

# CAMIVERT

A recurring nightmare

A mega palm oil plantation threatening people's rights in Cameroon, seeds made in France



GREENPEACE



Green  
Development  
Advocates  
*For a Green Congo Basin*

# Contents

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Camvert                              | 3  |
| Who is Aboubakar al Fatih?           | 7  |
| Camvert's war on communities' rights | 11 |
| Local testimonies                    | 15 |
| Focus on communities' views          | 19 |
| Recommendations                      | 20 |
| References                           | 21 |
| Annexes                              | 23 |

## Acronyms

**BOISCAM:** Bois du Cameroun

**CAMVERT:** Cameroun Vert S.A

**CEMCO:** Cameroon Emergence Corporation

**CERD:** Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**CIRAD:** Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement

**CPDM:** Cameroon People's Democratic Movement

**CRTV:** Cameroon Radio Television

**ESIA:** Environmental and Social Impact Assessment

**EU:** European Union

**FMU:** Forest Management Unit

**GDA:** Green Development Advocates

**GICACA:** Groupement d'Initiative Commune des Agriculteurs du Canton Akak

**HEVECAM:** Hévée Cameroun

**HIMO:** High-intensity Labor

**LTR:** Land Tenure Reform

**LUP:** Land Use Planning

**NGO:** Non-Governmental Organisation

**NTFPs:** Non-Timber Forest Products

**SCIEB:** Société camerounaise d'industrie et d'exploitation du bois

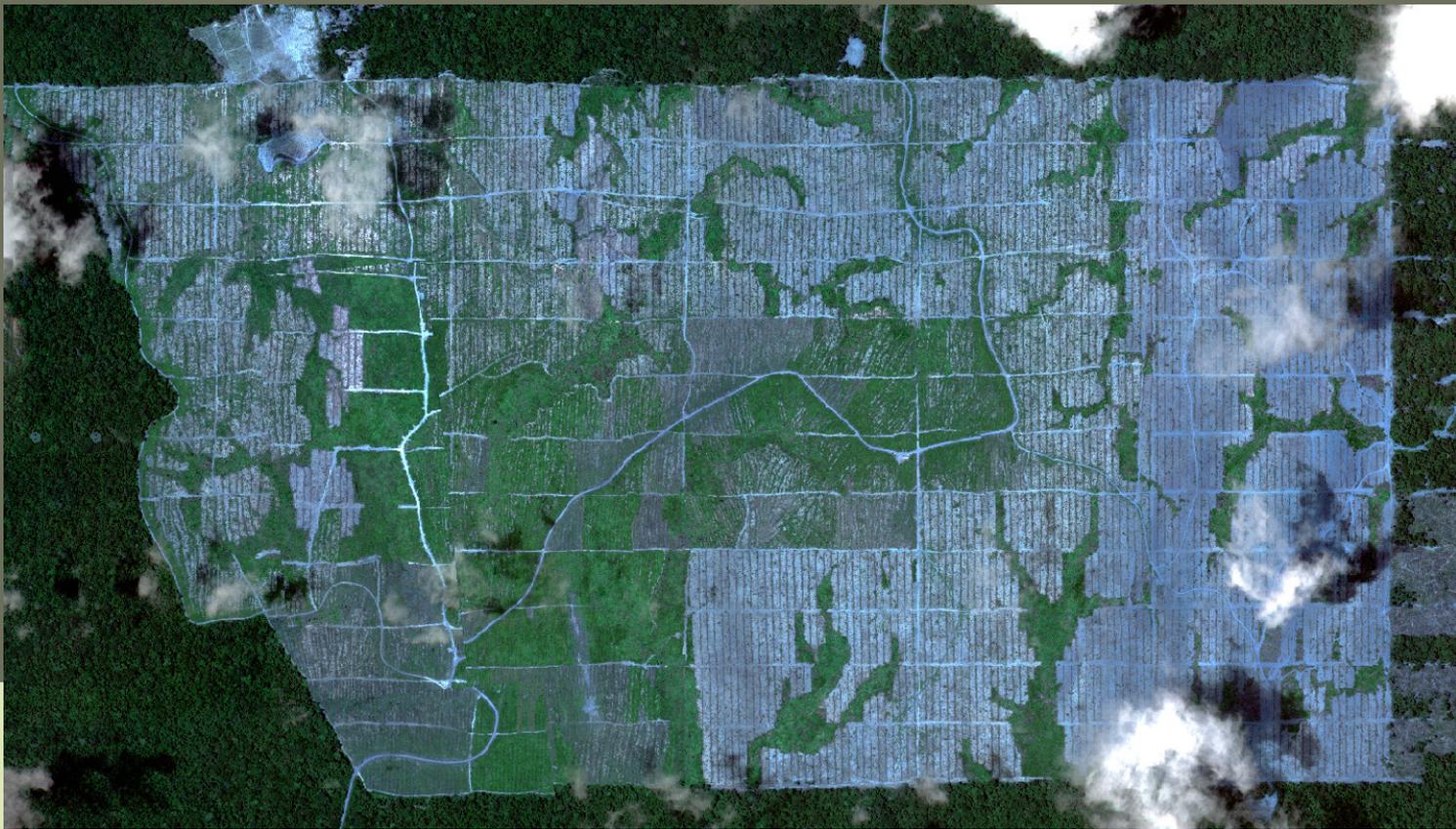
**SOCFIN:** Société Financière des Caoutchoucs

**SUDCAM:** Sud Cameroun Hévée

**TBC:** Tawfiq Business Company

**UNESCO:** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

# Camvert



2019 Camvert forest clearing © 2021 Planet Labs Inc. 

In the South Region of Cameroon, power base of President Paul Biya's Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) ruling party, the latest chainsaw massacre resembles the one which came before.

Between 2011 and 2019, Sud Cameroun Hevea (Sudcam) cleared over 11,600 ha of pristine forest, a stone's throw from the President's home village Mvomeka'a, for a giant rubber plantation on the border of the Dja Faunal Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Greenpeace Africa findings repeatedly linked the firm to the Biya family<sup>1</sup>.

Two years ago, in the Ocean division, a company called Cameroun Vert (Camvert) cleared 1,700 ha on the border of Campo-Ma'an National Park, a biodiversity hotspot, for a projected 60,000 ha oil palm plantation<sup>2</sup>. The firm's CEO, Aboubakar al Fatih, is a Cameroonian logger, miner, rancher, and... fervent member of the CPDM central committee<sup>3</sup>. Villagers we visited in January, September and November 2021, as well as other informants, claim Camvert is affiliated with the president's family<sup>4</sup>.

If the Sudcam operation required the removal of whole communities of Baka Indigenous people from their ancestral lands, Camvert has busied itself trying to buy off the indigenous Bagyeli – as well as numerous Bantu villages<sup>5</sup>. The company has offered bags of rice, bottles of palm oil, soap, canned tomatoes – and money<sup>6</sup>.

In October 2020, a month after planting started, seven Bagyeli communities filed a complaint with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), alleging that the illegal degazetting of the logging concession replaced by Camvert “fails to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of the indigenous Bagyeli people to their customary lands, territories and natural resources, and reflects a discriminatory nonrecognition of indigenous peoples' customary land ownership and use [...]”<sup>7</sup>

In three field missions this year to over a dozen villages, both Bagyeli and Bantu, we discovered significant opposition to the plantation. Opposition by Bagyeli was universal.

But the most conspicuous feature of life under Camvert is the company's colonial policy of divide and rule. Conflict and mutual mistrust between villagers and traditional chiefs are the norm. At least thirteen chiefs have handed over some 1,620 ha of community land to the company – for the establishment of “community plantations.”<sup>8</sup> At Camvert “consultation” meetings chiefs receive up to 40,000 FCFA in per diem<sup>9</sup>.

In creating its plantation, Sudcam's great friend was the French taxpayer-funded agronomy institute, the Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD). In 2014, it signed a “long-term collaboration” with Sudcam's then parent company to help “maximise productivity and yield.”<sup>10</sup> The partnership ended, prematurely, early 2017.

Guess who's providing seeds to Camvert? PalmElit -- a for-profit firm owned by CIRAD and the French firm Avril, the European leader in biofuels. In 2018, Greenpeace France denounced Avril's “near monopoly” of the sector between 2005 and 2012, its close ties to the French Agriculture Ministry and the corporate agriculture lobby, the company's tax breaks, and EU handouts<sup>11</sup>.



A shipment of PalmElit seeds to Camvert, 2021

CIRAD plays an important role in the hoax of “Sustainable Forest Management” that France has exported throughout Central Africa<sup>12</sup>. Three CIRAD experts spoke recently at a high-level African forests greenwashing event organized by the city of Paris and the newspaper Le Monde -- sponsored by the former and major French polluters<sup>13</sup>. All of the CIRAD panelists went on and on about the importance of forests for biodiversity and climate. None of them mentioned the profits their employer is reaping from the deforestation of southern Cameroon, on land grabbed from Indigenous People by Camvert<sup>14</sup>.

In addition to the CIRAD trademark, Camvert’s PalmElit seeds carry the trademark of Luxembourg-based Société financière des Caoutchoucs (SOCFIN). The firm’s subsidiaries in Cameroon and elsewhere have been massively criticized for their negative impacts on local communities<sup>15</sup>.

