

PRESS RELEASE

International Community Passes Resolution calling for global action to #SaveAtewa

On November 4th 2020, the IUCN announced that its members voted overwhelmingly to adopt Motion 103 calling for ‘**Urgent measures to safeguard the globally important Atewa Forest, Ghana**’. Now it is a formal IUCN resolution, the Ghana government is (again) given a clear message that the Atewa Forest must be withdrawn from bauxite mining plans and protected as a National Park.

The motion was brought by A Rocha Ghana with co-sponsors and IUCN members The Development Institute, Benin Environment and Education Society ONG, Nature Tropicale ONG, and international IUCN members A Rocha International, WWF, Birdlife International, Global Wildlife Conservation, Rainforest Trust, Synchronicity Earth and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

IUCN motions are voted on by the membership, including governments, civil society and indigenous peoples’ organisations, NGOs, scientific and academic institutions, and business associations. This breadth of knowledge and expertise means IUCN decisions carry significant weight. Motions are part of a 4-year cycle and enable members to guide IUCN policy. The motions process itself takes more than a year from submission to voting and is very rigorous.

Of the 580 members voting on the motion, 98% were in favour showing clearly that the decision to mine bauxite in Atewa is vehemently opposed. It follows years of letters and petitions from the international community signed by tens of thousands of people, all unheeded. To be called out in this way by the IUCN is extremely serious and government can no longer ignore this increasing dissent. The outcome also highlights how inimical the plan is to the President’s position as co-chair of the Sustainable Development Goals, for which the IUCN is a key partner in delivering.

What is the Motion about?

The [motion](#) outlined the critical conservation importance of Atewa Forest, in particular that it is one of only two Upland Evergreen forests in Ghana, a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), and home to an incredible diversity of wildlife species. These include over 100 listed on the IUCN Red List as threatened, at least two being Critically Endangered and several endemic.

It also highlighted the many benefits of the Atewa Forest and how bauxite mining would irreversibly damage them. One of its key ecosystem services is to provide clean water daily for an estimated 5 million people both within the forest and downstream to Ghana’s capital Accra.

The motion urges government to end all mining-related activities in the Atewa Forest and establish a National Park to ensure its conservation in perpetuity. It also requests support from the international community to help establish it as a world-class protected area complete with green development initiatives.

In case the government still refuses to reverse its decision, the motion requests mining companies not to mine bauxite in or near the forest, and aluminium users to exclude Atewa-sourced aluminium from their supply chains. The Aluminium Stewardship Initiative is asked to assist member companies in these endeavours, and financial institutions urged not to finance any destructive activities in or around the Atewa Forest. In view of the extreme urgency of the case, the motion finally calls on the IUCN Director General to provide a special report to the 2024 World Conservation Congress on the resolution's implementation.

The sponsors of Motion 103 are grateful to all IUCN members who recognised the critical importance of Atewa Forest and helped highlight this to the world. It gives great encouragement and hope that, with the international support behind the resolution, Atewa Forest will be protected for eternity.