

SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL CHARITABLE TRUST

Complainant

v

THE WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE

Respondent

SPECIFIC INSTANCE

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”¹ of southeast Cameroon, and that this failure has significantly contributed to the desperate predicament in which the Baka now find themselves.²
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.³ 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.⁴ 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.

¹ This is a term that many Baka consider offensive and prefer to avoid.

² See Annex I.

³ See page 60 of the Bundle.

⁴ 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.⁵ We have lodged in Survival’s name because the Baka lack the resources to file a complaint of their own.⁶

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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").⁷

⁷ 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 2008.⁸ 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].⁹

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.

⁸ This Statement of Principles is included at page 61 of the Bundle.

⁹ 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 areas¹⁰

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.¹¹ There is therefore a clear “nexus” between WWF and the relevant acts and omissions of the Government of Cameroon.¹²
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.

¹⁰ See Annex II

¹¹ See page 165 of the Bundle

¹² 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.¹³

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.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

¹³ See Annex II

¹⁴ See Annex III

¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ 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.

¹⁶ 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”)¹⁷ 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.¹⁸ The unsurprising result, to quote again from the 2007 survey, was:

¹⁷ See page 86 of the Bundle.

¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ 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.

¹⁹ 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.²⁰

²⁰ 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.”²¹ 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.”

²¹ 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.²² 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.

²² 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.²³ We also attach the statements of some eyewitnesses, one of whom has worked as a WWF consultant; reports from the Cameroonian press;²⁴ the video testimony of Baka whom we interviewed in 2013 and 2014²⁵; and the accounts of others whom we interviewed during the same period and in 2015.²⁶ 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”²⁷
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.

²³ See page 3 of the Bundle.

²⁴ See page 50 et seq. of the Bundle.

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

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

²⁷ *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.²⁸

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.²⁹

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.

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

²⁹ 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 Guidelines³⁰

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.³¹ 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.

³⁰ See Annex IV

³¹It 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.³²
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:

³² 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.”³³
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.³⁴

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.

³³ Supra, note 14

³⁴ 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.”³⁵ They might well have granted their FPIC in exchange for a secure right to continue to use the resources of their traditional lands.³⁶
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.

³⁵ See the discussion of the Endorois decision in Annex III

³⁶ 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.³⁷
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.

³⁷ 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.³⁸

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.³⁹

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

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ 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

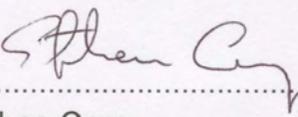
- (1) the UN's Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials. These require that steps are taken to ensure that damage and injury are kept to a minimum, that assistance and medical aid are rendered to any injured or affected persons at the earliest opportunity, and that 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

ANNEXES

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 19th 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 Areas¹

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 2014.² 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.

¹ 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.

² 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.³ 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.

³ 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]⁴

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];

⁴ 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.⁵

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.

⁵ 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.⁶ 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

⁶ 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.⁷

⁷ 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 ways⁸

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.”⁹

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.”

⁸ 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.”

⁹ 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.¹⁰ 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.”

