



[Home](#) > [News](#) > [Blog: Greenpeace Africa](#) >
[Investigation raises doubts of legality of DRC timber held in Belgian port](#)

[Email](#)[+ Share](#)

Investigation raises doubts of legality of DRC timber held in Belgian port

Blogpost by **Raoul Monsembula** - April 11, 2013 at 9:38

[Add comment](#)

11 April 2013

Afrormosia Tree in Congo

© Greenpeace / jiro Ose

Last month Greenpeace Africa released a report on how the illegal logging sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is in a state of organized chaos, with numerous companies flouting regulations and threatening the country's vast forests.

"Cut it Out: Illegal Logging in the DRC", also predicted that this chaos would make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for traders based in the EU and dealing in DRC timber to comply with the new European Union Timber Regulation (EUTR) that came into force on March 3.

A little over a month later and both the concerns over and the need for regulation have been demonstrated in the Belgian port of Antwerp, a major entry point into Europe for timber from the DRC. A shipment of 40m³ of Afrormosia (African Teak) by logging company Tala Tina is currently being held by the Belgian authorities after investigative work by Greenpeace Belgium raised question marks over its legality.

The EUTR prohibits illegally harvested timber and timber products from being traded on the European market. By doing so, it aims to reduce illegal logging activities, which impact on millions of Congolese citizens who depend on forests for their livelihoods, fuels corruption and denies the DRC government tax revenues.

This Afrormosia shipment in Antwerp is an early test for the new regulation. Greenpeace alerted the authorities to the shipment, which is valued between ZAR 700,000 – 800,000.

There are numerous reasons to be suspicious. Firstly, the contract for the concession area in DRC operated by Tala Tina has never been made public, something required by Congolese law. Secondly, no evidence of the "Annual cutting permit" (ACIBO) was found, which is also required by law. Thirdly, very little Afrormosia is actually found in Bandundu province, where Tala Tina has its logging permit. It is therefore possible that the wood was bought by the company from a third party, and the risk that such timber is illegally sourced is also very high.

Sales of Afrormosia are strictly controlled by CITES (Convention on International Trade in

Related Blogs

[Greenpeace condemns deportation of French filmmaker and cancellation...](#)

Press release

Kinshasa, 1 March 2017 - Greenpeace Africa is shocked by the... [Read more >](#)

[DRC Donors Release 40 million dollars after illegal award of 4000km2...](#)

Publication

Only a month after he was forced to cancel three logging concession... [Read more >](#)

[Congo threatens to open world's second largest rainforest to new...](#)

Press release

London/Kinshasa (Wednesday 2nd March, 2016: A tropical rainforest more... [Read more >](#)

[Greenpeace Africa reacts to verdict on DR Congo torture case in Yalisika](#)

Press release

Kinshasa, 16 December 2015 - Five policemen and soldiers have finally... [Read more >](#)

[Opportunity Knocks](#)

Press release

The Missed Opportunities by China, EU and US to address the global... [Read more >](#)

Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), because the species is at risk of extinction. Greenpeace has contacted the CITES authorities in both DRC and Belgium to express its concern, since the country of export and import are jointly responsible to ensure that its trade conditions are respected. Unfortunately, this is all too often a purely administrative exercise. For high risk countries such as the DRC, where the sector is riddled with corruption and there are few on-the-ground controls, this is far from enough. CITES authorities are legally obliged to verify legality in case of doubt - all the more important under the EUTR, which created a "green lane" for CITES-listed timber species entering the EU with a valid certificate. This could become an important loophole if not strictly enforced.

This case provides yet more evidence that the logging sector in the DRC is out of control. It is time for the DRC government to tackle corruption and clamp down on the routine flouting of Congolese law by forestry officials and logging companies, and put their people and forests first.



Blog post by: Raoul Monsembula

Raoul Monsembula is the Country Coordinator for Greenpeace Africa in The Democratic Republic of the Congo. Working in Africa, he has learned firsthand what his role is, not just in Greenpeace but as a human being.

[All blogposts](#) by Raoul Monsembula

Topics [forests](#)

Tags [afromosia](#), [drc](#), [logging](#)

[◀ Previous: Carrying the warmth of Africa](#)

[Next: One Planet. One Arctic. One Voice. ▶](#)

What we do

- Stop climate change
- Defend our oceans
- Protect ancient forest
- Ecological Farming in East Africa

About us

- History
- Contact us
- Victories
- Ships
- Organisation

Multimedia

- Photos
- Videos
- Slideshows
- Photo-essays

Take action

- Become a volunteer
- Make a donation
- Subscribe for news



Other Greenpeace sites

- [Making Waves blog](#)
- [Climate Rescue blog](#)
- [Nuclear Reaction blog](#)

Greenpeace around the world

What's hot?

- Building Climate Resilience through ecological farming
- Get active on Greenwire
- Join the Rooftop Revolution!

Stay up-to-date

- E-mail newsletter

Greenpeace Africa online

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube

Facts & Figures

- Founded in 1971.
- Three ships in the oceans.
- Offices in 40 countries.
- Millions of supporters world-wide.

[▶ Become a supporter too!](#)

- Rainbow Warrior III** sailing vessel, active since 2011.
- Arctic Sunrise** ice breaker, active since 1997.
- Esperanza** active since 2002.