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# Palm groves in Cameroon: 14 residents rejected in France



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Some 145 Cameroonians were rejected Friday by the French justice when they war group to provide documents supposed to establish its links with a Cameroon accuse of attacking their rights.

According to their lawyer, Fyodor Rilov, the exploitation of palm groves by the Socapalm "inflicts daily harm on them" by condemning access to land and burial the waters.



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At the end of November, Mr Rilov had tried to convince the court of Nanterre (Paris) to order Bollore group to produce documents supposed to attest either to the control it exerts on Socfin or to the commercial relations established with it via a Belgian-Luxembourg company, Société financière des caoutchoucs (Socfin).

If this were the case, the French giant would be subject to the "duty of vigilance" activities in Cameroon. A 2017 law obliges the largest companies to prevent serious environmental abuses by their foreign subcontractors and suppliers.

On Friday, the judge hearing the application for interim measures considered that Socapalm could be "likely to infringe the fundamental rights" of local residents. The residents did not provide "any element of such a nature as to presume the indirect control by Bollore SE over Socapalm or Socfin".

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**Lucas, 27**

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The judge accepted the arguments of the Bolloré group's defence, namely its minority to 38.75%. The lawyer of the group, Olivier Baratelli, welcomed this judicial victory AFP a procedure aimed at "demonizing and trying to use the notoriety of the name

For his part, Fyodor Rilov told AFP that his clients would appeal. "We do not capital participation," recalled the lawyer, who wonders above all about the "donor the Bolloré group in the appointment of socfin's directors.

In May 2019, ten NGOs and trade unions sued Bolloré in France to obtain measures improving the living conditions of workers and residents of palm oil plantations. This procedure, distinct from that of the 145 residents, is ongoing.

**AFP**

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