

docimpactaward

2016

#DocImpact

CHASINKI'S

CITIZEN FOUR

Food Chains

WINGS

SHOT DOWN

VIRUNGA

CELEBRATING THE
DOCUMENTARY FILMS THAT
HAVE MADE THE GREATEST
IMPACT ON SOCIETY

docimpactaward

HOT DANG



The Doc Impact Award 2016 is presented by:



We are so proud to share with you the story of the five remarkable winners of the Doc Impact Award 2016.

To qualify for the Doc Impact Award, excellence in filmmaking is not enough. Doc Impact Award films must also have created significant and measurable social impact.

Since 2011 this annual prize has been celebrating the power of film as a driver of change. **Our aim:**

- To help build new fans for the films
- Create new partners for the campaigns
- To share best practice for the whole community

Read on to learn about the campaign strategy & impact achievements for **Virunga**.

To read all five case studies and see previous winners go to **www.docimpactaward.org** and follow the conversation online at **#docimpact**

Defending
a national park,
its natural resources
and the world's last
mountain gorillas.



WINNER:
VIRUNGA



VIRUNGA

The Film

In the forested depths of eastern Congo lies Virunga National Park, one of the most bio-diverse places on Earth and home to the planet's last remaining mountain gorillas. In this wild but enchanted environment, a small and embattled team of park rangers – including an ex-child soldier turned ranger, a caretaker of orphan gorillas, and a conservationist – protect this UNESCO world heritage site from armed militia, poachers, and the dark forces struggling to control Congo's rich natural resources. When the newly formed Congolese M23 rebel group declares war, a new conflict threatens the lives and stability of everyone and everything they've worked so hard to protect, with the filmmakers and the film's participants caught in the crossfire.

A powerful combination of investigative journalism and nature documentary, *Virunga* tells the story of this group of committed park rangers as they fight to preserve one of the world's most precious natural environments from the damaging incursion from unscrupulous oil company SOCO international, its aggressive public relations representatives and the exploitative forces they attract.

Critical Acclaim

“Showcasing the best and the worst in human nature, von Einsiedel’s *Virunga* wrenches a startlingly lucid narrative from a sickening web of bribery, corruption and violence.”

—
New York Times
Critics Pick





THE CAMPAIGN

CONTEXT

The film team launched a campaign to redress the balance and inform the world of what was happening in Virunga National Park. The campaign had a clear set of ambitious objectives that were designed to make a dent on this complicated, geopolitical issue.

The competing interests fighting for dominance in and around the park during filming were fierce and the stakes were high. The park – a UNESCO World Heritage Site is one of the most biologically diverse locations on the planet. Within these lush environs reside half of all species on the African continent including elephants, lions, hippos, chimpanzees, okapi, rare birds and just over half of the world's last remaining 880 mountain gorillas.

Hidden in and around the animals' leafy habitats are untold riches in the form of minerals, precious metals, gems, rubber and petroleum – resources that for hundreds of years have made the Congo a target for rapacious global powers.

Consumer demand drove foreign exploration to Virunga's sacrosanct borders once a concession was drawn over Lake Edward – a clean

resource depended upon by over 200,000 Congolese people. This concession drew unwelcome attention from the FTSE 100 British petroleum company, SOCO International. Theoretically, national and international law protected Virunga from industrial exploitation – but SOCO managed to obtain government permits for oil exploration of which approximately 52% was inside the park.

In addition to SOCO's exploratory offensive, Virunga was again becoming a target for rebel armies. Over the years, these groups have often clashed with park rangers and have raped and looted surrounding populations. Re-entering a vulnerable period, the most prominent such group was the M23, an army whose goal was to topple the Congolese government and its allied UN forces. (The M23 movement folded in November 2013).



The goal of the campaign was to entrench Virunga National Park as the source of peace, stability and prosperity in eastern Congo; safeguarding the park by highlighting and stopping the corporate wrongdoing.

THE CAMPAIGN



How the Campaign Worked

The primary aim of using the film was to bring *Virunga* to as wide an audience as possible and to raise maximum awareness of the threats faced by the park. The immediate need was to protect the park from oil exploration. In the long term, the park's safety needs to be guaranteed for the future generations of Congo and the rest of the world.

Due to the nature of the film and the legal sensitivities of highlighting the suspected

wrongdoing of SOCO and its associates, the team had to be ready to launch a legal campaign concurrently with the launch of the film. This was managed through close cooperation with a number of well-respected lawyers and legal firms working pro-bono.

