

# Project of Independent Observer in Support of Forest Law Enforcement in Cameroon

**Approved by the Ministry of  
Environment and Forestry**

## **Report of the Independent Observer**

**No. 084En**

*Central Control Unit – Independent Observer Joint Mission*

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<b>Title</b>	None
<b>Location</b>	Ngoro Sub-Division, Mbam and Kim Division
<b>Mission date</b>	21-25 July 2003
<b>Companies</b>	Ets. Flamboyant, individuals

**Independent Observer Team (Global Witness):**

*Mr Reiner Tegtmeyer, Project Director  
Mr Serge C. Moukouri, Technical Assistant  
Mr Albert Mballa Mbarga, Driver*

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A forest control mission undertaken by the Central Control Unit (CCU) visited Ngoro Sub-Division in the Mbam and Kim Division of the Central Province from 21 to 25 July 2003. Accompanied by the Independent Observer (Global Witness), the purpose of the mission was to verify allegations of illegal logging activities taking place in the state forests of the region.

Observations made by the mission showed that illegal logging activities and small-scale wood processing had been undertaken in the state forests situated in the Ngoro Sub-Division. These activities seem to be the work of an organised network and appear to be occurring due to complicity at the community leadership level and laxity on the part of local MINEF officials.

The mission seized approximately 58m<sup>3</sup> of sawn wood, comprising *Pachyloba*, *Bete* and *Iroko* species. Sworn agents of the CCU took the initiative to sell part of the wood (54m<sup>3</sup>, primarily *Pachyloba*) by mutual agreement to the Ngoro Rural Council. The remaining 4m<sup>3</sup> were transported to the Provincial Delegation of Environment and Forestry for Central Province (PDEF-C).

The mission gathered proof that members of the political elite were involved in illegal logging activities taking place in the villages of Bondo and Massassa. No official statement of offence was established in the field.

In view of the above, **the Independent Observer recommends:**

- An administrative inquiry into the degree of involvement of cited local MINEF officials in the aforementioned illegal acts;
- Further investigations to identify those responsible for illegal logging activities as well as those who buy the illegally harvested wood;
- A mission be undertaken to take an inventory of all trees felled and abandoned in the Mbama and Kpoupa forests.

## **2. RESOURCES USED**

- 1 Toyota Hilux Pick up
- 2 GPS (Garmin brand)
- 1 digital camera
- 1 video camera (Sony brand)
- 1 200,000<sup>e</sup> map of the Bafia area

## **3. COMPOSITION OF THE MISSION**

The mission was made up of Messrs Djibrilla Hessana and Jean Avit Kongape, agents of the CCU, as well as Messrs Reiner Tegtmeier and Serge C. Moukouri, members of the technical team of the Independent Observer.

## **4. CONSTRAINTS**

Several constraints hindered the mission. Some of the information received by the mission prior to deployment was not consistent with reality “on the ground.” Though informed in advance by the Head of Mission, the Head of the Local Forestry Post for Ngoro was absent from his office during the entire mission process. In addition, some communities refused to cooperate with the members of the mission.

## **5. MISSION’S FINDINGS**

### **5.1 Case Summary**

On 10 April 2003, the Mayor of Ngoro Rural Council addressed a letter to the Minister of the Environment and Forestry about on-going illegal logging activities in his jurisdiction.

