

'Climate and Me'

The Destruction of the forests in the East of the Congo and its impact on the life of indigenous peoples

By James Kataliko, Global South defender

of Peace - human rights and environmental justice in DR Congo

Project coordinator of Kijiji Cha Amani

www.kijijichaamani.org

0. Knowledge of the Central African Forest

The Congo Forest Basin is located in Central Africa and spans six countries: Cameroon (11%), Central African Republic (3.4%), Republic of Congo (12.4%), Equatorial Guinea (1.3%), Gabon (17.7%) and Democratic Republic of Congo (54.2%).

It comprises about 70% of Africa's forest cover. The Congo Basin has a total area of 530 million hectares, of which 300 million are covered by forests 99% consisting of primary or naturally regenerated forests.

The carbon stock in the Congo Basin is estimated at 46,016 million tonnes (Wasseige et al. 2009).

1. Deforestation: A phenomenon with multiple causes

- First, the wood energy withdrawals:

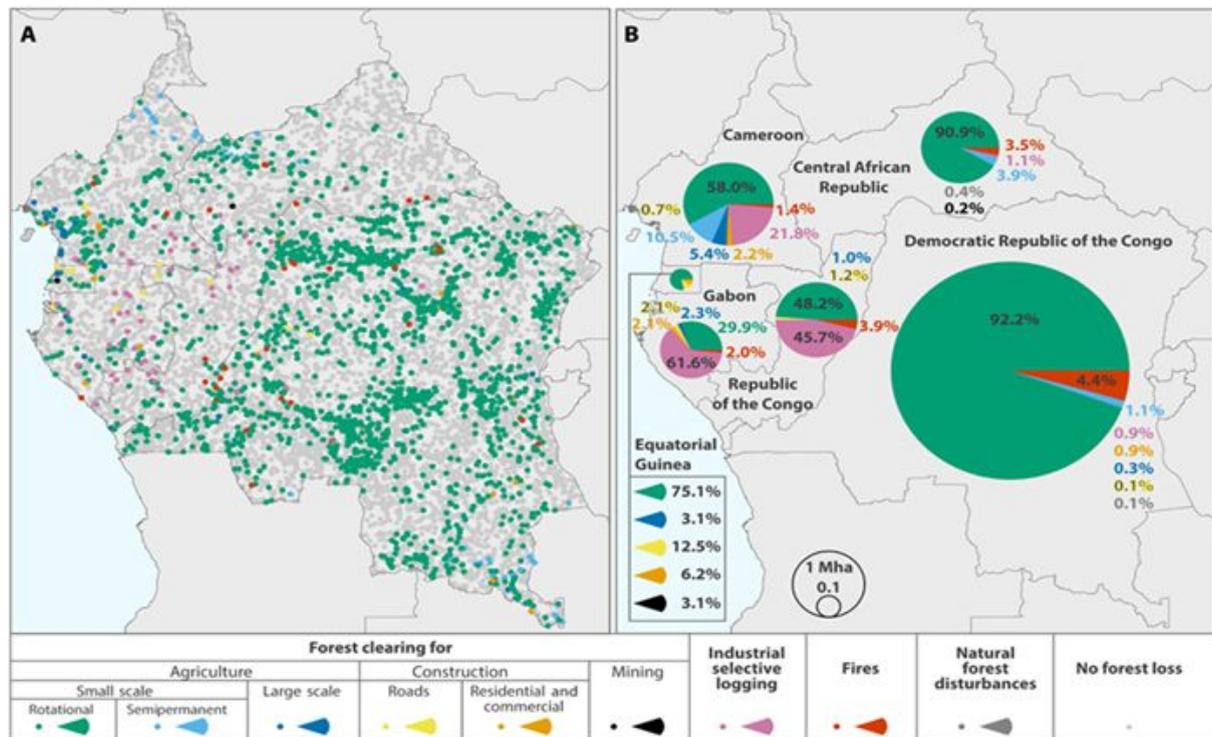
As the world's leading consumer of wood for cooking and heating in the world, Africa consumes, according to the FAO (2015), 625 million m³ of fuelwood per year, or 90% of its total wood consumption. . With population growth, the demand for woodfuel in sub-Saharan Africa is expected to increase considerably. The collection of fuelwood is particularly threatening to forests in densely populated areas.

- Then the agriculture and farms:

Expansion of agricultural land, shifting cultivation and industrial cultivation are responsible for the loss of 70% of the dense forests in the wetlands and 60% of the forests in the dry zone. In rural areas, the annual rate of clearing in dense forest is strongly correlated with the density of the rural population. The transition zones between tropical forest and savannah, where population densities are usually much higher (up to 150 inhabitants per square kilometer) have significant rates of deforestation or forest degradation.

- Logging for industrial purposes or mining quarries:

A cut can be legal, accompanied by a forest management plan. It can be illegal with a tendency to overexploitation when the cuts are too numerous, when the minimum diameters of the trunks of the logs felled are not respected, or when the volumes exploited are reduced. However, the importance of this factor in Africa should not be overstated. Industrial logging remains extensively practiced in the tropics, with around 44 million hectares of forest under concession (8.3% of the total land area).



2. The lives of indigenous peoples and climate change, the case of the Bambuti

About 30 million people, belonging to 150 different ethnic groups, inhabit the forests of Central Africa.

One of the indigenous peoples of our Central African forests are the Bambuti known as the Pygmies. They are living families currently wandering in almost urban environments following the great destruction of forest ecosystems. Usually the Bambuti are people who live in the equatorial forest by hunting and gathering.

Their life outside the forests is not easy for these victims of human wickedness. Men and women, out of thirst for the bush and in search of the survival of their families, are often victims of arrests in areas set up as parks in some countries. They look for small tree branches that they can use in the kitchens or sell them to buy soap, salt or used clothes. And they are often put in jail. Pushed by the effects of the climate, they live in tarpaulin huts offered by the owners of small concessions on the outskirts of Bantu Villages.

Without hope of return, some women also seeing their husbands absent or in prolonged detention, start to want to go and do the same activities in the Park. When they are arrested, they are often victims of sexual violence and butt whips for the chance to find release.

These women who walk barefoot again become responsible for large families which often have between 6 and 10 children. These women who give birth without going to hospitals, or any family planning service, often use small medicinal plants to help them. We met Naomi, one of the victims, 7 months pregnant, who is expecting a baby next November but has not had any prenatal consultation. She is confident that she will give birth at home. We tried to convince her to go to the Health Post but she demanded that we pay for her next bill of \$ 50 for the maternity ward and the cost of buying clothes for the newborn.

Skilled, they can practice the breeding of small cattle (Goats, rabbits, chickens, ...). Perhaps also a community field to facilitate their survival production; This can be one of the forms of intervention to try to meet their needs, but also a kind of pilot school for learning in Livestock and agriculture.

No one to plead their causes, they find themselves threatened in the portions of the land they occupied, because they were sold to senior officials. They were convinced to come and live with the Bantu to have a better life. But in reality, they are abandoned to their sad fate.

In several African countries, forests have become insecure by armed groups and serve as place for kidnappings.

3. Conclusion

Taking into account local communities including pygmies, both in the process of building knowledge and disseminating results related to climate research, is almost absent due to the use of inaccessible communication tools. and unsuitable for their capacities and needs. They are not even involved in reforestation (regenerative) projects. There are fewer mandates that target their economic developments and the securing of forests.

This also applies to government authorities who, due to their limited financial and technical capacities, are not able to participate more significantly in the production of knowledge and information relating to response on climate change in Central Africa.

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