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1606 Working Group News on Land Grabbing - June 2016

[European Parliament speaks out against agricultural colonialism in Africa](#)

On June 7, the European Parliament adopted a report calling for a radical change of the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition of the G7 ("Nasan" below). The parliament asks the EU to address the concerns raised in the report, if not the EU should withdraw its support to the Nasan. Criticisms focus on the preference of the Nasan for industrial farming, the use of GMOs and the privatization of both seeds and land. All of this ignores the African reality where customary law and the right to use are more common in land governance. Similarly, for centuries African farmers have conserved and exchanged seeds among each other. The parliament also criticizes the fact that all reforms proposed by the Nasan are largely in favour of agribusiness and not in favour of sustainable family farming that protects biodiversity. This EP report came after a campaign by various civil society organisations of which AEFJN was part. The coalition has published reports and statements and has demonstrated outside the European Parliament. In the end, the concerns of civil society were largely taken into account by the European Parliament in this report. [Read more](#)

[Sierra Leone: Six land rights activists released through citizen solidarity](#)

On June 16, the Sierra Leonean civil society organized a press conference to announce the release of six land rights defenders of Maloa (Malen Land Owners and Users Association). The six activists defend the rights of communities facing land grabbing by an agribusiness company, SOCFIN. Since February 2016 the six leaders were charged with "conspiracy", "incitement" and "destruction of 40 palm seedlings" and were sentenced to six months in prison and fined \$ 35,000. Thanks to mobilization of international civil society funds were collected for their release and in May 2016 the six MALOA leaders were released. Then the international coalition sent a letter to the President of Sierra Leone to take steps to resolve the land dispute in Malen. The coalition also organized actions to denounce the activities of SOCFIN in Luxembourg, France, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Cambodia, and Liberia. AEFJN was part of those initiatives. [Read more](#)