

**YACHAY WASI Sacred Sites Event - Submission 3 – CAMEROON -
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AFTRADEMOP

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**ASSOCIATION FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE
MOKO-OH PEOPLES CAMEROON (AFTRADEMOP)**

(AFTRADEMOP); was founded in 1999 by Mrs. Musongong Cecilia. Provoked by the Misery and want that characterize her childhood and the sexual exploitation and abuse, the slavery and servitude to which her mothers and sisters are still being subjected, in their search for farmland; she embarked on an in-depth research of what really rendered her family so landless and miserable.

A migrant tribe called the Bali-Nyonga arrived the Moko-ohs' land and was hosted by Fonjengoh Chief of Guwu village. The Germans arrived subsequent to the Balis in 1889, in order to facilitate the collection of a few head tax to run their affairs, the Germans in contravention to International Law issued 1000 rifles to the Bali-Nyongas who then served as a German tool for the invasion of the Moko-oh villages and their subsequent subjugation.

Ekwen, Gumbo and Guwu, 3 villages each headed by a chief lived alongside Afong and Dom. These five villages made up the Moko-oh (upper) people of Moghamo a clan in Batibo Sub-division in Momo division of the North - West of Cameroon.

To make matters worst, the Germans crowned the leader of Balis, Suzerain over 31 villages made up of people who were culturally, traditionally and linguistically alien to the Balis. The Chaos was total. This disastrous economic policy was maintained and reinforced by the British on the defeat of the Germans through incessant raids and patrols that caused the Moko-ohs of Ekwen, Gumbo and Guwu villages to flee in diverse directions in 1914 away from their ancestral lands. Their artefacts, antiquities and treasuries were all looted, and not even a single one was recovered.

Since 1914 till date, the Moko-ohs have lived as internally displaced persons (IDP) completely disposed of everything; and have lost access to their ancestral tombs, shrines and sacred places of worship. These sites are known in the Moghamo dialect, native language of the Moko-ohs as: Nwih means god.

Nwih Tekah (god of Tekah ancestor of Gumbo village)

Nwih Njiekizem (god of Njiekizem ancestor of Ekwen village)

Nwih Chiektingwih (god of Chiektingwih, ancestor of Guwu village)

Before colonisation, the peoples of the 3 Moko-oh villages organised annual feasts during Yams season. Yams are indigenous tubas with creeping stems that mature from August to October each year. During the yam season, a male sacred convocation enters into session once a week, on every traditional Sunday called 'Kweih' for 7 consecutive weeks. No one does any manual labour on this day, not even to do harvesting. It is a day of the gods' visitation on the land.

When this season is over, the village notables resume their normal weekly meetings on the same Kweih. When a mistune strikes a family member, e.g a strange or a protracted illness, an accident or a sudden and unnatural death; the whole family is summonsed and a visit is paid to this shrine; to seek blessings, cleansing and atonement from the ancestors; but the Moko-ohs have been deprived of all these on

which their physical and spiritual wellbeing reposes for a whole century which has left devastating effects on them.

When a Chief dies, certain rites are performed in these shrines before his burial. Before a new one is enthroned the same process is repeated. Since the Chiefs of Ekwen and Guwu died in 1986 and 1996 respectively, their successors have not been enthroned till date; because of the German Bali-Nyonga armed group that continues to prevent the Moko-ohs from returning to their ancestral villages.

AFTRADEMOP since it's creation in 1999, has written to the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous issues in Geneva, Amnesty International, Justice Initiative, Minority Rights Group, and many other Indigenous and Human Rights Organisations like FIDH, OMCT etc to no avail.

Since 2001, AFTRADEMOP has been relentlessly advocating before the Cameroonian National Administration for the Creation of an Inter-ministerial Committee for the Restitution and Restoration of the Moko-oh Land rights and their Resettlement in their 3 villages; but the administration lacks the political will to do so.