

# Radiating Africa – The Menace of Uranium Mining in Cameroon

## Exploration:

- Since 1958
- Currently involved mining company: Mega Uranium (license for 1000 km<sup>2</sup>) has already undertaken exploration work at three sites in Cameroon
- Further mining companies received mining exploration licenses over the past decades: Caminex, Ridgeway Energy Ltd, East Mining Corporation, Fer du Cameroun, Xplor-Tech, Venture Capital VNC, Capam Holding PMC, Camerican Mining and more

**Exploration activities:** Centre, Littoral, South, East, North-West, West, South-West, Adamawa, North and Far-North. Uranium is found almost everywhere in Cameroon. In some places, it is found in detectable presence or in deposits: Lolodorf (in the South), Poli (in the North) and Teubang (in the North, on the frontier to Chad).

**Main exploration locations:** Poli, Teubang, Lolodorf (11,000 tons), Kitongo: (13,125 tons)

**Accessibility:** Infrastructure is very poor, especially the road to Lolodorf, furthermore there is no good tarmac road from the North to the harbors of the South.

## Livelihood conditions of population and environment in the affected area

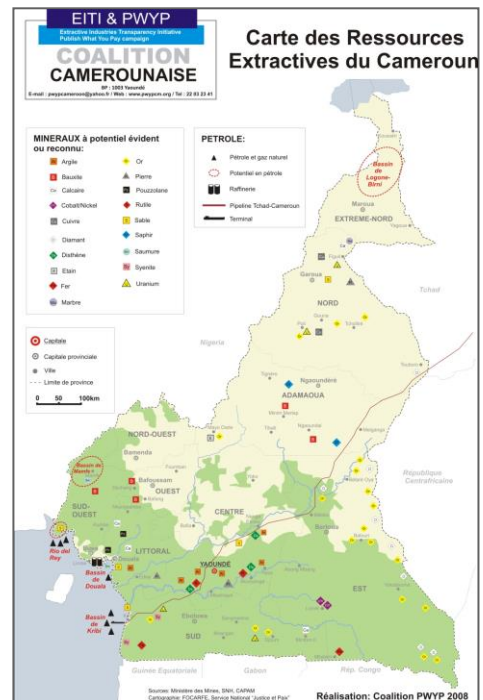
- Cameroon is poor (UNDP-HDR Rank: 150 of 177), the rural population is again poorer, and the North (including Poli and Teubang) is even the poorest part of the country
- General life expectancy at birth is 55 years, with an alphabetization rate of 68%, all indicators worse for the North
- Social disadvantages for local population due to a severe inflation of the food basket during exploration of the mining company
- Casualties without compensation for families
- Water pollution, noise disturbance etc. now visible already

## Current exploration status

- Current status: exploration ongoing, but slowed down, suspension has been given to Mega-Uranium's prospecting activities in Poli, Lolodorf, Gouna and Salaki's
- Current legal status: legal licenses for mining companies

## (Potential) impact of uranium mining

- Land destruction and water demand
- Potential release of toxic and radioactive compounds
- The principal risks: human health (particularly if radiation spreads to agricultural and livestock systems and via the food chain) and environmental damages, e.g. water contamination, threat to natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity of the affected area
- Possibly impact on the genetic resources
- Financial loss for the country – the profit remains with the mining companies
- Hampers sustainable development in the country
- No democratic involvement of the civil society
- No transparency in the value chain, neighbouring communities were not informed adequately before, during or after exploration
- No awareness about the danger of the uranium mining in Cameroon
- Conflict regarding (potential) exploitation area in the North between Chadian and Cameroonian population



Ministry of Mining, 2008. *Map of Extractive Resources in Cameroon.*

## FACT SHEET

- Hampers sustainable development in the country – investments go the uranium mining instead of development of e.g. renewable energy sources
- Waste of exploration and later exploitation

### Policy recommendations and conclusions

- The public is not well informed about the situation, conditions and consequences → an awareness campaign should be initiated aiming at informing society and governmental institutions
- The local population, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the staff of involved mining companies need training at all levels (with support of experienced countries / Civil Society Organizations)
- The Transportation of radioactive material needs to be improved (regulation not in place yet)
- The legal framework of the *Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale* (CEMAC) should be aligned
- No uranium mining should be undertaken in states with weak governments and high corruption rates (as Cameroon) without international regulatory and executive support
- Affected areas should be left intact, without uranium mining and contamination, therefore uranium mining should be prohibited there and in any other regions
- Prospecting companies should share the radiation cartography with the local administration and the local population (in addition to research and awareness raising through civil society organization)
- Chemical substances used by Mega Uranium should be publically known, affected areas should be published and analyzed
- Regular controls need to be undertaken at exploration sites: water management, radiation analysis etc.
- The level of radiation in inhabited areas has to be verified, radiation measures have to be taken in Poli and Teumbang to protect the local population
- The water quality as well as the level of radiation of food staples have to be controlled
- Measures for storage of radioactive waste are required
- Uranium should be included in the (draft) guideline of the European Union on *Responsible sourcing of minerals originating in conflict-affected and high-risk areas (guideline towards an integrated EU approach)*
- Involved stakeholders, multinational companies and nuclear energy consuming countries should recognize and take their responsibility and fulfill criteria of corporate accountability
- The whole fuel chain should be more transparent and monitored more
- Nuclear energy (with all its negative consequences as e.g. uranium mining) should be abandoned

The basis for this Fact Sheet is the project *Enhancing transparency in the uranium chain and supporting responsible practices; uranium mining: a comparison of producing and near-producing countries.*



#### More information:

National Service for Justice and Peace / Service National Justice et Paix de la Conférence Episcopale Nationale du Cameroun (SNJP), part of the National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon (NECC), Cameroon

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