Just as Sudcam’s plunder involved playing fast and loose with Cameroonian land law<sup>16</sup>, Camvert proceeded to clear forest in 2019 in the complete absence of a decree allowing it to

do so. Earlier in the year it had gained access to the zone via the illegal degazetting of Forest Management Unit (FMU) 09-025 by order of the Prime Minister<sup>17</sup>. In September 2020, Greenpeace Africa and Cameroonian NGO Green Development Advocates (GDA) called for an investigation of the Land Tenure Minister, for his 9 April 2020 authorization to clear an initial zone of 2,500 hectares<sup>18</sup>.

What passes for an Environmental and Social impact assessment at Camvert is similar to such literature produced by Sudcam. The word “chimpanzee” appears exactly once in the 206-page draft document<sup>19</sup>. In addition to chimps, the Campo-Ma’an landscape is home to elephants, gorillas, giant pangolins, hippos, leopards, and mandrills.

On the “social” front, the ESIA of Aboubakar Al Fatih’s company recommends making Bagyeli into wage slaves:

The High-intensity Labor (HIMO) method will resolve the problem of unskilled workers, specifically the pygmies from local hamlets.

Ten years ago, Sudcam sent ex-Defense Minister Rémy Ze Meka on a tour of local villages to alert them to the imminent arrival of “the President’s company.”<sup>20</sup> History repeating itself: the message that Camvert has been sending critics and potential critics is hard to miss. Paid content in Cameroonian media denounces

Cameroonians, clearly opposed to the Great Opportunities plan of the

President of the Republic and Head of State, His Excellency Paul Biya, whose present administration<sup>21</sup> is based on “Revolution in Agriculture,” [and who] will do anything to sabotage this Great Industrial Project<sup>22</sup>.

Opponents of the projects are labelled “enemies of the Republic” and even “profanateurs.”<sup>23</sup>

Quatre exemples ont permis de débusquer ces ennemis de la République. Une Ong fantôme, appelée « **Tête d’éléphant** », basée à Paris dans l’antre des agitateurs connus, distille des cris d’alarme sur le projet, qui n’ont rien à voir avec la réalité. On ne les connaît même pas à Campo. Une autre Ong qui est sur le terrain et qui a spolié gravement les populations dans le cadre de la conservation, s’agite par des positions fantaisistes, pour s’attirer le pactole des bailleurs de fonds qui n’ont aucune vérité de terrain. Un troisième profanateur débusqué, vivrait à Limbé , qui s’appellerait **People’s Forest**, distille toutes sortes d’incohérences dans les Réseaux sociaux à partir de la forêt dense du Sud Ouest, pour justifier sa sinécure de financements occultes obtenus de l’étranger. Citons aussi ces fils du terroir, qui sont dans un réseau mafieux pour pêcher en eaux troubles, que les fins limiers sont entrain de démanteler. C’est le cas de ce » Faux

Excerpt of local media denouncing critics of Camvert, May 2020<sup>24</sup>

But perhaps what Sudcam and Camvert have most in common is international donors’ silence about them<sup>25</sup>. This time though the indifference of European and American “partners” might not last forever: *Jeune Afrique* says Aboubakar al Fatih’s money comes from “the Middle East and Asia”<sup>26</sup>...

Our field missions to Camvert revealed that, on this point as on everything related to al Fatih, local people have been kept entirely in the dark.

# Who is Aboubakar al Fatih?



Although Ngaoundéré-based al Fatih likes to depict his company as a bastion of patriotism, it appears that he himself was raised and educated in Egypt, returning to Cameroon only in 2005<sup>27</sup>.

He's a "protégé" of Adamaoua party bosses including the late Hamadjoda Adjoudji, Animal Husbandry Minister from 1984 to 2004 – one of the current regime's longest-serving Ministers<sup>28</sup>. President Biya made al Fatih a Knight of Merit in 2013<sup>29</sup>.

His "Tawfiq Business Company" (TBC) and "Cameroon Emergence Corporation" (CEMCO)<sup>30</sup> have held numerous mining exploration permits, in the North, Adamaoua, and East Regions<sup>31</sup>.

In fact, in 2018 CEMCO described itself as "the largest gold producer in Cameroon and a top 10 gold and sapphire producer globally with one of the lowest cost profiles<sup>32</sup>". The first claim is astonishing, at least if Cameroon's most recent Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative reports are to be trusted: they show no mining exploitation permits for either of Al Fatih's firms<sup>33</sup>. As for the second claim – that CEMCO is

"a top 10 gold and sapphire producer globally" – it's manifestly false<sup>34</sup>.

The firm's website is now defunct.

In February 2021, al Fatih's East region permit appears to have expired and been returned to the national mining domain. He was ordered to pay 7,812,000 FCFA (about 12,000 €) in unpaid area tax<sup>35</sup>. Camvert Managing Director Mahmoud Mourtada worked for CEMCO from 2014 until moving to Camvert in 2018. His LinkedIn boasts:

- Contributed in building an extractive team of sapphire. Has led the sale's [sic] team in different activities
- Traveled to Dubai (UAE) and Nigeria for sales purposes
- Has contributed in preparing and implementing a project of sapphire's extraction<sup>36</sup>

Extraordinary! How did Camvert's director manage to sell minerals – patriotically, in Nigeria and Dubai – without a mining exploitation permit?

SAPHIR CEYLAN

SAPHIR CEYLAN CLAIR

SAPHIR CAMBODGIEN

SAPHIR BIRMAN

**CEMCO Mining**  
@cemcogroup - Entreprise locale

[Nous contacter](#)

[cemco-group.com](http://cemco-group.com)

Mourtada, regarding Camvert:

A Big Thank You to the Head of State His Excellence Paul Biya, and his government, for the invaluable support resulting in the success of this Project<sup>37</sup>.

suspended in 2020<sup>39</sup>. Reconstruction – and especially decontamination – of the abandoned ex-Cellucam paper mill that SCIEB's plant is supposed to replace, has yet to begin<sup>40</sup>.



Yaounde Explorer

Mayo  
Yaounde



Gold parcours

Mayo  
Ngaoundere



Gold exploration

Mayo  
Limbe

Expérience, Organisation Is what makes us

ALL PROJECTS

CEMCO website

Al Fatih is best known as the owner of the major logging firm Bois du Cameroun (BOISCAM) and its affiliate companies, as well as of Société camerounaise d'industrie et d'exploitation du bois (SCIEB), former owner of the FMU 09 025 concession<sup>38</sup>. A year ago he announced a huge plan for the creation of a sawmill, biomass electricity generator and pulp plant at Edea – presumably to be supplied by timber from Camvert as well as a 70,000 ha concession adjoining the plant (whose status is unknown) and a Littoral-province concession for which tendering was

The first phase of the Edea project was reported to represent an investment of 27.2 million€.

In June 2020 Camvert's Project Manager told *Jeune Afrique*: "All sawmill equipment enabling the facility to go from the primary to the tertiary processing stage has already been purchased and would have already arrived had it not been for restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic."<sup>41</sup>

Why, in its PR campaigns, Camvert hasn't vaunted al Fatih's TBC cacao plantation near Yoko, in the Center province, is unclear<sup>42</sup>. Naturally, he doesn't communicate about the identity of TBC's shareholders – at least one was added in 2018, when the company headquarters was moved from Douala to Yaoundé<sup>43</sup>.

In September 2020 TBC's ambition to acquire 115,000 ha of land for an agro-industrial complex in the Adamaoua region sparked controversy<sup>44</sup>.