The legal strand of the campaign was a two-pronged approach. The first was to design strategies to ensure that the rule of law was upheld in the relevant jurisdictions where allegations of

wrongdoing were made. The second approach required the film work to be of the highest journalistic standards. Making such serious allegations the film team could not afford to make mistakes and their rigorous preparation proved to be invaluable for the media eruption post launch and for the partners' work going forward.

Targeted Partnerships

Licensing *Virunga* to Netflix, for their highly curated Originals slate, ensured that the film would reach the widest possible international audience. To date, *Virunga* is available on the platform to screen in 190 countries to a potential audience of 75 million subscribers (and counting). In addition, the film secured high visibility through their Executive Producer, Leonardo DiCaprio and was subject to an extensive marketing campaign by Netflix (more usual for a narrative feature) both at release and in the run up to the Academy Awards, including the placement of billboards in New York, LA and London – where they would be seen by SOCO's employees and peers, gaining maximum exposure for the campaign goals.

But the campaign started long before the awards season. Prior

to its release on Netflix, the film team targeted key influencers and worked with international partners to reach the following influential targets:

Governmental:

The campaign held screenings at six parliaments, on Capitol Hill and many diplomatic missions, screenings with the Congolese diaspora in the UK and the US, and a special screening hosted by Leonardo DiCaprio for President Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton. The campaign goal here was to ensure that those working at the geopolitical level were aware and engaged with the issue. The team worked closely with the British Government, the Belgian Government, British & Belgian Embassies in DRC, Dutch Foreign Ministry, German Foreign Ministry, Norwegian Foreign Ministry, European Commissioner, EU Parliament, Former Great Lakes Envoy Mary Robinson, US State Department, Senator Russ Feingold, Senator Chris Coons, Representative Karen Bass, UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, UK All Party Parliamentary Group on the Great Lakes, APPG Great Lakes Chair; Lord McConnell, International Contact Group on the Great Lakes Region.

Key events for this target group included screenings at EU, Belgian, Dutch and UK Parliaments, Screening on Capitol Hill, German Development Ministry screening and a UK Development Ministry Screening.

Business:

Key partnerships with The B Team – co-founded by Richard Branson, The Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Investec Asset Management (IAM) and Google helped bring the issues in the film to members of the investment and business community. Key events included two private screenings at the Bulgari Hotel, London, the UK Premiere co-hosted by IAM and well attended by business individuals, Dutch Development Bank screenings, World Economic Forum screening at Davos for business leaders and influencers, private screening for Generation Investment staff and the Google Impact Challenge.

Shareholders:

The team's engagement strategy with the shareholder community, as well as the wider corporate/business community, began by showing the film for key high-profile companies and investors. By educating

shareholders in private screenings followed by small Q & A's it provided a means for this critical audience to engage with the issues on their own terms, in a safe environment. They were presented with evidence which allowed them to question and feel supported in making their own enquiries. Early supporters of this strategy included Investec Asset Management and Aviva, both shareholders who went on to put significant pressure on SOCO to address the allegations against them. This area of work also saw key engagement with the Church of England Ethical Investment Fund and screenings hosted by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL).

The film team wanted this to be a precedent-setting case as well as a warning to international corporations operating in Africa. In order to safeguard the future of the park, shareholders were asked to directly engage with SOCO. The campaign sought to encourage shareholders to avoid divesting which could potentially lead to reduced control over the actions of the company. Instead, they asked shareholders to:

“It [Virunga] has had a very powerful effect. One thing we’ve come to realize is that the institutions responsible for regulating business activities and upholding the law are often quite slow to act, and need to be inspired. That’s the role media can have. It has had a pivotal role in protecting the park; we now feel a lot more confident about our ability to continue protecting it.”

—
Emmanuel de Merode
Director of Virunga
National Park

1. Ask SOCO to make an absolute commitment to the DRC government and UNESCO never to explore in Virunga National Park, regardless of its World Heritage Status.
2. Ask SOCO to commit to an exit plan that properly safeguards the area of the park formerly permitted for drilling (e.g. responsible measures to ensure the permit is not simply sold on).



Since the Netflix launch, there has been increased activity from members of the public writing to shareholders asking them to positively engage with SOCO. The film team continues to receive regular feedback from audiences who have been inspired by *Virunga* in this way.

