



We fight back: Global solidarity in the fight against Socfin's human rights abuses

To the shareholders of Socfin and its subsidiaries Socfinaf, Socfinasia ; To Mr Vincent Bolloré and Mr Hubert Fabri and family, owners of the Socfin company,

As affected communities and organizations working to defend human rights, we have brought scrutiny to Socfin's operations for decades. We have repeatedly raised serious concerns about violations of human rights, which have recently [been confirmed](#) by an investigation commissioned by the company itself from the Earthworm Foundation. The Norwegian Pension Fund has even [divested](#) from Bolloré because of such concerns. Today, we draw attention to **new developments in our struggles for justice**, as we continue to raise our voices in solidarity until Socfin and its shareholders fulfil their obligations to put an end to ongoing human rights abuses.

This week, **a coalition of non-governmental organizations, namely CNCD-11.11.11., FIAN Belgium, Humundi, and SOS Faim Luxembourg, has initiated legal proceedings against Socfin.** This action is a direct response to what they consider to be an abusive lawsuit previously brought against them and seven of their employees by the company. Following the publication of a human rights report on Socfin's operations in Sierra Leone as well as peaceful awareness-raising actions, Socfin initiated a defamation complaint in 2019, which eventually ended in a dismissal in 2024. Nonetheless, it cost the organizations a large amount of money, time, and energy. For us, the conclusion is clear: this was a SLAPP (strategic lawsuit against public participation). The four NGOs have thus decided to respond: firstly, to seek reparation for the harms caused by this abusive lawsuit ; secondly, to send the message that courts should not be at the hands of billionaires - they must protect the space for civil society, journalists and communities to speak out without fear.



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But the immediate victims of Socfin's abuses are those on the frontline of human rights violations: the people living in the many villages and farming communities directly affected by land conflicts, precarious working conditions, environmental degradation, violence and threats to suppress dissent. Today, they are hosting a webinar titled "*On the margins of Socfin's AGM, people raise their voices: We want our land back because we want to live*" ; to make their struggles known to a wider audience.

In **Cambodia**, the inhabitants of six Bunong villages in Bu Sra affected by Socfin's plantations never gave their free, prior and informed consent to the granting of the concessions and to Socfin's occupation of the land. Consequently, many **want Socfin to give their land back** (demarcating both community and individual lands, and handing back concession lands to communities upon expiry). As Socfin's arrival undermined Bunong villagers' key livelihood - swidden agriculture - some also **ask the company to share their revenues with the local communities** through ongoing development support. The villagers involved in the court case in France ask for a **swift reopening of the court case** that was initiated more than 10 years ago and has not progressed for several years.

In **Indonesia**, the Sengon Sari Shelter Farmers Group in Aek Kuasan Subdistrict gathers more than 250 family members, fighting for their land since 1989. They have

reported the non-consensual seizure of 435 hectares of land by Socfin's plantation to the Indonesian government, showing ownership documents and historical evidence. The Maju Lestari Farmers Group in Aek Ledong Subdistrict, consists of 184 family members fighting for 390 hectares of land since 1972. **Their struggles have reached the Supreme Court and have involved several hearings with the House of Representatives**, both at the central and regional levels.

In **Cameroun**, an association of women residents of the plantation in Edéa called AFRISE, has been struggling for decades for their lands, their forests, their rivers, their sacred lands, taken over by Socfin plantations. They are now involved in **a legal case against the State of Cameroun**, of which the first hearing was held on June 4th, 2026. This historic legal action aims to obtain the return of lands occupied by Socfin's plantation Socapalm in Edéa to the community of Apouh. Their struggle for the restitution of their ancestral land is gaining legitimacy at the national and international level: **they are conducting advocacy actions** towards the President of the Republic of Cameroun, the Prime Minister, public administrations at a national, regional and traditional community level.

It does not stop there. In **Ivory Coast**, multiple villages are fighting to secure their land back in order to live a decent life, as they find themselves pressed into insufficient spaces. In **Sierra Leone**, women are on the frontline to demand better working conditions, access to the land leases and an end to the constant allegations and arrest for palm theft even in communities that own land and palm trees. In **Ghana**, communities demand that gates preventing them access to farming lands be removed, and that their farmland be given back. In **Liberia**, 36 communities in two plantations (SRC and LAC) are requesting the full settlement of damages caused between 2004-2012 and 2007-2012 respectively, by implementing the compliance audit report of CAO, the Ombudsman of the World Bank, without preconditions, and the Earthworm Foundation's recommendations.

We are all too familiar with the company's strategy of denial, opacity and legal intimidation. But our global solidarity makes us strong in the face of human rights violations. We will not be silenced, until we obtain justice.

Signatories

FIAN Belgium

FIAN Switzerland

ONESTENSEMBLE, Cameroun

The Oakland Institute

SYNAPARCAM, Cameroun

GRAIN

Sawit Watch, Indonesia

Kelompok Tani Penampungan Sengon Sari, Indonesia

Kelompok Tani Maju Lestari, Indonesia

RADD, Cameroun

AFRISE, Cameroun

Bunong Indigenous People Association, Cambodia

Rettet den Regenwald, Germany

Collectif pour la défense des terres malgaches - TANY

HEKS/EPER Swiss Church Aid

JVE Côte d'Ivoire

YVE Ghana

SOLIFONDS, SWITZERLAND

WoNARPI, Sierra Leone

Alliance for Rural Democracy, Liberia

Yeabamah National Congress for Human Rights, Liberia

Ablojay, Liberia

Look Green Care Foundation, Nigeria

Green Advocates International, Liberia

CADTM France