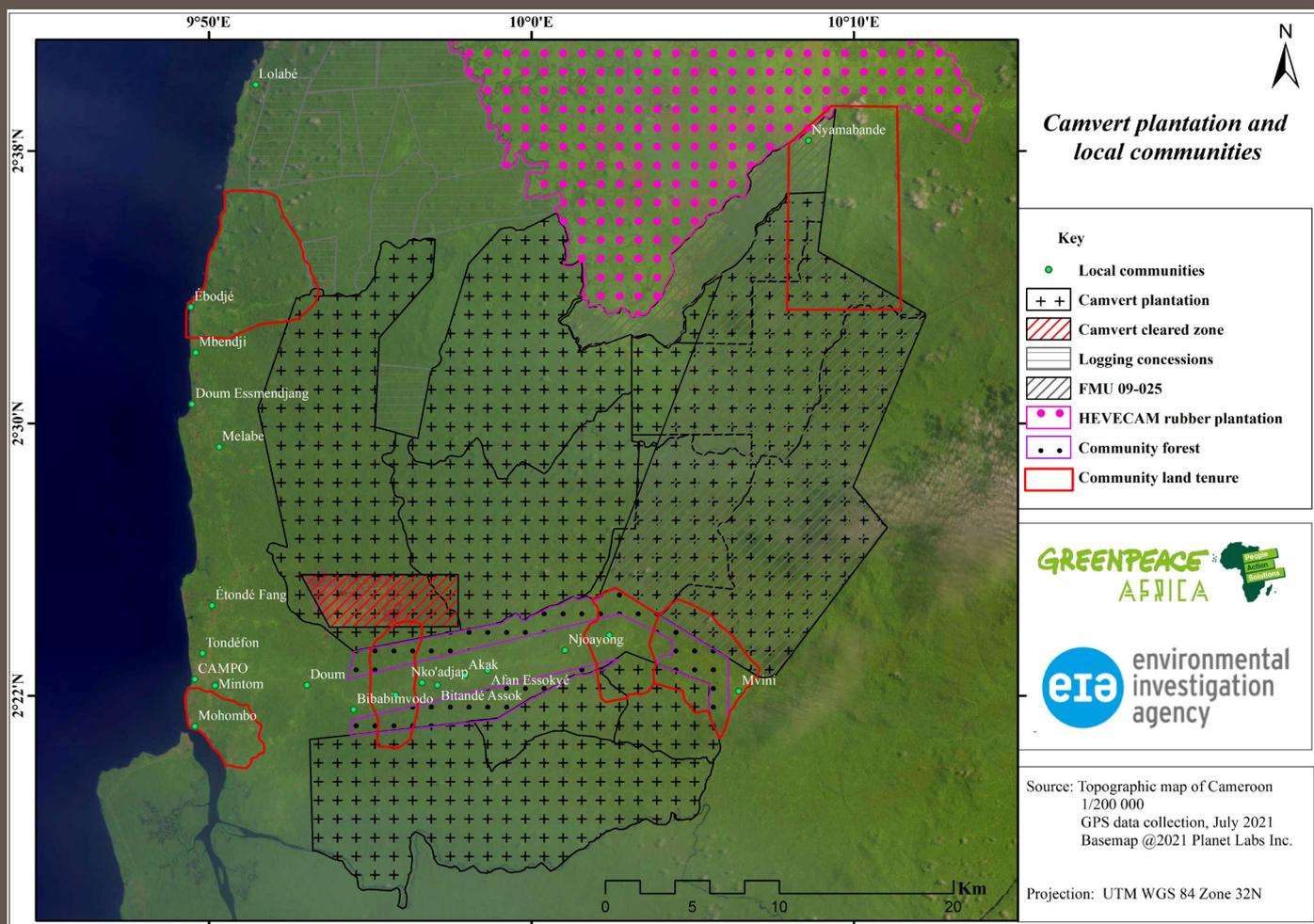


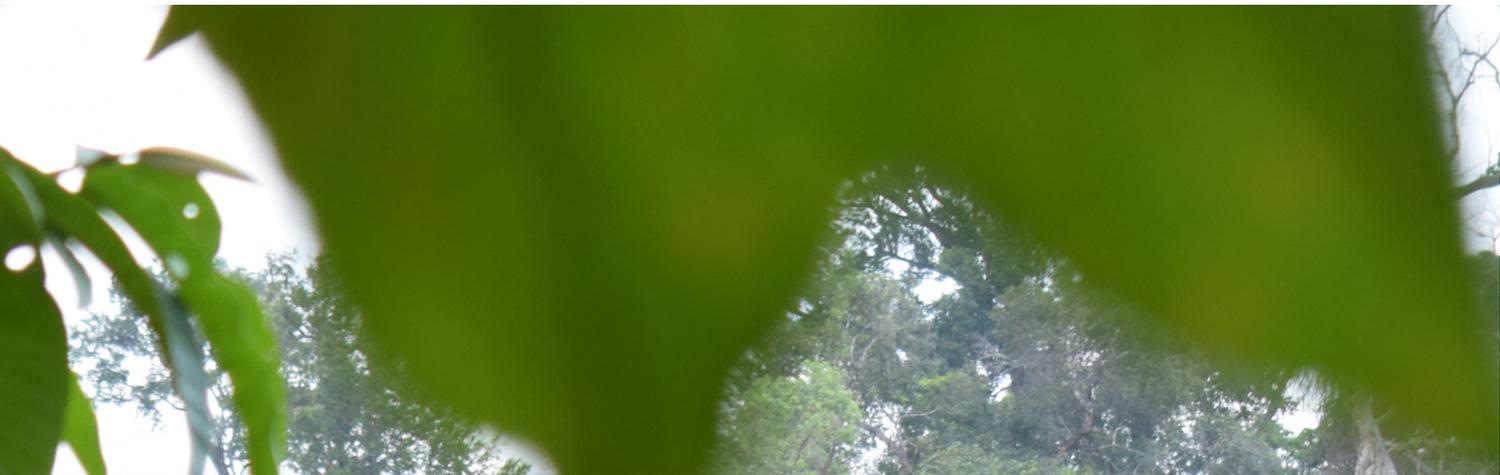
Unspecified partner (at center) of al Fatih's Adamaoua operations in 2020 CRTV broadcast on al Fatih business empire © CRTV

The fact that, nearly two years after clearing started, Camvert has succeeded in clearing only 1,700 ha of a projected 60,000 ha plantation may be significant – especially given the lack of progress in al Fatih’s Edea project, Camvert’s minimal local investment in Ocean division, and the highly misleading way al Fatih has presented CEMCO.

A year ago, Camvert claimed that after two years 3,500 ha would be cleared, after three years 5,000 ha<sup>45</sup>.

In June 2021 the mayor of Campo, an early outspoken critic turned company ally, reported that the idea of reducing the size of the plantation had been floated at a recent meeting with Camvert and unnamed officials at the Presidential mansion<sup>46</sup>. This would pose a problem for Camvert’s “financial partner,” a company representative stated at the meeting.