Local stakeholders:

As well as working with international partners such as the National Committee of the Netherlands (IUCN NL), Human Rights Watch and Global Witness,

the campaign worked closely with local civil society groups on the ground in North Kivu – IDPE (Innovation for the Development and Protection of the Environment), Copeile (Committee of Individual Fishermen), Réseau Cref (Network for Conservation and Rehabilitation of Forest Ecosystems), SOPR and CREDDHO (Centre for Research and Investigation into the Environment, Democracy and Human Rights). An audience engagement campaign was

devised to bring a series of films about Virunga to the local communities in North Kivu. The overarching aim of this being to represent local communities to themselves in a positive light, and to show the Congolese fighting for justice and with pride. This mobile cinema screening tour rolled out in August 2015 reaching Congolese who live and work within a day's walk of the park. One of the additional highlights of working with local partners brought representatives from IDPE and Copeile to speak at a UK



Parliamentary screening hosted by the All Party Parliamentary Group on the Great Lakes.

International Stakeholders:

The campaign also generated engagement with a number of eminent organizations including; UNESCO, the UN Development Program, the EU, the World Bank, Royal Foundation, United for Wildlife, Transparency International, Synchronicity Earth and Virgin Unite. Key screenings for this group were hosted at the UN, World Parks Congress, the World Bank, United

for Wildlife event with HRH Duke of Cambridge, David Beckham and Emmanuel de Merode, Virgin Unite, Google US and Google UK, UNESCO HQ in Paris and by UN Envision in New York.

Champions

In addition to these targeted screenings, the team engaged a number of high-profile advocates to raise awareness and share the film to their online followers. This proved vital in allowing them to reach further audiences to keep *Virunga* in the spotlight. This work

included securing an Op-Ed co-written by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Sir Richard Branson and Howard G. Buffett. Other high profile advocates included: Leonardo DiCaprio, Sir David Attenborough, President Bill Clinton, Youssou N'Dour, Fally Ipupa, Salif Keita, Edward Norton, Bianca Jagger, Vivienne Westwood, Hillary Clinton, Ben Affleck, Bennett Miller, Chelsea Clinton, Mo Ibrahim and Hadeel Ibrahim, Mark Ruffalo, Paul Haggis, Wendy Schmidt, Paul Wesley, Nicholas Hoult, Jessica Chastain, Frances Fisher, David Beckham, Natalie Portman, Oprah Winfrey and Jane Fonda.

 **Bryan Christy**
@BryanChristy

Power of investigative story: Church of England may sell £3m stake in Soco oil re fear 4 gorilla haven
@virungamovie

 **Leonardo DiCaprio**
@LeoDiCaprio

Thanks to all who joined at the #Virunga screening last night, esp President @BillClinton and the #Netflix Team.

When @LeoDiCaprio shared news of the Oscar nomination on Twitter in January 2015 it resulted in almost two thousand re-tweets, bringing further attention to the park and the threats it faced.

Media

Since the film's launch in April 2014, there have been over 600 global media articles on Virunga including: CNN, BBC, *LA Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The Sun*, *The Guardian*, as well as 10 pieces in the *New York Times* alone, including a front page feature. In addition, there were multiple appearances on international TV channels and radio stations, including CNN, Al Jazeera English, Al Jazeera America, MSNBC, PBS, NPR and CCTV Africa as well as in-depth articles in *Der Spiegel*, *Men's Journal* and the aforementioned Huffington Post Op-Ed by Archbishop Tutu, Sir Richard Branson and Howard G. Buffett.

The campaign inspired further in-depth reporting and journalism on Virunga from Global Witness, Human Rights Watch, The Telegraph, the *New York Times* and the BBC who all reported on the allegations of bribery and corruption and/or human rights abuses highlighted by the film.

Public Call to Action

During public screenings, the audiences were encouraged to become involved in the public engagement campaign through four "Take Action" points:

1 To bring attention to the park, the film and the issue on social media with suggested tweets: What is SOCO International doing to safeguard #Virunga? Watch @virungamovie on #Netflix today and #TakeAction virungamovie.com/#takeaction

2 Sign up to the website to join the #TeamVirunga mailing list. By doing so, this allowed the film team to update audiences on recent developments or new #TakeAction suggestions, keeping them continually engaged with the park's struggle.

3 Donate to Virunga National Park – the most direct way to support the park was through raising critical funds to support its conservation work.

