



REDHAC
RESEAU DES DEFENSEURS
DES DROITS HUMAINS
EN AFRIQUE CENTRALE

Promotion-Protection-Plaidoyer



Human Rights Defenders Network in Central Africa

ARBITRARY DETENTION, ADMINISTRATIVE AND JUDICIAL HARASSMENT:

Continuous Arbitrary detention, judicial and administrative harassment of Esu youth leaders, held at the Bamenda Central Prison in favor of Mr. BABA AHMADOU DANPULLO, proprietor of ELBA Ranch.

PRESS RELEASE

Douala- Bamenda, July 18th, 2016: The Land Conflict between Mr Baba Ahmadou DANPULLO, businessman, proprietor of ELBA Ranch and the ESU community in Fungom Sub-Division, Menchum Division, North-West Region of Cameroon, has led to arbitrary arrests (since 22th April 2016) , of nine youth leaders . Five of whom are arbitrarily detained for «acts of vandalism and arson"; one (1) was released (Redemption GODLOVE).

In 1985, his Majesty **Joseph Buh MEH II**, the late Traditional Chief of Esu, gave Mr. Baba Ahmadou Danpullo verbal permission for a temporary grazing land within on a specific perimeter of land at Ibiy Wundele. Mr Danpullo displaced 135 families without compensation and prevented local people from continuing their agricultural activities around the area.

In the years that followed Mr. Baba Danpullo, with the help of his henchmen, violated the terms of the Agreement, and made cohabitation with the local population impossible. They suffered repeated harassment, physical attacks, and seizures of property, the destruction of homes and evictions.

On several occasions, he was invited to dialogue (for example, July 6th, 2015 at the Senior Divisional office of Wum) to restore peace, without success. To date, he has annexed 75% of land and wants to acquire a land title on it. The youth of Esu have paid a heavy price: in particular the continuous arbitrary arrests and detention of four youth leaders: **Mr. Abue Phillip KPWE; Mr.Divine BIAME; Mr.Cyprian AZONG** and **Mr.Bernard FUH** for «acts of vandalism and arson. » We recall the trial of one of them **Abue Phillip KPWE** took place on 12/07/2016 but it was adjourned to 26th July 2016.

New Information:

After investigations by the gendarmerie commander of Zhoa and Company Commander of Wum, the complaint from Elba Ranch about vandalism and arson was closed because no one could be held responsible. But the same file was opened in Bamenda, by **Mr Sale UMARU, manager of ELBA Ranch**, on behalf Mr. Danpullo. **Barrister Robert FON** has on each case file, noted the lack of jurisdiction, because neither the alleged crimes, nor the arrests took place in Bamenda. The number of the files (two) open at the court are identical, the accusations made subject to jurisdiction of the court and the names of the accused were identical. Thus, a judge of Mezam High Court, Bamenda declined jurisdiction and withdraws the remand warrant for Redemption GODLOVE.

On the 05.07.2016, when the trial of the five youths leaders opened, only **Abue Phillip KPWE** was in court, the other four (**Redemption GODLOVE, Divine BIAME, Cyprian AZONG** and **Bernard FUH**) were not present, because the order of presenting them had neither been produced at the court registry, or sent to prison for their transfer to the court. The case was adjourned to 12/07/2016. On the 12.07.2016, the same scenario was repeated adjourning the matter to 26/07/2016. After investigation from their lawyer, court registrar accused the prison official who in turn accuses the registrar.

On the 11/07/2016, Mr. Sale UMARU manager of ELBA Ranch, Esu, travelled to the Bamenda Central Prison where he presented a document to Abue Phillip KPWE for signature, against acquittal and large sum of money (500 000 FCFA). The document accused the chief of the village **HRH Kum ACHUO II** of ordering acts of vandalism at the Ranch for which the youth leaders are being detained.

Meanwhile, Mr. Baba Ahmadou DANPULLO brought a civil case against **Barrister Robert FON** the lawyer for the Esu Community and **M. Chris MBUNWE** journalist of The Post newspaper at Bamenda at Bamenda High Court. He is claiming 100 000 000 FCFA (One hundred million CFA francs) as “damages for defamation, based on an interview in The Post newspaper. The matter has been adjourned to 08.08.2016, for deliberation at primary investigation stage.

REDHAC requests the administrative, security and judicial authorities of the North-West Region to:

- Release unconditionally and without delay the 4 youth leaders still languishing in the Bamenda Central Prison;
- Ensure the physical safety and welfare of the traditional Chief of Esu, youth leaders, their Barrister Me. Robert FON in individuals and populations of Esu community in general;

The REDHAC urges the State of Cameroon to:

- Act expeditiously for the peaceful settlement of this conflict;
- Ensure compliance with **the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights**, in particular Articles 4 (respect for life and physical and moral integrity), 6 (Right to liberty and security of the person, against arbitrary arrest and detention);
- Ensure that Baba Ahmadou Danpullo, complies with the Constitution, laws, regulations and other regulations in force in Cameroon;
- Cause Baba Ahmadou Danpullo to cease all harassment, intimidation, criminal act against the people of the community Esu, Barrister Robert Fon lawyer and Mr. Chris MBUNWE.

Thank you for taking any action that will contribute to the release of the four youth leaders and the return to calm in ESU, North-West Region, Cameroon. Contact the following to urge them to act:

Mr. Paul BIYA: President of the Republic, President of the Republic, the Unity Palace: 1000 Yaoundé Cameroon

Fax (+ 237) 222 22 08 70

Mr Philemon YANG: Prime Minister:

Phone: (+237) 222 23 92 54/222 23 57 60/222 23 57 50/222 21 00 42

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Mr. Laurent ESSO: Minister of State, Minister of Justice, Seals keeper:

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Justice Viviane Ndze VERLA epse MBAKI: President of the Tribunal: Tel.: (+237) 677 61 74 56

Justice Albert Njie NGANJE: Attorney General of the North-West: Tel.: (+237) 233 36 11 05

Justice Augustin AMUNGWA NCHANG: State Prosecutor Mezam: Tel.: (+237) 233 36 13 60

Justice Francis Ndip OBEN: Magistrate Mezam High Court: Tel.: (+237) 673 58 79 80

Done in Douala July 18th, 2016