

## **Peoples' Internationalist Solidarity Groundings of Gbetowo and Sami (PISGOGS)**

We would be delighted seeing you at our screening of the documentary '**GÁLLOK: The Battle for Sami Rights and to Stop a Mining Project in Sweden**', with a discussion afterwards!

This is a Cross-Community Internationalist Solidarity relationship building event as part of the African Liberation Awareness Month (ALAM), May 2021.

This event is created as part of our Community Resistance work, we are braiding our Internationalist Solidarity through mutual exchange and co-liberation of our communities; the Sami in Europe with our Gbetowo in Afrika.

Indigenous Ewe-Fon-Adza Communities of the Gbetowo nation and indigenous Sami people of Sápmi share similar Community Resistance struggles against the ongoing colonial and neo-liberal powers exploiting their lives.

The Forest Rebellion (a group of Sami and non-Sami activists), Extinction Rebellion Internationalist Solidarity Network (XRISN) and XR Affinity All-Afrikan Network (XRAAAN) are co-creating this event together with ALAM.

**Join us online via Zoom on the 23 of May at 3pm (UK time).**

Zoom link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/peoples-internationalist-solidarity-groundings-of-gbetowo-and-sami-tickets-153299810861>

The documentary is in Swedish with English subtitles.

“Next to the Swedish world heritage site of Laponia, plans to introduce a controversial new iron ore mine in Gallok (also known as Kallak) are under way. Tor, a father of two, reclaims his Sami surname and joins a group of indigenous and environmental activists to stop British company Beowulf from mining on the ancestral lands of the indigenous Sami people. But he faces strong political and economic forces, local rivals and a Sami collective that hesitate to accept him as one of them”

Please have a look at the trailer: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/gallok>

The last natural forests in Sweden are being [felled at an increasing rate to give way for large-scale plantations](#) of single species of trees, at the same time as the logging companies and state authorities are saying that everything is as it should be and [falsely claiming that there no longer are any clear-cuts](#) in Swedish forests. They say that for every tree felled, two new are being planted but a plantation of a single species of tree is as far from an actual forest as a field of wheat is from a wildflower meadow. [In Sweden, only a few percent of the area used for production of forestry products, is protected](#), far from the government's own targets to protect biodiversity.

The Swedish state's abuse of the forests is a continuation of over 400 years of colonialism in Sápmi and the indigenous Sami people who have lived in northern Scandinavia for thousands of years before the nation states existed. The land was stolen for mining, hydroelectric dams and large scale logging industries and to this day the Swedish state is ignoring consultations with the Sami people about extraction of resources from or infrastructure projects on [the land which is not rightfully owned by the state](#). Sweden, still after more than 30 years of delays, have not signed the UN's convention ILO-169 which would help secure 'Free, Prior and Informed Consent' for indigenous people about activities on their lands. We need to look at the ongoing deforestation from a perspective of decoloniality, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, as Martin Luther King said.

On the international scene, Sweden is relying on portraying itself as a progressive and environmentally friendly country, but in reality this is hiding a legacy of colonialism and exploitation which is very much still alive. When it comes to protecting biodiversity in forests, Sweden ends up on place 99 out of all the world's countries, far behind countries like Brazil which is often in the public consciousness about deforestation. The near future for what little remains of the forests is set to become [exploited at a constantly increasing rate for products such as biofuels and alternatives to plastic](#) in the name of the climate crisis. In reality this will only make the problem worse, what's needed is a deeper change of course. The state-owned forestry companies and government authorities [choose to prioritise short-sighted gains without listening to other voices](#) such as the Sami

people who have lived in the area for thousands of years without destroying it.

Similarity, the kindred indigenous Afrikan communities of the Gbetowo nation, all of whom speak various dialects of their one common indigenous Gbe language, are spread along the unique eco-system of the Wetogbika (Amedzofe-Atakora-Akwapim) mountain range and forests, across the European imperialist created and still imposed colonially divisive borders of the artificial modern nation-states of present-day Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria in West Afrika, which minoritise, oppress and marginalise them with the 'Divide and Misrule' schemes of the structural violence of Neocolonialism and its prolonging 'Coloniality of Power'.

The Internationalist Solidarity relationship building between the Sami and the Gbetowo bring to light the force of Community Resistance, as well as the immense brutal forces of colonial powers and neo-liberal violence which always put profits first, over the right to life.

Through meeting in a mutual exchange on the 23rd of May, when together watching Gállok, we plant a seed of glocal Community Resistance and Internationalist Solidarity Groundings.

See you soon across time zones!