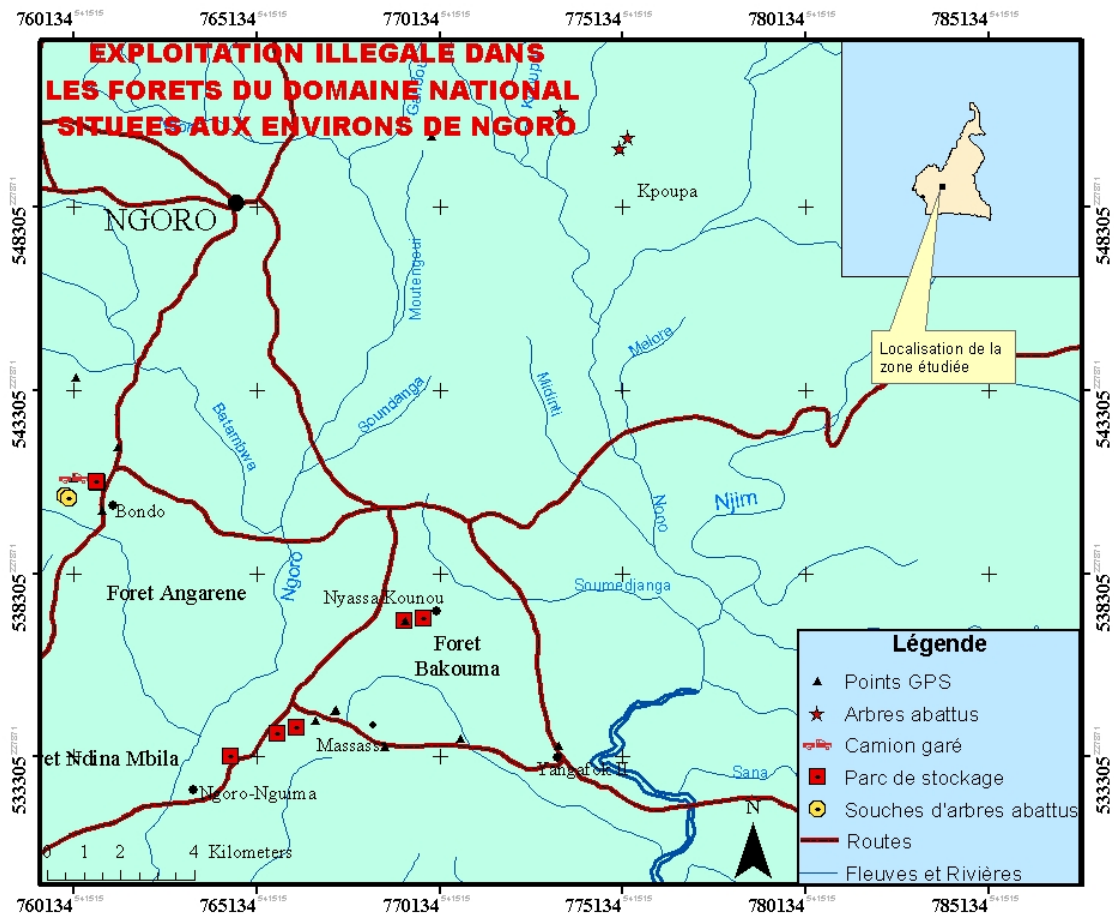
This letter was a follow-up to previous complaints which had resulted in a verification mission in March 2003. During that mission, a large quantity of sawn wood as well as some equipment used in carrying out the illegal activities were seized. Litigation undertaken following the mission resulted in preliminary notifications of fines.

The mission conducted meetings with the Sub-Prefect of Ngoro.

### **5.2 Observation of the Independent Observer**

Evidence discovered in the villages of Massassa, Bondo, Ngoro-Nguima, Nyassa-Kounou and Egona II confirmed that the surrounding forests of Ngoro were being illegally logged. The mission observed, for example, that recent felling had taken place in the forest adjacent to Kpoupa Village. The map below shows the sites where sawn wood was seized.

**Map:** Area of illegal logging



**(a) Massassa and Ngoro-Nguima**

In the vicinity of Massassa Village, the mission seized a stock of about 600 *Pachyloba* beams, ranging from 1 to 3 meters in length. According to information given to the mission team by the local population, this wood allegedly belonged to a local company, and had been hidden from the March 2003 mission. Due to time constraints, the mission did not investigate further to identify the person or persons responsible for this activity.



**(b) Bondo**

About 30m<sup>3</sup> of sawn *Pachyloba*, seemingly awaiting evacuation, was discovered and seized. According to information gathered, a member of the political elite may have been responsible for the illegal logging in this village.



**(c) Nyassa-Kounou**

The mission seized 86 planks of *Bete* and *Iroko* meters length discovered in the forest neighbouring Nyassa-Kounou village. This wood was transported to the Ngoro Forestry Post.





**(d) Egona II**

*Pachyloba* wood sawn into planks and beams was seized on the road to Egona II.



**(e) Mbama and Kpoupa**

Observations made at Mbama and Kpoupa strongly suggested that illegal logging activities were still continuing. The mission observed freshly felled trees in addition to trees that had been felled and abandoned at least two years ago.



**5.3 Responsibility of local MINEF agents**

The mission members concluded that such large quantities of unidentified wood cannot circulate in the region without attracting the attention of local MINEF officials. The mission also noted that local MINEF agents, viz: Provincial and District Delegation of the Environment and Forestry (PDEF, DDEF), Head of Local Forestry Post have not taken measures to end these illegal activities which were already noted in Report of the Independent Observer No. 039.