¹⁰ 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

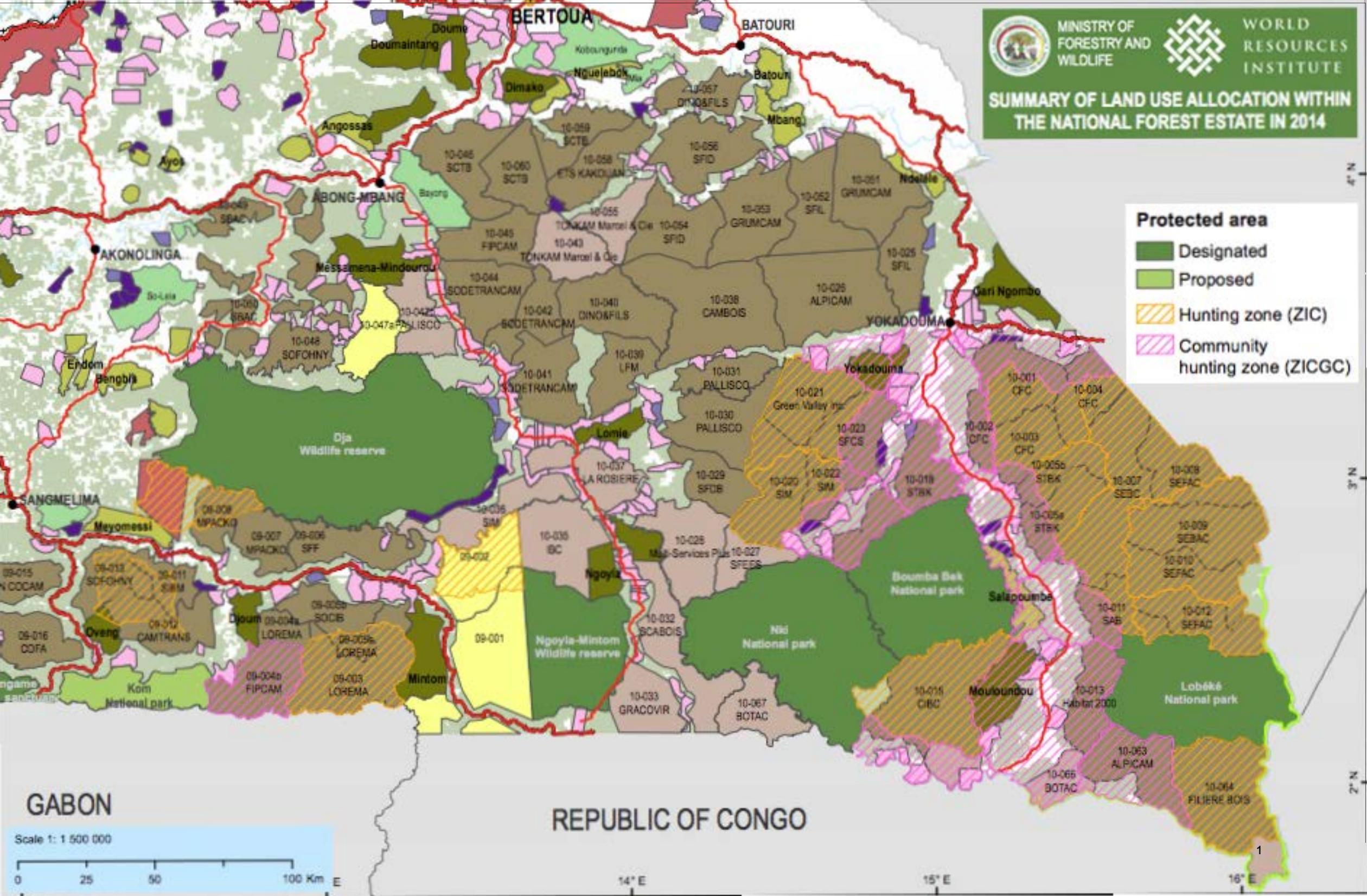
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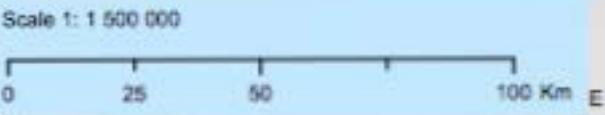
THE WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE

