



STATEMENT

From civil society organizations on the ongoing timber looting in the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve and the Djoko Community Forest

We, Cameroonian civil society organizations committed to the conservation and sustainable management of forests, protection of the environment and the defence of human rights in the exploitation of natural resources, gathered from June 11 to 12, 2026 in Mbalmayo, to express our deep concern about the logging operations currently being carried out in the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve and in the Djoko Community Forest under the specious pretext of implementing the Mbalam iron project.

The mining permit granted to Cameroon Mining Company Sarl by decree no. 2022/395 of August 17, 2022, covers an area of 768.5423 km² in the municipality of Ngoyla, Upper-Nyong division, East region. According to the cartographic analysis of the coordinates in this decree, the permit area notably includes 40,038 hectares of the southern part of the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve as well as the entirety of the Djoko Community Forest.

Our field observations and information gathered from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) indicate that several Sales of Standing volume, including SSV n°10 02 475 et n°10 02 509, were attributed within the reserve.

The signatory organizations note with concern:

The absence of public information on a possible partial or total declassification of the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve, in accordance with the requirements of article 17 paragraph 1 of law no. 2024/008 of July 24, 2024 on the regime of forests and wildlife ;

The lack of transparency surrounding the allocation of sales of standing volumes which cannot be allocated without a declassification decree made public as mentioned previously ;

The apparent lack of prior consultation with the stakeholders concerned ;

The absence of a prior impact study carried out in consultation with Indigenous Peoples ;

The granting of special permits for logging in the Djoko Community Forest without prior consultation or FPIC with the Baka indigenous people; The Djoko Community Forest, primarily a conservation area, is currently the only space in the region where indigenous people have access to carry out their traditional and religious activities. This forest was allocated as compensation to the Baka during the creation of the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve, and if it is destroyed, the cultural identity of this people will be lost, along with their basic means of subsistence ;

The increasing number of deforestation alerts recorded in both forest areas. According to data from Global Forest Watch (GFW), 42,566 deforestation alerts were recorded in the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve between November 3, 2025, and June 8, 2026. In the Djoko Community Forest, 2,347 alerts were recorded between December 9, 2025, and June 8, 2026 ;

The ongoing operations pose significant risks to :

The sacred sites and cultural spaces of the Baka indigenous people ;

The health, food security, and well-being of the Indigenous Baka Peoples ;

The transmission of traditional knowledge and the preservation of Baka cultural identity ;

The usage rights of local and indigenous communities;

The natural habitat of many species of wildlife ;

The destruction of wildlife corridors and the escalation of human-wildlife conflicts ;

The increase in poaching ;

The coherence of public policies in the face of the overlap of mining and forestry titles ;

The signatory organizations believe that this situation could compromise Cameroon's national and international commitments regarding respect for human rights, conservation of natural biodiversity, protection of indigenous peoples, the fight against climate change and transparency in extractive industries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The signatory organizations recommend :

- **To the Government of Cameroon**

1. Ensure that the implementation of the Mbalam iron ore project does not compromise the integrity of the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve and the Djoko Community Forest, and map and safeguard sacred sites, areas used by the Baka indigenous peoples, and areas of high conservation value in accordance with current legislation;
2. Make public the information regarding the alleged partial declassification of the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve and the publication of sales of standing volumes ;
3. Ensure that extractive companies operating in Cameroon respect human rights in accordance with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights ;
4. Strengthen transparency and accountability in the management of overlaps between mining, forestry and conservation activities ;
5. Launch an independent administrative inquiry into allegations of timber plundering in the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve and of violations of the rights of the Baka indigenous communities in the Djoko community forest ;

- **To companies involved in forestry and mining activities**

6. Respect the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, in particular the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) ;
7. Ensure transparent and accessible information about their activities ;

Repair (compensation or restitution) damages according to the actual impact on the affected Baka (effects on access to resources, health and well-being, right to housing, food security, cultural impact, economic impact, and others), not on the basis of a financial evaluation. Any reparation must be the subject of meaningful consultation and agreement with the Indigenous Peoples themselves ;
9. Ensure the conduct of prior human rights impact assessments before any activity likely to affect the Indigenous Baka People, within the framework of a broader due diligence process in accordance with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights ;
10. Facilitate their effective involvement in the implementation of activities related to ongoing projects ;

- **To the Technical and Financial Partners**

11. Support participatory forest governance initiatives ;

12. Supporting communities in defending their rights and preserving their basic means of subsistence and their natural living habitat ;

13. Support independent citizen monitoring and oversight mechanisms ;

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Done in Yaoundé july 1st, 2026

APPENDICES