#### **5.4 Sale of seized wood by mutual agreement**

During this mission, agents of the CCU sold seized wood by mutual agreement. Section 144 of the 1994 Law prescribes sale by public auction in these cases. The law also stipulates that control agents can sell via direct and immediate means only perishable goods seized. In this instance, the wood was sold to cover the handling charges and costs to transport the seized wood (remaining monies were deposited in the public treasury, see Appendix 1).

### **6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This mission found clear evidence that illegal logging of state forests situated in the vicinity of Ngoro is continuing. This activity is taking place with no apparent opposition from local MINEF officials (PDEF, DDEF and Head of Local Forestry Post).

Consequently, **the Independent Observer recommends:**

- An administrative inquiry into the degree of involvement of cited local MINEF officials in the aforementioned illegal acts;
- Further investigations to identify those responsible for illegal logging activities as well as those who buy the illegally harvested wood;
- A mission be undertaken to take an inventory of all trees felled and abandoned in the Mbama and Kpoupa forests.



## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix 1

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN  
Paix- Travail- Patrie  
MINISTRE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT  
ET DES FORETS  
SECRETARIAT GENERAL  
UNITE CENTRALE DE CONTROLE

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON  
Peace- Work- Fatherland  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT  
AND FORESTRY  
SECRETARIAT GENERAL  
CENTRAL CONTROL UNIT

### PROCES-VERBAL DE VENTE DE GRE A GRE

L'an deux mille trois et le vingt-cinq du mois de juillet, je soussigné **DJIBRILA HESSANA**, Ingénieur Forestier, Contrôleur à l'UCC (MINEF), Certifie avoir procédé à la vente de gré à gré d'un stock de bois cubant 54 m3 de Pachyloba.

Ce stock de bois saisi suivant les notifications de saisies :

- N° 01/NS/MINEF/SG/UCC/MC 0848
- N° 02/NS/MINEF/SG/UCC/MC 0848
- N° 03/NS/MINEF/SG/UCC/MC 0848
- N° 04/NS/MINEF/SG/UCC/MC 0848

est constitué de pièces de pachyloba issues du sciage sauvage dans le domaine national (localité de Ngoro).

- Mise à prix : 75.000 F CFA le mètre cube soit un montant total de quatre millions cinquante mille francs (4.050.000 F CFA) ;
- Les 13 % en sus donnent un montant de cinq cent vingt-six mille cinq cent francs CFA (526.500 F CFA) ;
- Les charges afférentes à la manutention et au transport dudit bois montent à six cent soixante dix-sept mille quatre cent cinquante francs CFA (677.450 F CFA) ;
- Soit un montant total de trois millions trois cent soixante douze mille cinq cent cinquante francs CFA (3.372.550 F CFA) versé au Trésor Public (quittance N° 94 83 76 du 28 juillet 2003) et au fonds de Développement Forestier (quittance N° 000810) du 28 juillet 2003.

La partie acquérante étant la Commune Rurale de Ngoro, le présent procès-verbal de vente de gré à gré lui est délivré pour servir et valoir ce que de droit./-



LE CHEF DE MISSION

*Hessana*  
DJIBRILA HESSANA

DATE 08/07/2002	PARTIE VERSANTE DEBITOR MINEF JCC	NATURE DE LA RECETTE NATURE OF REVENUE Vente aux enchères TOTAL 2 023 550 F	MONTANT AMOUNT EN LETTRES / IN LETTERS Deux millions deux mille cinq cent cinquante francs EN CHIFFRES / IN FIGURES 2 023 550
CACHET / STAMP SIGNATURE N° 948376 R QUITTANCE ENREGISTRÉE Banque / Bank C.P. / Giro (Postal)	N° CONTRIBUTABLE TAXPAYER'S NUMBER		

EXERCICE : 2002  
FINANCIAL YEAR : 2002  
Imprimerie Nationale Yaoundé - CR799 - 2002

FONDS SPECIAL DE DEVELOPPEMENT FORESTIER

DATE	PARTIE VERSANTE DEBITOR	NATURE DE LA RECETTE NATURE OF REVENUE	MONTANT AMOUNT
08/07/2002	JCC MINEF	40 90 00 C.A.D. des travaux de recherches de bois	En lettres / in letters 40 900 00 En chiffres / in figures CFA
		TOTAL	1 349 000 F