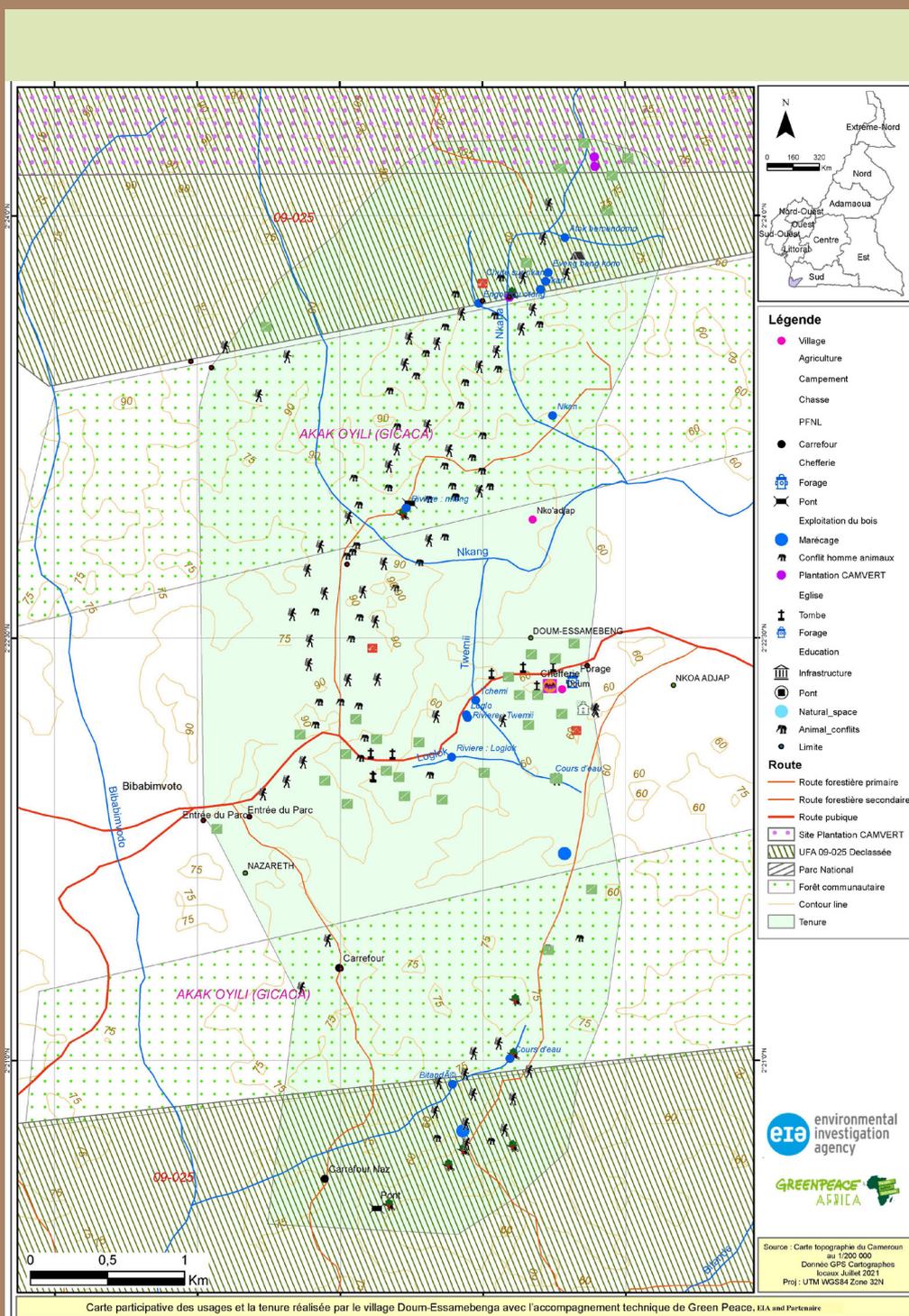
# Camvert's war on communities' rights



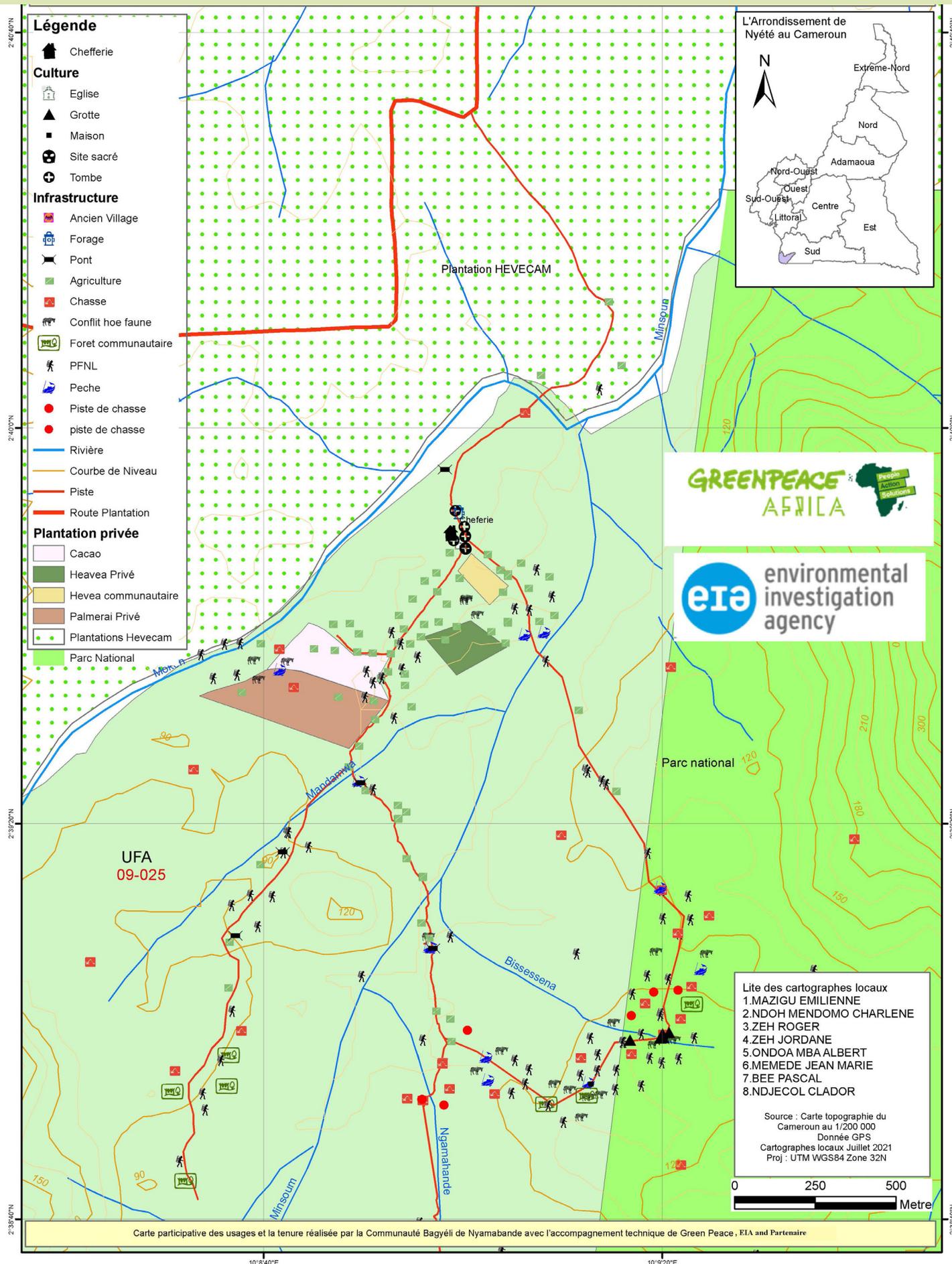
Between May and September 2021, participatory mapping carried out in nine villages in Niete and Campo subdivisions indicated that communities' land rights are being restricted outside of the plantation, and their usage rights within the plantation are being extinguished.

The zone is already under pressure from the nearby Hevecam rubber plantation -- Sudcam's sister company -- as well as Campo-Ma'an National Park and the newly created Manyange Na Elombo - Campo marine national park.

In Doum Essamebenga, Nkoelon and Mvini for example, representative of the situation in many other villages, customary land has shrunk due to Camvert: the boundaries of the plantation have been moved several times. Under the 1994 Forest law, communities possess customary rights inside forest concessions. However, communities fear losing these without proper compensation.

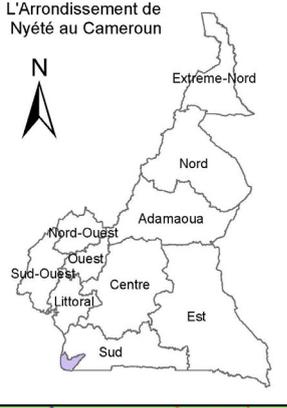


Land use in and around Doum Essamenbenga



**Légende**

- Chefferie
- Culture**
- Eglise
- Grotte
- Maison
- Site sacré
- Tombe
- Infrastructure**
- Ancien Village
- Forage
- Pont
- Agriculture
- Chasse
- Conflit hoe faune
- Forest communautaire
- PFNL
- Pêche
- Piste de chasse
- piste de chasse
- Rivière
- Courbe de Niveau
- Piste
- Route Plantation
- Plantation privée**
- Cacao
- Hevea Privé
- Hevea communautaire
- Palmerai Privé
- Plantations Hevecam
- Parc National



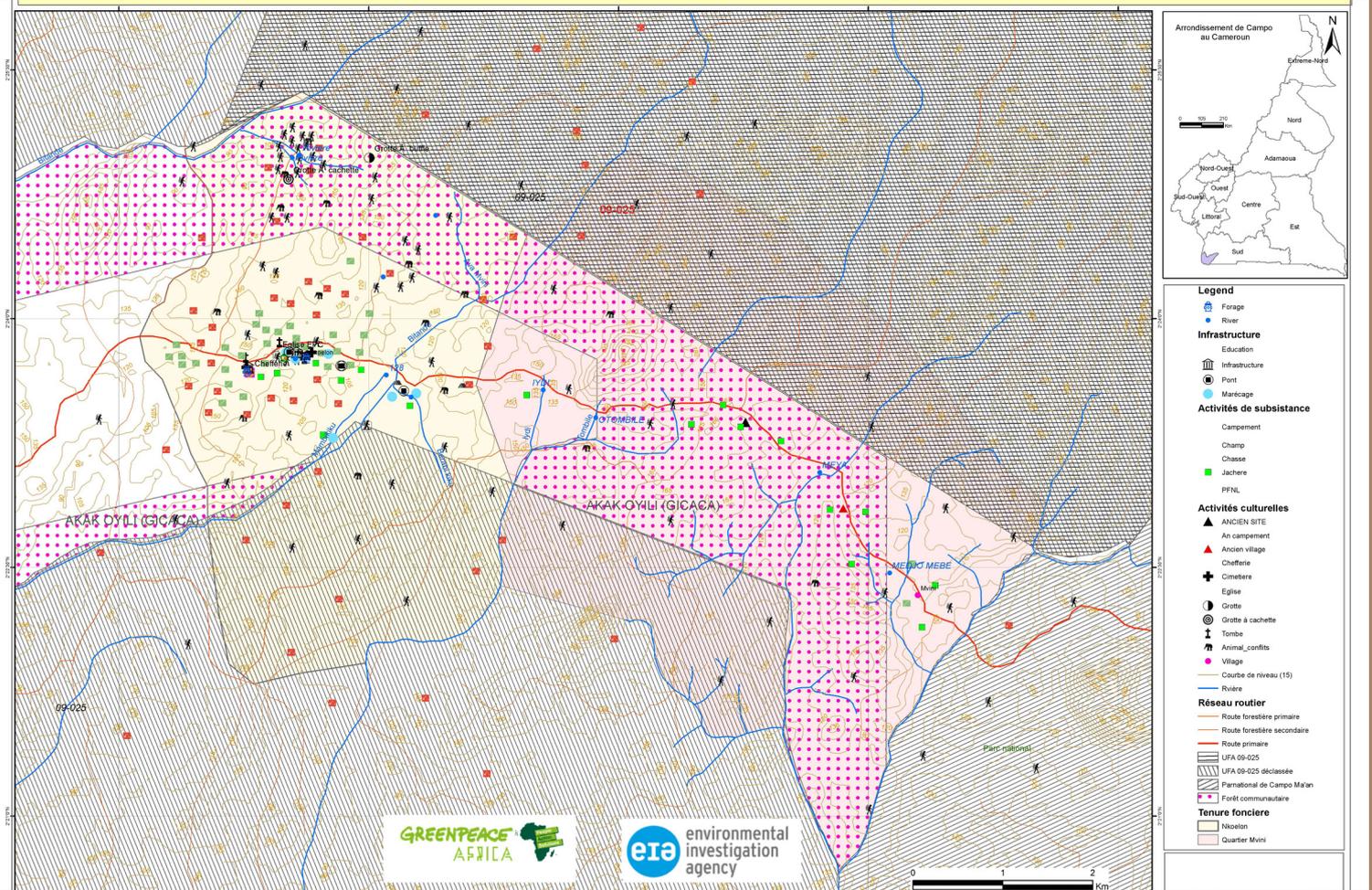
- Lite des cartographes locaux
1. MAZIGU EMILIENNE
  2. NDOH MENDOMO CHARLENE
  3. ZEH ROGER
  4. ZEH JORDANE
  5. ONDOA MBA ALBERT
  6. MEMEDE JEAN MARIE
  7. BEE PASCAL
  8. NDJECOL CLADOR

Source : Carte topographique du Cameroun au 1/200 000  
Donnée GPS  
Cartographes locaux Juillet 2021  
Proj : UTM WGS84 Zone 32N



Carte participative des usages et la tenure réalisée par la Communauté Bagyéli de Nyamabande avec l'accompagnement technique de Green Peace , EIA and Partenaire

Land use in and around Nyamabande



Land use in and around Nkoelon-Mvini

Ongoing Land tenure reforms and stalled, non-transparent national Land Use planning will come too late for the victims of Camvert.

