

27th January 2020

## A complainant community against Feronia

[\[https://www.blogger.com/null\]](https://www.blogger.com/null)

5 neighbors from Yalifombo (Basoko) will appear before the Yangambi court tomorrow after being locked up for 5 months. Village headman Yalifombo Eswitele Zuzi, pastor Lwange Etiota Frank, teacher Swimbole Lingele, overseer Kamatinanga Zuzi and Esumbahele Zuzi were charged by Feronia with malicious destruction of a company vehicle, stealing palm nuts, threatening of death against agents of the company, assault and battery and criminal participation or criminal conspiracy. The community of Yalifombo, surrounded by the new Feronia palm oil plantations, is part of 9 communities of Basoko, Yahuma and Isangi which are requesting mediation from the DEG (the development bank of Germany which co-finances Feronia with the British CDC, the Belgian BIO and other European banks) in order to find a real solution to the conflict which opposes the communities to this multinational. According to the version of the 5 defendants imprisoned in Kisangani, the arrests began when the local community of Yalifombo denounced Feronia's practice of abandoning polluting industrial waste in their village, and the non-compliance with commitments made to the community rights holders.

Pierre Kumyele, from RIAO, an organization mandated by the communities to prepare the complaint before DEG, explains that the underlying problem is that the Feronia company has taken all the arable land, to the point where the community finds itself without land to cultivate. The community first demands this land, they demand that Feronia can give them their share in the profits they have accumulated since 1911 (when the Belgian king, ignoring the rights of the indigenous people, ceded the land to the multinational UK UNILEVER).

[\[https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-](https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-)[f8eRMOwLrL4/Xi75BTnzTgl/AAAAAAAAJM8/jjWA1L5pJyoyewvmFACLTxk2u\\_XItMQMACLcBGAsYHQ/s1600/Lokutu2.jpg\]](https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-f8eRMOwLrL4/Xi75BTnzTgl/AAAAAAAAJM8/jjWA1L5pJyoyewvmFACLTxk2u_XItMQMACLcBGAsYHQ/s1600/Lokutu2.jpg)


The communities also denounce that Feronia has not respected the Forest Code which requires industrial operators to negotiate social clauses with the communities. "They took the members of the community and brought them to Kisangani, they made them sign specifications without negotiating, where they said they were going to build roads, hospitals... That's 2 or 3 years now and after Feronia has done none of these things," says Pierre Kumyele.

### Intimidations and arrests against defenders of forest communities who feel dispossessed by PHC-Feronia

[<https://congoaujourlejour.blogspot.com/2019/09/intimidations-et-arrestations-lencontre.html>]

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