedly, our first objective is to ensure the abuse, which has been going on for years, is stopped. We believe that you have a responsibility here which you have failed to meet, and that you will never address it if you simply call for specific examples to be investigated as and when we or others bring them to your attention. We believe you have a duty to establish, without further delay, working and robust systems to ensure your programmes do not lead to further human rights abuses and, where they occur, to ensure those perpetrators you are supporting are prosecuted. We are concerned just as much with the fact that this abuse been going on for years and seems to us likely to continue, as we are with any specific incidents.

Our principal other concern is to stop the eviction of tribal peoples from the conservation zones you encourage and have a hand in planning and running, and to try and bring some form of restitution to those tribal people who have already had their land taken from them through your programmes.

As you know, since April 2014 we have been asking for the management plans you worked on for the parks. You played an important role in these plans, yet your refusal over the last 20 months to make them public might easily be seen as a deliberate obstruction. You are repeatedly calling on companies to be transparent in their environmental policies. Should WWF not itself be transparent? Although you obviously have these management plans, you now tell us we must ask specific individuals in government for them. We have done so, let's see if we receive them.

You will, I hope, be aware that your claim, "it is apparent that there was a consultative process and that Baka needs were at the very least a substantial focus of the consultations" means very little and does not begin to address your obligations were you actually to be abiding by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, your own stated policies, or for that matter by the World Bank Report which says that you, "will support the Government of Cameroon to... hold specific consultations with Indigenous Peoples to ensure free prior and informed consent – in compliance with the UN Declaration." No one, including

WWF, has ever seriously claimed that the Baka consented to their removal from their lands.

Regarding my question about whether or not WWF has spoken out about the eviction of tribal people from conservation zones, anywhere, we are not looking for exhaustive information taking a long time to compile. We simply want a brief paragraph or two on some verifiable concrete examples which surely should take up only a few moments of your staff's time.

As you would, I hope, expect, Survival does not give prior undertaking that it would publish, sight unseen, anything from anyone. We are, however, eager to draw public attention both to what WWF *does* as well as to what it says *vis-à-vis* the eviction of tribal peoples from protected areas and how they are treated, before, during and after such evictions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Corry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'S'.

**Stephen Corry**  
Director