Respondent

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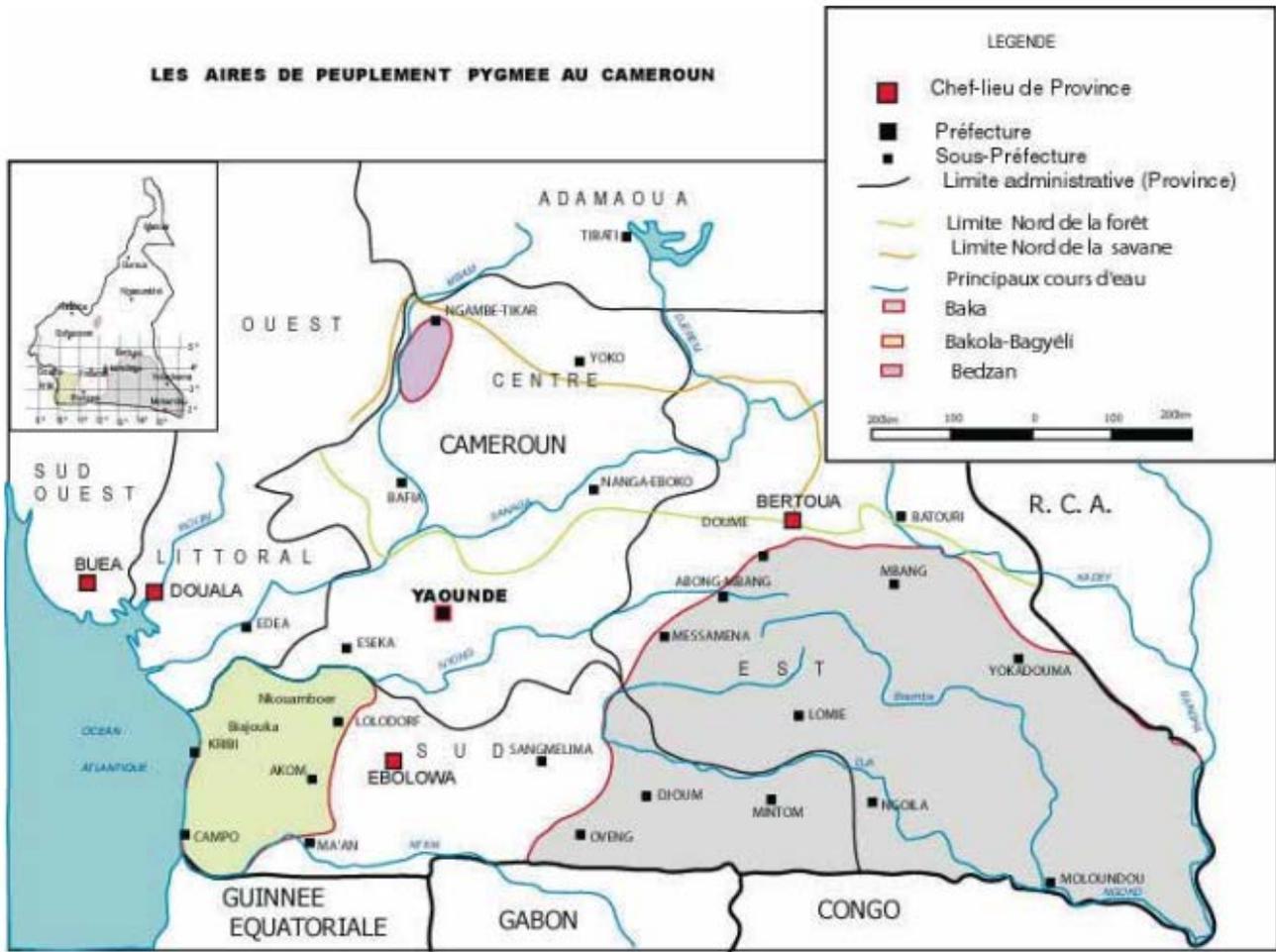
GABON



REPUBLIC OF CONGO

14° E 15° E 16° E

LES AIRES DE PEUPLEMENT PYGMEE AU CAMEROUN



Source: LOUNG Felix

Données: Emmanuel MOUNGOUMPOU 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*

Chronology of abuse of Baka by ecoguards and BIR

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.ⁱ
- 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."ⁱⁱ
- 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).ⁱⁱⁱ
- 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.^{iv}

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.”^v
- 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.^{vi}
- 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^{*} 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]

^{*} <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.”[†]
- 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.”^{vii}

[†] <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.

ⁱ 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.

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

ⁱⁱⁱ 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

^{iv} *ibid.* p.56

^v 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

^{vi} 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

^{vii} 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 [REDACTED] 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. [REDACTED] [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 [REDACTED]'s house and in [REDACTED]'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, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 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 [REDACTED] 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 [REDACTED] 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[†] 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

* <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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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

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.[‡]

[‡] 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.

* 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 [REDACTED], to Survival International in Ngatto Ancien, 3 August 2014.

He is referring to the same incident as [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], 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 wakling 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"[‡]

Then [REDACTED] arrived and found us.

[‡] 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.

L'hefferie de 3^{me} 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 dormions, 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 machette. il m'a brutalement
tiré de notre natte et m'a balancer dehors. de là, il a commencé
à me donner des coups de pied et de machette. me voyant fatiguée
de bastonnade et sachant qu'il m'avait blessé avec machette (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 étranglé mon mari au sortir de la porte
le coupant avec les machettes 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^r [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^r [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^r [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^r [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^r [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^r 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 : - T₃
- Conj : pâles
- T₄ :

- 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

T³ =

TA =

Vu ce jour: Va mieux

Stop Exacryl;

Continuer T³ en cours

ajouter : tot' Henna :
2 amp 8h dans $\frac{1}{2}$ verre
d'eau.