# Local testimonies



Meeting with Nkoelon community members, 2021 (c) Greenpeace Africa

In January, September and November 2021, Greenpeace Africa visited fourteen villages in Niete and Campo subdivisions<sup>47</sup>.

Local informants reported that eight Camvert employees had died in work-related accidents since clearing started in 2019. They claimed that no compensation was paid to families. Four employees have been hospitalized and one paralyzed.

In one village, Camvert's "health campaign" lasted about two and a half hours. The visit was intended to include examination of over 2,500 people for dental disease, hepatitis, hypertension, MST and HIV.

Company promises to equip local schools with benches, books and other material for the 2021-22 academic school year have not yet been kept.

When asked whether Camvert outreach efforts nevertheless represent an encouraging "glimmer of hope," one resident told us last September: "They scandalize us, rather than encourage us. It's a kind of exchange which isn't equal. It's like a colonial exchange [...] where a father sells his son because he wants to obtain salt. There's no equality in that kind of exchange."

Almost all villages reported an alarming increase in conflicts with foraging mammals – elephants, gorillas, monkeys, chimpanzees, buffalos, antelopes and warthogs – attributed to loss of habitat from Camvert clearing and related disturbance. Extensive loss of crops is reported<sup>48</sup>.

An emblematic piece of testimony from a member of the Bagyeli community, paid 20,000 FCFA (= 30 €) in exchange for his signature:

Camvert deceived me by asking me to sign the paper without reading it. After signing it, other people came to tell me that I signed the paper agreeing to the allocation of our forest to Camvert on behalf of all the Bagyeli communities

that are part of the Campo forest. I do not know anything, I am a Pygmy and I signed by deception.

Most of the very few local people that have been hired by the plantation are employed in unskilled positions such as security guards, planters and manual transporters of seedlings. Salaries are low and paid late – they're hardly enough to live on, according to some informants<sup>49</sup>.

With the influx of workers from other areas, a recurring complaint is an increase in sexually transmitted diseases and exposure to COVID, as well as the risk of social conflict.

A Camvert outgrower program is supposed to involve 5,000 ha of "community plantations." But many people we spoke to say their villages have no land to give up for the program -- which was initially stated to take place on the plantation area itself. In Mabiogo, where land has already been cleared for a community plantation, residents say they have no information about how the scheme will work. They haven't been informed how much Camvert will pay for their oil palm nuts, nor in what volume. Recently, individuals have been approached, rather than villages via traditional chiefs.

**Nyamabande** is a Bagyel settlement of about 100 people which overlaps FMU 09-025 and adjoins the Hevecam plantation, Sudcam's sister company. Community members were displaced by the creation of Hevecam in 1975 and its privatization in 1996.

Informants told us Camvert representatives had visited them three times to inform them their forest would be "taken." They said on the first visit they had no idea what was being said. They have no knowledge of a "social investment" agreement.

They fear the loss of trees and plants used for medicinal purposes, the loss of sacred sites, and the end of their hunting activities.

They're afraid clearing could begin at any moment.

Much of the fishing village of **Ebodje**, about 15 km from the cleared zone, is violently against the plantation. Residents immediately voiced concerns that waste from the company would pollute the sea, killing off fish stocks and ruining the beach used by sea turtles to lay eggs. The village is renowned as an eco-tourist site. They also worried that Camvert deforestation would make hunting impossible, and that the local population would soar, driving up prices and the cost of living.

Previous experience with BOISCAM in the area was negative. Camvert organized a two-and-a-half hour health "campaign" in the village.

Informants from the Bagyeli hamlet of **Mvini**, about 10 km from the clearing zone, linked the increasing death rate of the community to broken ties with their ancestors, whose tombs in the National Park and FMU 09 025 are off limits. They're completely opposed to Camvert, which they associate with the end of hunting

and shrimp-fishing, and the prospect of eventual starvation. They fear being jailed if caught with oil palm nuts.

A majority of residents of the large village of **Nkoelon**, neighboring Mvini, want the area of the plantation to be reduced if it goes ahead and, above all, moved further away from their village. They have no knowledge of a "social investment" agreement, if one exists. They fear that Nkoelon's ecolodge will suffer from the existence of a neighboring palm oil plantation, and that medicinal plants will become unavailable – the closest hospital is over 35 km away. Almost the entire population depends on local remedies.

Conflicts with foraging elephants and gorillas are increasing. Previous employment of villagers with Hevecam was extremely negative.

**Doum Essamebenga** immediately adjoins the cleared zone. Informants told us that company representatives have been insulting and disrespectful. The company has destroyed a cemetery. They have no idea what was in the "social investment" agreement that has apparently been signed. Around 20% of the village's customary land is occupied by the Camvert cleared area. The passage of heavy machinery is weakening a local bridge.

For them, Camvert is a "chameleon" company: just BOISCAM and its affiliates under another name.

Now elephants and other wild animals are frequently found directly behind their houses, ravaging farms. Residents fear for their lives

**Campo Beach**, population about 500, is 25 km from the cleared area. In September 2021 a resident told us:

*I'd like what I'm saying to be transmitted to Biya in his mansion so he knows what Camvert is doing here in this village. If you complain you're told "Shut your mouth, here's 20,000FCFA (= 30 €), if you keep complaining you're put in jail. How am I supposed to live with that? How am I supposed to support this big family of mine when they've already taken my whole forest?"*

indeed been “virulently” against the plantation, and had said so in company “outreach” meetings, with the Senior Divisional Officer in attendance<sup>51</sup>. But after further meetings with the company, including one at the President’s office, he said he had come to find its social investment commitments sufficient; copies of them are available to all who ask; an implementation committee had been established. The company road, he said, made it easy for residents to travel to Kribi.

He said villagers were fickle: the people who complain of loss of crops from foraging elephants are the same people who initially supported the project, against his advice.

In January 2021, one informant told Greenpeace Africa he had no knowledge of the “social investment” agreement that he believed had been produced after the firm rejected an initial draft submitted by area “elites”<sup>50</sup>. The draft was revised at a company meeting with chiefs, who received per diem.

He said that traffic on a company-improved road to Kribi was tightly controlled at numerous roadblocks.

The mayor of the nearby town of Campo is from Campo Beach. In January 2020, he stated that he was against the plantation, fearing water pollution and the end of tourism.

By June of the same year, his own position had changed. In an interview with local media he acknowledged that at first, and for a long period, he had



Meeting with Akak community members, 2021 (c) Greenpeace Africa

## Focus on communities' views

Most of the communities visited have expressed their dissatisfaction (at different degrees of appreciation) with the Camvert project and the violation of their customary land rights, as well as the environmental and social damage which the project will cause<sup>52</sup>. Below are some of the demands:

- We want to be able to go to our farms again for our food without fearing to meet those elephants due to their habitat being destroyed by forest clearing.
- We do NOT want Camvert. We have seen the effects on what their forest degradation action is doing to our neighbors and they are not respecting their social obligation and engagements.
- Camvert is a wrong project. Their operation is polluting our waters, this has reduced the amount of fish we catch since the company started its operation, it also not respecting its social engagement and not recruiting our youths as he promised.

The detailed position of communities who are critical of the Camvert project include those categorically against the project and those who consider necessary changes to the project, in case it continues.

| Against the project  | In case the project continues  |
|--|--|
| Cancellation of the project by the Presidency  | Communities consultation before hand   |
| The need of the forest for them to have their activities: Fishing, traditional hunting, rites, medical plants, collection of Non timber Forest Products (NTFPs), etc | The reduction of the area targeted by the company from 60,000 to around 30,000ha       |
| No to deforestation  | Youth employment with good salaries  |
| No to Beach Pollution  | Project is implemented in a way that does not have negative impacts on the village.    |
| No to Negative environmental impacts   | Protection of their sacred sites.  |
| No to false promises   | Needs of schools, hospitals, roads, electricity, family farms supported by the company |
| Protection and preservation of their cultural and spiritual heritage   | increase of the limits of his village to around 5-10 km from the FMU 09 025 limits.    |

Contacted by Greenpeace Africa and GDA, Camvert failed to respond to a request for comment on a draft of the present report.

# Recommendations



## Greenpeace Africa and GDA recommend

### To Camvert

- An immediate and permanent end to all activities;
- Transparency: disclose all documents related to Camvert's ownership and financing, land acquisition and impact assessment process.

