

your help
 sinharaja campaign Team
 to:
 Bangladesh, cao-compliance, pic, talktous
 08/20/2009 09:39 AM
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Dear Sir ,Mamdom,
 On behalf of concerned citizens of the Deniyaya village in Sri Lanka which lies just on the periphery of the Sinharaja Forest Reserve and the concerns of myself and many others, I am writing to ask you to investigate rumours of illicit felling within the forest.

It is in my understanding that this area has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as stated in the IUCN Summary 405, found at

http://whc.unesco.org/archive/advisory_body_evaluation/405.pdf

It also states in this document that the felling of the forest is prohibited within 1.6km of the reserves boundary (p68).

Worryingly it has been brought to my attention that, regardless of this prohibition, construction of a hotel has been ongoing for some time (approximately one year) in the Ensalwatte Tea Estate, Viharahena near the tv transmission tower deniyaya Deniyaya village. As a result of the hotel construction,

<http://www.greentechno.ae/ecolodgesrilanka.html>

the forest is being felled and if this is indeed within the 1.6km prohibition zone as I'm sure you would agree

it was started bu USAID

<http://web.archive.org/web/20071226184716/http://www.competitiveness.lk/tourism.htm>

It is furthermore been brought to my attention that contributory to a local river close to the construction site has been recently dammed. I would like to be made aware of the evaluations that must have been undertaken prior to the damming. As I understand it the river has been completely dammed and therefore many species has been displaced as a result. Conservation organisations, who are providing funds for management plans and programmes surely such activities must have been properly evaluated and approved before hand.

If so;

Why has the river and so many species been affected?

Who has evaluated beforehand the construction of the hotel?

Finally can I enquire as to what actually is protected under World Heritage protection?

As Sinharaja Forest Reserve is, and I cite the Justification for inclusion on the World Heritage List as recommended in the IUCN summary 405,

An on-going Biological Evolution. The reserve is the last remaining relatively undisturbed tropical humid evergreen forest in Sri Lanka.

A habitat for Rare and Endangered Species. At least 139 endemic plant species are found in the reserve. Fauna endemism also exceeds 50% and there are various rare birds, reptiles, fish and insects. (p67)

It has been mentioned that the construction of this hotel is for the purpose of ecotourism, if so could you please make enquiries as to what exactly is being returned to the forest itself and to the local people.

It is inconceivable to us that this situation is unique to the Sinharaja. We believe that if this can be going on in a UNESCO World Heritage Protected Site such as the Sinharaja Forest Reserve practically right underneath their very noses then surely and sadly similar actions must be going on elsewhere in other protected World Heritage Sites across the globe. We hope that change can be brought about that will

enforce countries to abide by the legislation that is set up to protect areas that need such protection, then maybe something will be done to encourage enforcement of regulations.

These areas are for the good of all, not for the pockets of a few.

We need your help and the help from everyone who honestly sees this particular shade of ecotourism as a contradicting problem rather than an effective and sustainable solution.

Please investigate this matter immediately before it is too late!!...

thank you

save the sinharaja raiforest

Media Team

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