~~J. Gammal~~



le 09/04/2014

T₂ =
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:

- Bupropifène 400:
2cp x 2 x J pdt 10j.
- Amoxicilline 500:
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⁺
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

- SG 1/2 dose en perfusion rapide
cefraxone 1g.
1 fl en 12h en IVL

Diclofenac 75

1 Amp / 12h en 3A

Bexamethasone;

2 Amp / 12h en IVL

~~J. Gammouh~~

le 08 / 04 / 2014

TX =

DA =

Vu ce jour; Va assez mieux

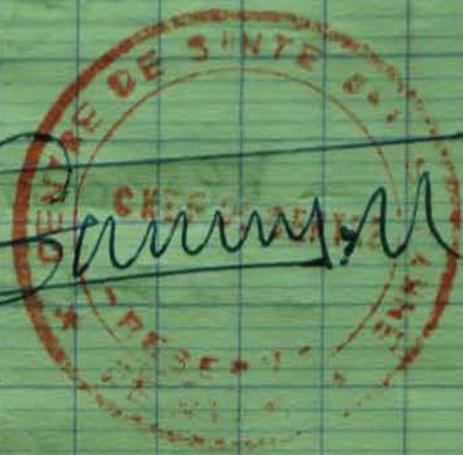
Stop Exacel

continuer 3 en cours et ajouter

lot Henna;

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

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



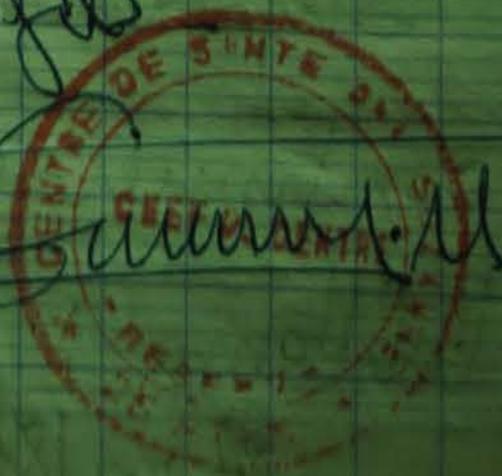
le 09/04/2014

T° =
TA =

Vu ce jour; Va mieux

sont T³ en cours

Jusqu'à l'ablation
totale des foyers



le 17/05/2014

Mle: tumeur à l'omoplate & droit
avec masse palpable sous
cutanée 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°C

- Stop Dipyrone,
- Pst à la bétadine
- Cont T³ en cours

~~J. Samuël~~



le 26/05/2014

- Un ce jour:
- Va encore trop mieux
 - Ablation partielle des fils
 - Stop injection
 - Continuer T³ 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 ██████████, 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

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.

| [Cliquez sur une image pour agrandir](#)



Réagir à cet article »

Nom et Prénom

Votre email

Ville

Quartier de résidence

-- Pays de résidence --

Echos du Littoral

Echos des régions

- » Adamaoua
- » Centre
- » Littoral
- » Extrême-nord
- » Nord
- » Sud
- » Est
- » Ouest
- » Sud-ouest
- » Nord-ouest

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- 13/11** Politique - Le Littoral accueille Ivaha Diboua
- 13/11** Politique - La troisième session de l'Année législative 2015 ouverte hier au Sénat
- 26/10** Politique - Evacuation d'Essimi Menye : Le diagnostic de Mama Fouda
- 19/10** Lutte contre Boko Haram - Paul Biya reçoit David M. Rodriguez, commandant d'Africom
- 12/10** Société - Terrorisme : L'arrondissement de Mora à feu et à sang
- 28/09** Economie - Coopération Cameroun – FMI: satisfaction dans l'ensemble
- 14/09** Société - Double attentat à Kolofata: neuf morts et 24 blessés
- 14/09** Force multinationale mixte - Le général Bouha

INFO EN IMAGES



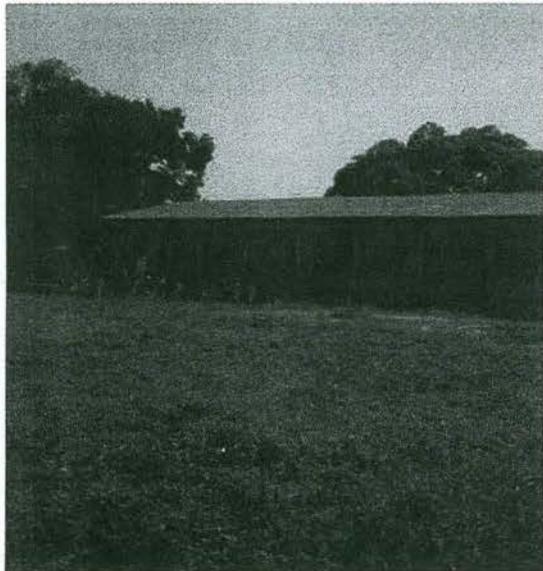
POLITIQUE
Assemblée nationale : Mijital Zake pour remplacer Bouba Simala ?

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 la 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 Nguébi 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.