4 Check their investments and pension funds. If they were invested in SOCO, audiences were asked to write to the company and ask them if they intended to really stay away from Virunga forever and what they intended to do to safeguard the park for the future.



IMPACT DYNAMICS AT WORK

As a tool for analyzing campaign strategies, BRITDOC uses what we call the four Impact Dynamics; broad categories for the kinds of change you can make in the world. This has been developed by studying the films that we have worked with, as well as working with NGOs and activists to understand how they conceptualize their campaigns. More information on the impact dynamics can be found in **impactguide.org**

Here we apply the Impact Dynamics to the campaign goals of *Virunga*.

CHANGING MINDS

Mass awareness and understanding – creating a shift in public attitudes.

Reach a mass audience with the distribution of *Virunga*.

Target Audience: International public

Informing the debate around extraction in world heritage sites.

Target Audience: International public; United Nations World Heritage Committee; all UN Nations; Corporations working in World Heritage sites and their investors, brokers and insurers and target governments.

Support the work of the civil society in North Kivu, by aiding the debate around oil versus sustainable development amongst the wider local community.

Target Audience: Populations within a day’s walk from the Virunga National Park borders (about four million individuals).

BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Grassroots – providing the focal point around which people come together.

Support the work of the sustainable development initiatives — Virunga Alliance.

Target Audience: Populations within a day’s walk from the Virunga National Park borders (about four million individuals).

CHANGING BEHAVIOURS

Actively mobilizing people to do different, not just think different – whether that’s to buy or boycott, donate or volunteer.

Encourage shareholders to positively engage with SOCO in order to safeguard the future of the park and to encourage SOCO to carry out an adequate, independent investigation into all allegations of wrongdoing, accounting for their worrying lack of oversight whilst operating in the DRC.

Target Audience: International and SOCO shareholders

CHANGING STRUCTURES

Top down change whether in politics or business, directly influencing law and policy to change the context.

Ensure that the rule of law was upheld in the jurisdictions where allegations of wrongdoing were made.

Target Audience: The British oil company, SOCO, its associates and lawyers and target governments

Secure elite political engagement and high-level influential support to inform the debate around extraction in World Heritage Sites.

Target Audience: United Nations World Heritage Committee; all UN Nations; Corporations working in World Heritage sites and their investors, brokers and insurers and target governments.

WHO SAW IT?

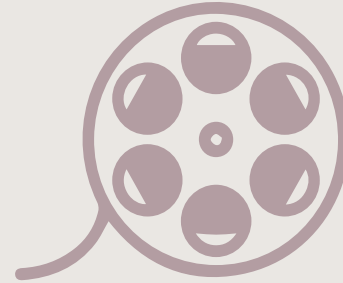
Cinema

April 2014

World Premiere at
Tribeca Film Festival, NY

Oct/Nov 2014

Theatrical runs in NY,
LA and London



Non-Theatrical Screenings

100 FILM FEST SCREENINGS + 103 WORLDWIDE

Between April 2014 and December 2015:
almost 100 film festival screenings
plus 103 other screenings worldwide,
including 30 countries outside
of Netflix reach: Armenia, Bosnia
& Herzegovina, China, Croatia, Czech
Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Georgia, Greece,
Iceland, India, Italy, Kosovo, Lithuania,
Malaysia, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal,
Romania, Russia, Serbia, Singapore,
Slovakia, South Korea, Spain,
Taiwan, Turkey, UAE, Ukraine



Broadcast

Broadcast **four times** on AfriDocs to
all 49 countries in sub-Saharan Africa
on satellite channel DSTV ED190 and
terrestrial channel GoTV.

**In South Africa alone, 92,165
households watched the film**
(10% of all Channel ED viewers that week)



vimeo

183,000

Trailer Views

vimeo.com/92226142

NETFLIX

250,240

Official Netflix trailer views

youtube.com/watch?v=wxXf2Vxj_EU

Netflix produced a series of short online
trailers for the Academy campaign
including “Virunga: Consider This”

youtube.com/watch?v=WeGaacZwhvQ

49,198 VIEWS

95% rating on Metacritic; 100%
on Rotten Tomatoes; 8.3/10 on IMDB and
is one of the highest rated films on Netflix

WHO SAW IT?

