

COALITION DES ORGANISATIONS NON GOUVERNEMENTALES DE LA SOCIÉTÉ CIVILE DU SECTEUR ENVIRONNEMENTALE, DES DROITS HUMAINS ET FONCIERS.

N°/Réf : 11/COALITION/2020

Goma, Le 21 Juillet 2020

Copie pour information :

- To His Excellency the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, with our most respectful tributes;
- Honorable Madam Speaker of the National Assembly;
- To His Excellency the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development,
- To His Excellency the Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs;
- Mr. Director General of the ICCN;

All in Kinshasa

- To the Honourable President of the Provincial Assembly of North Kivu ;
- To His Excellency the Provincial Minister of Environment and Tourism of North Kivu;
- To His Excellency the Provincial Minister of the Interior of North Kivu;
- To His Excellency the Provincial Minister of Agriculture, Fishing and Livestock of North Kivu;
- To the Provincial Director of ICCN and Chief of the PNVi site in Rumangabo ;
- Provincial Commissioner of the Congolese National Police of North Kivu;
- To the Provincial Director of the ANR;
- Mr. Representative of MONUSCO;
- To all ICCN partners;
- Mr. President of the Civil Society of North Kivu.

All in Goma

- Community Chief Bwisha Chiefdom in Rutshuru;
 - To Mr. Head of ANR Department, Rutshuru Territory;
 - Territorial Commissioner of the FNCP Rutshuru territory;
 - To the Commander-in-Chief of Operations Sokola 1&2 in North Kivu Province in Beni and Goma;
 - To the Administrators of the Territories of Beni, Lubero, Rutshuru, Masisi and Nyiragongo;
 - To the representatives of the media in North Kivu
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Subject: Habitat destruction
of primates in PNVi/South
with risk of their
COVID-19 infection

Our concern

**To his excellency the governor of the
province of north kivu
In goma.**

Your Excellency, Governor,

We hereby have the distinct honour of addressing your august personage to express our deep concern for the above-mentioned purpose.

Indeed, there is no need to describe here the multidimensional importance of the Virunga National Park, both ecologically and socio-economically. While playing a role in regulating the climate,

this protected area is home to a biodiversity that includes endemic species of fauna such as the Mountain Gorilla in the southern sector.

Excellency Governor, currently the results of our monitoring reports carried out in the southern sector of Virunga National Park reveal a large-scale destruction of ecosystems through illegal activities including: carbonization, sawing of wood, poaching, illegal trafficking of baby primates, game meat and other specimens, whose actors are organized in a heterogeneous mafia network including:

- Elements of certain armed groups, in particular the FDLR and NYATURA;
- Some undisciplined elements of the FARDC who have become business people;
- A few intermediaries, including wives of soldiers, motorcyclists, etc., who act as brokers or commissioners in this illicit traffic.

Your Excellency, Mr. Governor, it should also be pointed out that little money circulates in this zone, as the traffic is mainly based on barter between the goods supplied and military effects. This situation encourages the entrenchment of an infernal cycle of insecurity in the region maintained by easy access to the effects of war by the armed groups present in the PNVi. Moreover, what is aberrant and surprising, Your Excellency, the Governor, is that taxes are being levied on these carbonization activities, which leads us to believe that this would be a tacit institutionalization of these illegal activities within the PNVi.

Excellency Governor,

Given the accelerating pace of this destructive phenomenon in this sector at a time when our province is facing the challenge of the VIDOC pandemic-19 we would like to express to you our fears that are of a :

Ecological first:

- The disruption of the climate due to this strong deforestation of the KIBUMBA region with harmful consequences on the market gardening crops dependent on permanent rainfall,

Sanitary suites:

- The risk of infection of primates, including the Mountain Gorilla, by COVID-19 that could be transmitted by poachers, sawyers and illegal traffickers who escape barrier measures and quarantine,
- The risk of emergence of a new strain of virus resulting from mutations in the genome of the virus. since the main reservoirs are wild animals.

Your Excellency, Governor,

It is never too late to do the right thing; while we count on your promise to ensure the protection of Virunga National Park, we think it would be urgent :

- To initiate investigations into this phenomenon that we have just denounced;

Excellence Monsieur le Gouverneur,

Il n'est jamais trop tard pour bien faire ; tout en comptant sur votre promesse de veiller sur la protection du Parc National des Virunga, nous pensons qu'il serait urgent :

- D'initier des enquêtes sur ce phénomène que nous venons de dénoncer ;
- To dismantle the Mafia networks responsible for these heinous acts and bring them to justice.

Your Excellency, Mr. Governor, we believe that it is in this way that, through your mandate, the Province of North Kivu will be able to contribute to national development efforts by promoting a tourism industry based on the potential of the PNVi.

Please accept, Excellency Governor, the assurance of our patriotic sentiments.

Highest consideration.

For the signatory associations:

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