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1605 Working Group News on Land Grabbing - May 2016

[Study: Forest Peoples Programme: Securing Forest Peoples' Rights and Tackling Deforestation in the Democratic Republic of Congo](#)

A recent report from the Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) states that the European Union's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) action plan and the United Nations/World Bank REDD+ initiatives, that are active in the DRC, lack effective safeguards and compliance mechanisms to protect community rights. The study focuses on the DRC's most densely forested provinces and links forest loss with many socio-environmental impacts and human rights violations. In order to improve circumstances FPP suggests for the DRC to fully recognise the customary rights of forest peoples. Effective recognition of tenure rights of forest communities should be at the heart of European Union's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) action plan and the United Nations/World Bank REDD+ initiative. [Read More](#)

[Ethiopia Hands Dissident 9-year Jail Term](#)

Land activist, Okello Akway Ochalla, has been convicted to nine years of jail for his resistance to violent land grabs in the Gambella region of Ethiopia. The Gambella region is at the forefront of the Ethiopian governments' land investment strategy, which aims to attract foreign agribusinesses to boost export-oriented agriculture. In the Gambella region the eviction of local Anuak people has been surrounded by violence according to several human rights organizations. [Read more](#)

[Indigenous and Forest Community Leaders Tour the EU to Call for Conflict-Free Palm Oil](#)

Community leaders from Liberia, Colombia, Indonesia and Peru have toured Europe (Netherlands, Germany, UK and Belgium) London and Brussels to bring to the attention of policymakers that a significant amount of conflict palm oil is destined for European markets. 18% of all illegal palm oil ends up in Europe, the main consumers being France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK. They have also brought evidence that European institutions are involved in bankrolling palm oil plantations on illegally deforested land, causing human and environmental damage. The community leaders also called upon European policymakers to put in place binding regulations on palm oil supply chains and other agricultural commodities entering the EU-market. [Read more](#)