### To the Government of Cameroon

#### On the Camvert project and future deforestation plans

- Cancel Camvert project due to their potential impact and lessons learnt from Herakles farms, SudCam, Socapalm...
- Conduct an independent biodiversity survey and impact in the areas by an external party with public results;
- Stop facilitating large-scale land deals through direct intervention in sales and lease agreements, and by introducing public policy incentives for agribusiness investors.
- Launch an investigation to assess Camvert's compliance with Cameroonian law and publish the findings, including the illegal authorisation of clearing 2,500 hectares of forest given at the Ministry of Domain.
- Adopt a community based approach to natural resources management and fully and formally recognize the customary ownership of Indigenous and local communities over parts of the forest and hand over logging areas to be converted and other concessions back to local communities, so both justice and degraded ecosystems are restored.
- Ensure proper impact assessment process which includes but not limited to, the impact on biodiversity and climate;
- Halt any new large-scale land acquisitions for plantation development pending reform of the land tenure law and land use planning process.

- Support smallholder farmers by implementing clear rules on land ownership that protect smallholder and indigenous and local communities rights and encourage investment.

#### On Land Use Planning (LUP) & Land Tenure Reform (LTR)

- Adopt laws and regulations to respect and protect local communities and indigenous people's free, prior and informed consent to any activity that may affect their lands.
- Ensure effective participation and representation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in all decision-making processes relating to lands, territories and resources affecting them.
- Recognize, protect and support traditional knowledge, livelihoods and sustainable resource management systems of Indigenous Peoples, and their role in sustainable resource management.
- Ensure more transparency and accountability by publishing clear information with regard to LTR and the ongoing LUP process.

#### ■ **To the UN working group on Indigenous People's rights**

To use this evidence and commission an investigation work to the areas for the violation of Indigenous communities and make recommended sanctions according to the results.

#### ■ **To donors (concerning foreign support of LUP/LTR processes)**

- Stop funding land grabbers and adopt a "zero-tolerance approach" over land grabs
- Investment should be redirected towards supporting sustainable agricultural practices suited to the needs of smallholder farmers, ensuring strong safeguards.

■ **Greenpeace Africa and GDA also calls on fellow civil society organisations in Cameroon:**

- To reinforce their engagements with local and indigenous communities to defend their rights and echo their voices.
- Lobby and advocate for communities and support them in defending their rights
- Build communities' capacities in monitoring and full participation in natural resources management decision making processes and defense of their interests.



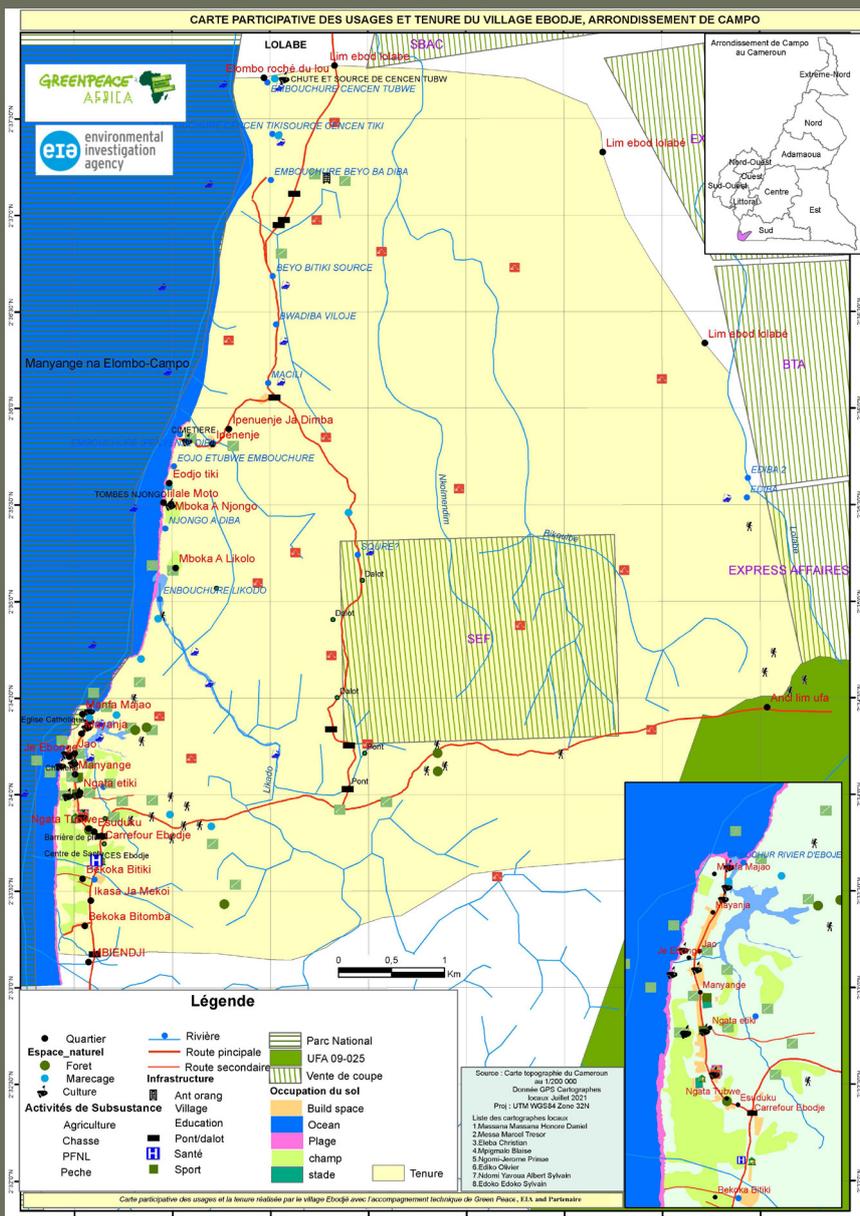
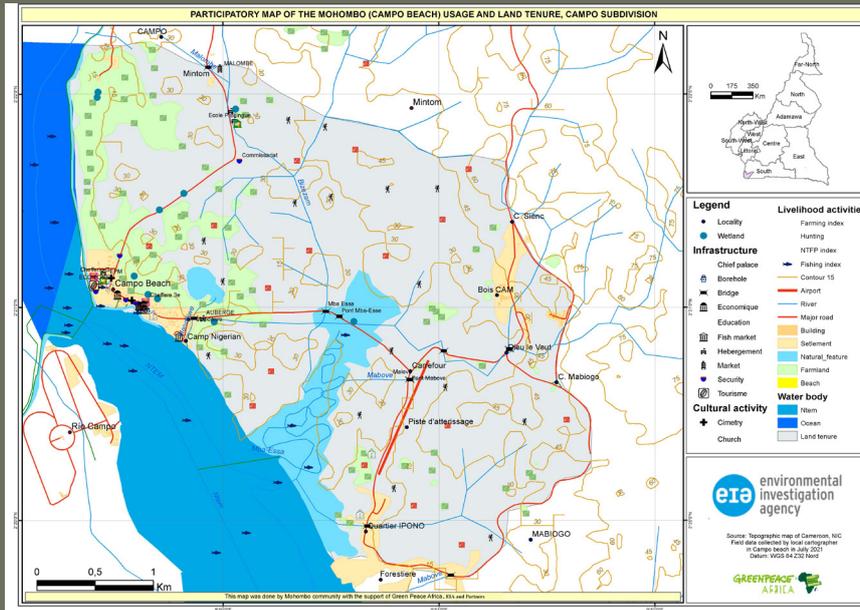
# References

1. Greenpeace, [Ruinous Rubber](#), 2018
2. Mongabay, "[NGOs reject new oil palm plantation in southern Cameroon](#)," 25 December 2019; Greenpeace, "[Illegal giant palm oil plantation flattening indigenous people's rainforest and threatening endangered wildlife in Cameroon](#)," 28 September 2020
3. Découverte Régionale, "[A bâtons rompus avec Aboubakar Al Fatih](#),"  
"En effet, militant convaincu du Rassemblement Démocratique du Peuple Camerounais (Rdpc), je suis un fervent défenseur des idéaux de ce parti et membre de la délégation permanente de son comité central pour le département du Mayo-Banyo. Je fais partie de cette jeunesse consciente qui croit au message du Président national de notre parti son Excellence Paul Biya, président de la République, à l'endroit de la jeunesse quand il leur a demandé 'd'oser.'"
4. Greenpeace field research, January, September and November 2021
5. Ibid.
6. "CAHIER DE CHARGES ENTRE CAMVERT S.A ET LA COMMUNAUTÉ DES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES BAGYELIS DE CAMPO, 2020"
7. Forest Peoples Programme, "[Request for consideration under the Early Warning / Urgent Action Procedure of the declassification of Forest Management Unit \(FMU\) 09-025 and reallocation to CamVert \(Cameroon\)](#)," 23 October 2020
8. Greenpeace field research
9. Ibid.
10. The company boasted in its 2015 annual report: "Through CIRAD's research, we found that our Sudcam plantation in Cameroon, Africa, possesses one of the most excellent type[s] of soil quality in the world for growing rubber trees. This is extremely exciting and very positive news for us as we continue our hard work of planting and replanting." See Greenpeace, "Ruinous Rubber," op. cit.
11. Libération, "[Biodiesel Le groupe Avril ne tient qu'à un fil](#)," 8 June 2018
12. CIRAD is a member of the board of directors of the corporate lobby Association Technique Internationale des Bois Tropicaux (ATIBT) and an official partner of the ATIBT's Fair&Precious green label, promoting some of the most notorious European logging multinationals in Central Africa.
13. Libération, "[Langue de bois Forêts d'Afrique centrale : une étrange conférence à la mairie de Paris](#)," 7 October 2021
14. <https://www.initiative-forets-afrique.paris/>
15. L'Humanité, "[Business as usual' chez Socfin et Bolloré](#)," 24 May 2020
16. Greenpeace, [Ruinous Rubber](#), op. cit.
17. No decree of public utility had been published and the firm's final ESIA had yet to be validated. (Green Development Advocates, "[Qualifying illegalities in the Degazetting Process of 60,000 hectares of a forest and the attribution of a Concession for an agro-industrial project in Campo and Nyete of the Ocean Division, South Region](#)," 2020
18. Greenpeace, "[Illegal giant palm oil plantation flattening indigenous people's rainforest and threatening endangered wildlife in Cameroon](#)," op. cit.
19. Camvert, [Etude d'impact environnemental et social](#), November 2019
20. Greenpeace, [Ruinous Rubber](#), op. cit.
21. Literally : "seven-year term." Paul Biya has been in office since 1982.
22. Actu-Plus, "[Projet Agro-industriel de Plantation et Transformation du palmier à huile à Campo et Niété: Voici les vérités cachées des accords Camvert-Collectif des ONGs de la réserve Campo-Ma'an](#)," 9 May 2020
23. The plantation is under a "barrage of fire by international NGOs attempting to destroy the project;" criticism is an act of "belligerence against the foundations of the Cameroonian economy;" NGOs are "preparing arms of massive destruction against it;" in an "external aggression against Cameroon," "an attempt at destabilization;" critics are "activists hidden abroad readying for battle." "These so-called international NGOs, we know them all, some are based in Yaoundé, in [Anglophone] Bamenda, in the [Anglophone] South West [...] They infiltrate the field." (Le Pélican, "Manoeuvres Mafieuses des Ong contre le Projet Camerounais de Production de 200 milles tonnes d'huile de Palme," 5 October 2020)
24. [Actu-Plus](#), op. cit.