Repression
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

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Quotidien



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95 ans déjà que Douala Manga Bell a été pendu

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• *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 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 Minfof 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 Minfof. Ces écogardes commettent des exactions, mais de moins en moins (...) Nous saisissons chaque fois notre partenaire, le Minfof, 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 brusque 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) corréctif 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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Deux vendeurs de crânes humains interpellés

Ils sont en garde à vue au commissariat.

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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 Maléa 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 qui est 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 les 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-

crétiser 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'Etat 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'Etat 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 ignorés 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, autorisations du Cameroun. « En ne comprenant pas les enjeux de leur communauté, l'Etat a fallu dans la prise en compte de leurs besoins », conclut-il.

Muriel Etjo (stagiaire)

forêt

Privés de leur bois, privés de leur vie

Cracés 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 aires 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-delà de ces limites que se trouvent nos champs



Maléa Ancien le 20 juillet 2009. Des Baka dans la cour du village.

et le gibier. Nous sommes condamnés à mourir », se plaint le chef du village. « La forêt, c'est la richesse des Baka », ajoute-t-il. En effet, la forêt constitue l'essence de la culture des pygmées Baka. « On ne peut pas imaginer un Baka sans forêt », avoue Nadine Mbala, la coordinatrice du programme de protection et de promotion des droits des peuples autochtones au Ced. Par ces restrictions, les Baka n'ont plus la possibilité de se soigner. Dans la forêt, les pygmées Baka pratiquent aussi des

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. Annuellement, une somme de 100.000 Fcfa est versée à la récolte annuelle d'une cacayère estimée à 200.000 Fcfa appartenant 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 reconcession 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, Gervais Sak, 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 été élu conseiller municipal de Saboumbé. Laurent Medoua Pem, le conseiller municipal de Saboumbé, qui passait par là, Selon un Baka ne pouvait avoir un autre régime de plantain, il avait voté dans sa plantation où le Baka travaillait de temps en temps. Une dispute va s'ensuivre, et pendant l'altercation, le conseiller municipal va jeter les lunettes de Raymond Mekpok, provoquant un saignement abondant des narines géni-

taux de Raymond qui s'évanouit sur le champ. 40 heures plus tard, il mourra plus à se mettre debout. Il sera conduit auprès des soins de Saboumbé où il déclenche le 27 avril 2008, selon les dires de son père, Félix Koum. 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 Gervais Zok, le principal en cause. Ce dernier tente les approches pour séduire la jeune fille. Malgré son refus, la jeune Baka n'est pas relâchée. En quittant la salle la nuit de la fête, elle ne peut plus être accompagnée par le jeune garçon, Sylvie Libalaka sera suivie par celui-ci et deux de ses amis, Serge Nkomo Mboué et un autre. Ce sont ces deux garçons qui vont immobiliser la fille dans un coin éloigné du lieu des retrouvailles pendant que Gervais Zok abuse d'elle. Trois jours plus tard, le corps de Syl-

vie Libalaka est retrouvé dans le puits dans la concession de la famille de Gervais Zok par sa mère. Les investigations de la brigade de gendarmerie de Yokadouma ont conduit à l'implication de Gervais Zok et de ses deux amis, Gervais Zok et Serge Nkomo Mboué sont arrêtés et détenus à la prison principale de Yokadouma. La troisième garçon s'est réfugié à Lure. Sylvie Libalaka était mère de deux enfants.

M.E. (Stg)

peuples autochtones

Un plaidoyer pour le respect des droits

D'avril 2007 à décembre 2009, le Ced, pour l'environnement et le développement (Ced) a mené un programme de protection et de promotion des droits des peuples autochtones. Ce programme consistait spécifiquement les populations pygmées. Au niveau national et international, le Ced entend, à travers les outils 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 Cfa 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 sous 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, Oradit 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 Efoudebe, 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 débarrassant 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 Assouindélé République du Cameroun
(Baka) - paix - travail - patrie.
Chefferie traditionnelle
3^e Deg. (Baka).

lettre de recommanda-
tion :

Nous, Communautés, Baka d'Assou-
indélé (A travers ma voix chef 3^e
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^e Deg.
Assouindélé

 MENÉWA,
SAMSON

NDONGO-30-10-2014

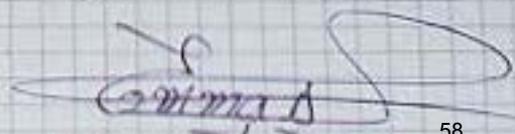
Chef du village de Ndongo
à NDONGO, DJA RIVIERE frontatier
au CONGO Brazaville

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

Je vous dit une chose Mr:
Depuis l'installation de WWF ici a
NDONGO nous somme très d'accord
mais les dire et promesse promis
n'étais jamais réaliser.
nous doutubonts de vos application
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