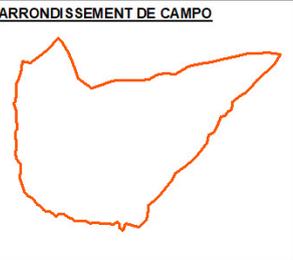
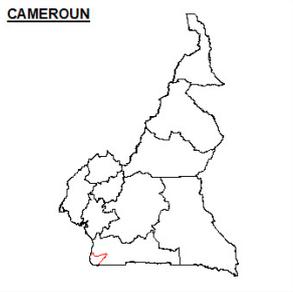
25. It was an Independent Observer financed by the European Union which gave the decisive green light to Sudcam in 2013 to continue deforestation. And it was France's publicly-funded Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD) which provided the Mvomeka'a plantation with key technical assistance.
26. Jeune Afrique, "[Cameroun: qui est Aboubakar al Fatih, acteur montant de l'industrie du bois?](#)" 2 June 2020
27. CRTV, "[Ces Jeunes qui participent à l'Emergence du Cameroun](#)"
28. Découverte Régionale, "[Aboubakar Al FATIH, le prodige du Mayo-Banyo](#)"
29. CRTV, op. cit.
30. In 2018 Al Fatih was one of seven CEMCO shareholders: [\(p.173\)](#)
31. EITI, [EITI Report 2017](#), February 2020, (pp.117, 112); EITI, [Rapport ITIE 2018](#), June 2021, (p.173); Découverte Régionale, "Aboubakar Al FATIH," op. cit.
32. <https://web.archive.org/web/20180814192458/http://cemco-group.com/corporate>
33. EITI 2017, 2018, op. cit.
34. <https://web.archive.org/web/20180814192458/http://cemco-group.com/corporate>
35. MINMIDT, "[communiqué radio-presse](#)" 24 February 2021
36. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/mahmoud-mourtada>
37. In Le Quotidien, "Camvert lance le planting industriel à Campo," 14 September 2020
38. The area slated for deforestation by Camvert was previously a Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified logging concession, run by the local partner of Dutch multinational Wijma. After "sustainably" depleting the zone of commercially viable species, the firm – which managed to keep its FSC label for months after its South West Region concession was engulfed in civil war in 2017 – proceeded to sell it to al Fatih. See FERN, "[THE BLAUWE LOPER PROJECT: A CLIMATE-FRIENDLY BRIDGE BUILT WITH TIMBER FROM A CONFLICT ZONE?](#)" 14 May 2018
39. The gazetting of Ebo forest near Douala for logging appears to have been intended as compensation for the degazetting of Al Fatih's FMU 09 025. Al Fatih's company SEXTRANSBOIS prospected Ebo forest. (Alain Ndedi, "Main Basse sur la forêt d'Ebo," 2020)
40. EcoMatin, "Réhabilitation : '[la Camerounaise du Métal](#)' prend possession du site de l'ex-Cellucam" 11 July 2021; MINMIDT, "[Avis d'appel à manifestation d'intérêt \[...\]](#)" 9 October 2020,
- SCIEB signed an MoU with the Mines and Industry Minister on 12 May 2020 (Investir au Cameroun, "[Vers le démantèlement et la dépollution du site de l'ex-Cellucam, société d'État tombée en faillite en 1982,](#)" 18 November 2020; Le Messenger, "[La reprise d'activités de l'ex-Cellucam est une fierté nationale](#)" 19 November 2020,
41. Jeune Afrique, op. cit.
42. Découverte Régionale, "[TBC Un magnat en plein déploiement,](#)"; Découverte Régionale, "Aboubakar Al FATIH," op. cit.
43. TBC, "[annonce légale,](#)" in Mutations, 15 March 2019, (p.2) Camvert suffers from the same opacity.
44. Land Portal, "[Adamaoua : pas moins de 655.000 hectares des terres convoités,](#)" 21 September 2020, TBC's Brazilian partner is [the seed producer IBSS Agronomy](#)
45. CRTV, op. cit.
46. Agroforêt, "[Je ne regrette pas d'avoir finalement changé d'avis sur le projet Camvert.](#)" 28 June 2021,
47. Niète: Nyamabande V12, Nkongho V15. Campo: Mvini, Mabiogo, Afan-Essokye, Akak, Doum-Essamebanga, Nkoadjap, Nkoelon, Ebodje, Nazareth, Doum-Essamedjang, Malaba, Campo Beach.
48. Greenpeace field research See also Le Monde, "[Dans le sud du Cameroun, la difficile cohabitation entre les hommes et les animaux sauvages,](#)" 29 July 2021; Ndombong and my forest, "[Cameroun :: Campo :: Les animaux fuyant les zones exploitées par Camvert affament les villageois :: Témoignage de sa majesté Mbili Jean René, chef de 3è degré du village Nazareth,](#)" 29 July 2021
49. Camvert paid local people 15,000 FCFA (= 23 €)/ha to clear its plantation. The going rate for clearing of fields in the area is 25,000 FCFA (= 38 €)/ha.
50. Greenpeace field research
51. Agroforêt, op. cit.
52. GP field trip of January and September 2021

# Annexes

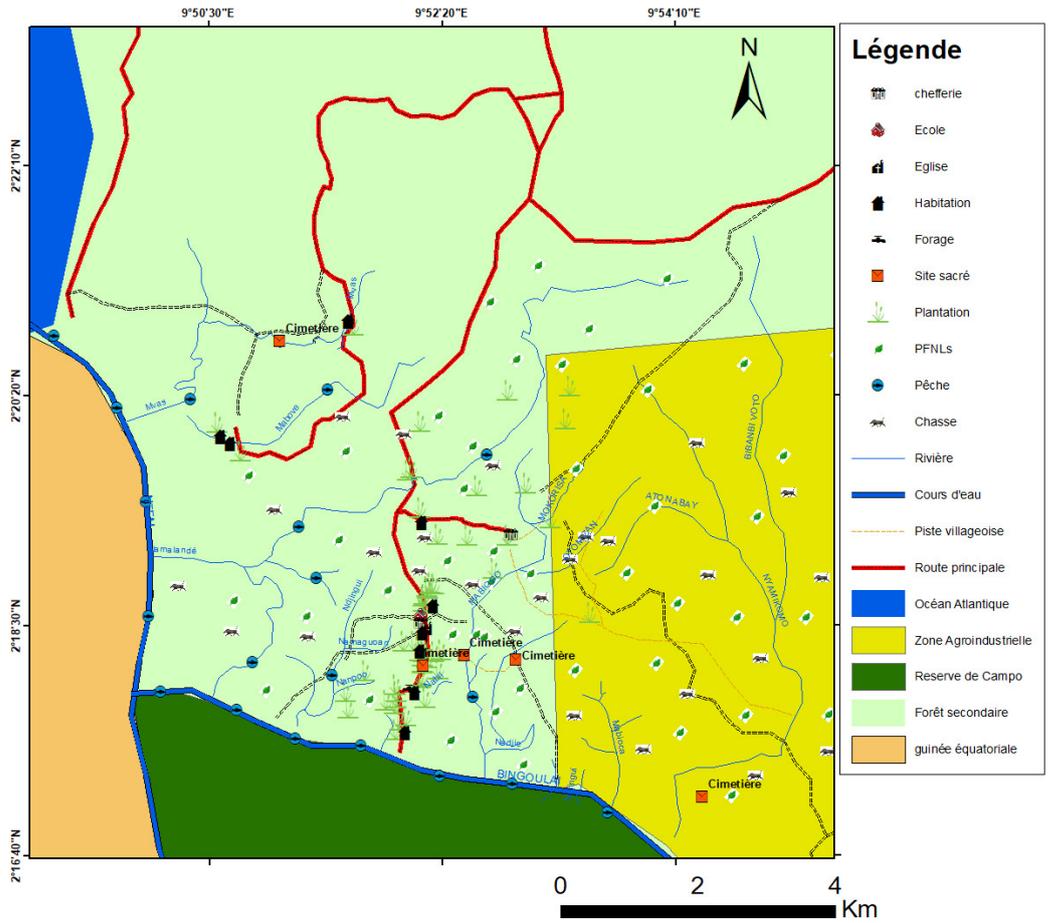
Participatory mapping maps carried out by GP, EIA and GDA in Campo and Niete area.



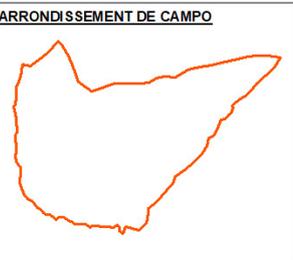
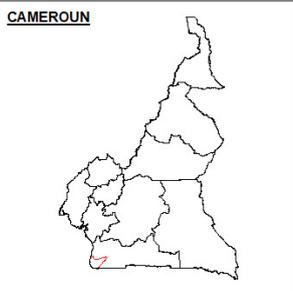
### CARTE DES USAGES COMMUNAUTAIRE DU VILLAGE MABIOGO



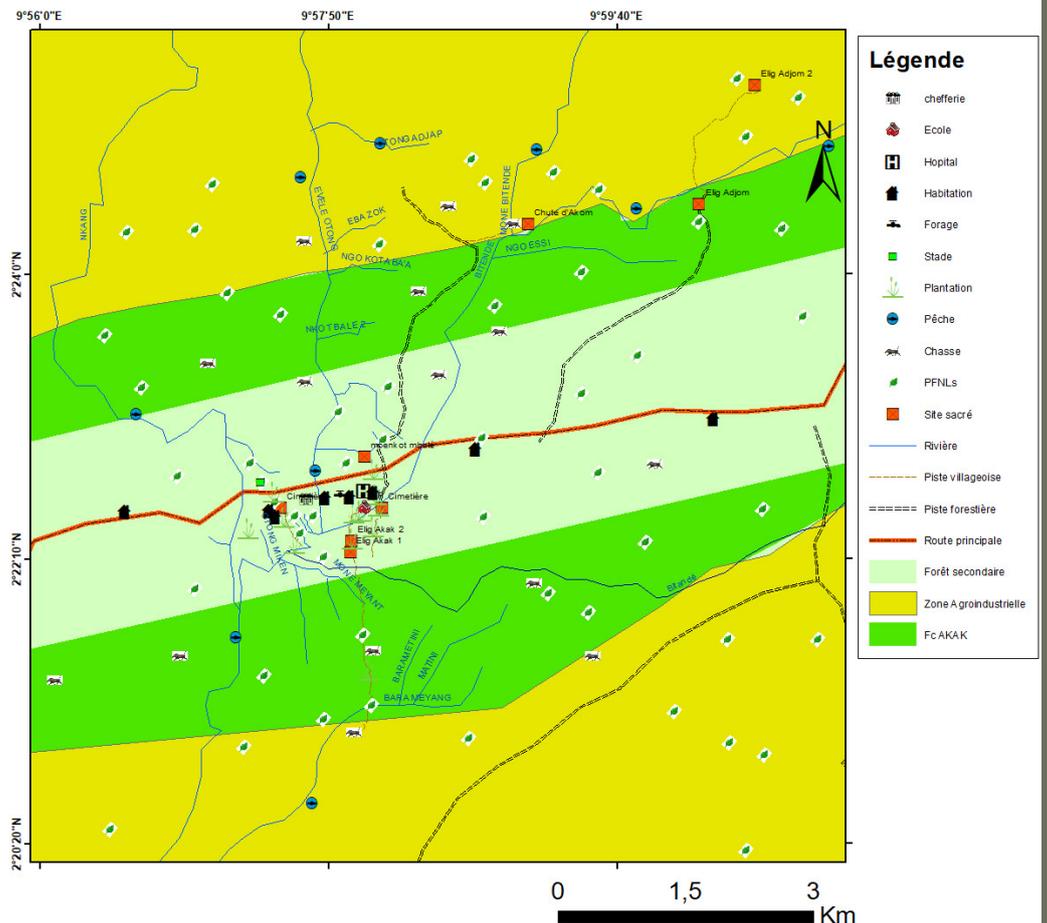
Projection: WGS84  
UTM 32N  
Août 2021



### CARTE DES USAGES COMMUNAUTAIRE DU VILLAGE AKAK

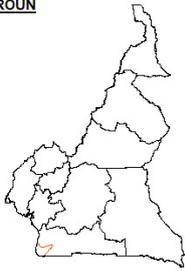


Projection: WGS84  
UTM 32N  
Août 2021

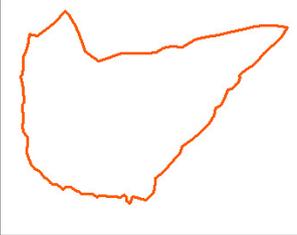


### CARTES DES USAGES COMMUNAUTAIRES DU VILLAGE MALABA

CAMEROUN

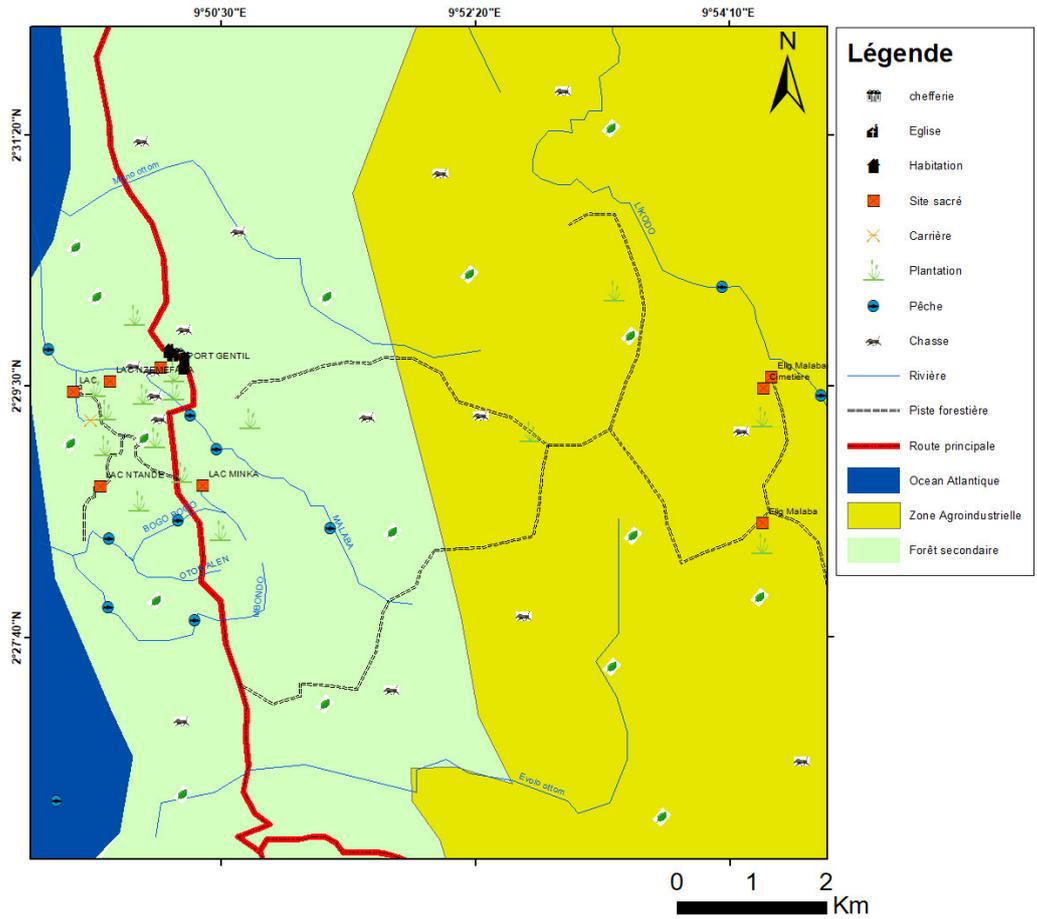


ARRONDISSEMENT DE CAMPO



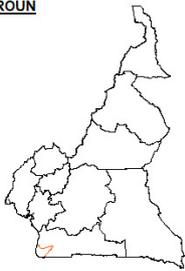
**Green Development Advocates**  
For a Green Congo Basin

Projection: WGS84  
UTM 32N  
Août 2021

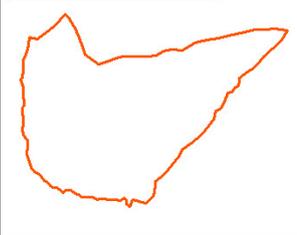


### CARTES DES USAGES COMMUNAUTAIRES DU VILLAGE NAZARETH

CAMEROUN



ARRONDISSEMENT DE CAMPO



**Green Development Advocates**  
For a Green Congo Basin

Projection: WGS84  
UTM 32N  
Août 2021