Facebook
facebook.com/virungamovie

57,995

Likes

 **Paul Wesley**
@PaulWesley

I was utterly moved and riveted by @virungamovie — please watch this film on @netflix now. It is beyond important

Twitter

12,008

Followers

YouTube

Google Doodle Earth Day Challenge
with Paul Wesley, April 21 2015

46,959 VIEWS

Other

Instagram 7,288 followers
Mail Chimp 21,061 Sign ups



75 AWARDS INCLUDING:

- BAFTA Nominee for Best Documentary Film
- Academy Award Nominee for Best Documentary Feature
- Film Independent Spirit Award Nominee for Best Documentary
- Cinema Eye Honor for Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography
- PGA Award for Outstanding Producer of Documentary Nominee
- Theatrical Motion Pictures and DGA Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Documentary Nominee
- Peabody Award
- TV Academy Honor
- Grierson Award for Best Cinema Documentary
- Feature Documentary Award at DOXA
- DuPont-Columbia Award for Outstanding Journalism
- Emmy for Outstanding Cinematography

Festivals

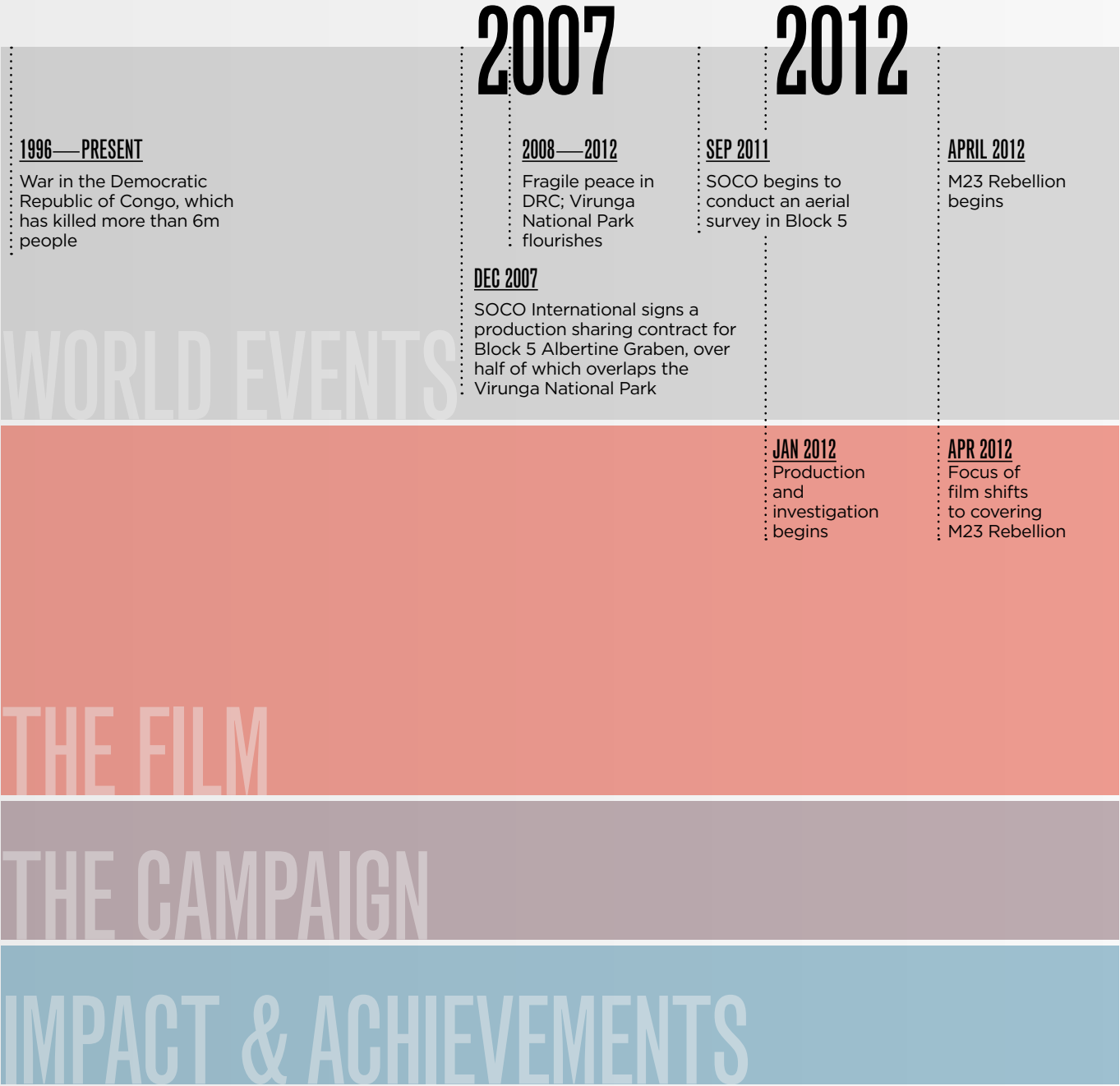
84 INTERNATIONAL FILMS FESTS INCLUDING:

- Tribeca Film Festival
- Hot Docs
- AFI Silverdocs
- One World Human Rights Film Festival
- Abu Dhabi Film Festival
- Thessaloniki Documentary Film Festival
- Shanghai International Film Festival
- Melbourne International Film Festival
- International Film Festival (Seoul)
- Addis International Film Festival

IMPACT & ACHIEVEMENTS

VIRUNGA

TIMELINE



2014

APR 2014
Director of the Virunga National Park, Emmanuel de Merode, shot by unknown assailants on the road to Goma

APR 2014
World premiere at Tribeca Film Festival

JUN 2014
UK Premiere at Edinburgh International Film Festival

THROUGHOUT 2014
Virunga screens at 37 Film Festivals across the world

APR—JUN 2014
Governmental screening events in the USA, UK, Belgium and The Hague

JUN 2014
—Screenings at EU, Belgian, Dutch and UK Parliaments and on Capitol Hill
—Screening for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the African Great Lakes Region, attended by representatives from IDPE and Copeile

JUN 2014
—Global Witness uses undercover footage provided by filmmakers to publish a catalogue of accusations against SOCO in its report “Drillers in the Mist”
—Human Rights Watch report released expanding on the allegations put forward in the film

AUG 2014
SOCO begins seismic study in Virunga National Park

OCT 2014
—Leonardo DiCaprio joins as Executive Producer
—UK’s Picturehouse Cinema tour in ten cities

JUL 2014
Netflix pick up exclusive distribution rights to *Virunga*

JULY-SEPT 2014
Virunga nominated as a Google Impact Challenge finalist

JUL 2014
Private Screening hosted by Chelsea Clinton, Hadeel Ibrahim for The Africa Center, filmmaker, Bennett Miller and His Excellency Michael Moussa-Adamo, the Gabonese Ambassador to the US

SEP 2014
Global Witness cites *Virunga* in a call to SOCO to launch a full and independent investigation into their activities in Virunga National Park

NOV 2014
—US theatrical release in New York and LA
—*Virunga* launches on Netflix in 55 countries

NOV 2014
—London Premiere for high profile advocates from business & investment arenas, government, press, law and NGOs
—*Virunga* launches on Netflix
—Sir David Attenborough via The Independent “Sir David Attenborough facing new battle to save the gorillas” — original article received 1000 social shares

DEC 2014
Virunga debated at All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) meeting on Corruption

2015

MAR 2015
BBC reported that the Democratic Republic of Congo says it wants to redraw the boundaries of Virunga National Park, to allow for oil exploration

JAN 2015
Virunga announced as Academy Award nominee for Best Doc

THROUGHOUT 2015
Virunga screens at 58 Film Festivals around the world

JAN 2015
—Leonardo DiCaprio hosts screening for President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton
—Screening at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Bonn, Germany
—World Economic Forum Screening, Davos

FEB 2015
Screening for the World Bank

APR 2014 — DEC 2015
103 Non-Theatrical/Influencer screenings worldwide

JAN 2015
The Church of England calls for SOCO to leave Virunga, initiating an investigation into SOCO’s operations in the park

JUL 2015
The Church of England divest their £1.6 million stake in SOCO

MAY 2015
African broadcast premiere to all 49 sub-Saharan countries

APR 2015
Google Doodle Earth Day: Challenge

MAY 2015
Afridocs broadcast on channels ED DSTV and GoTV

AUG 2015
-Mobile cinema screening tour in North Kivu for communities local to Virunga

MID 2015
Tourism in Virunga reaches an all time high having increased month-on-month since the park re-opened in Jan 2014

NOV 2015
SOCO relinquished its license to Block V, which overlaps Virunga National Park

JAN 2016
Netflix goes global — *Virunga* now available in 190 countries

NOV 2015
SOCO relinquished its license to Block V, which overlaps Virunga National Park

THROUGHOUT 2016
Development projects in Virunga, including hydro-power projects, fisheries and agricultural efficiency projects that started before the war recommence

IMPACT & ACHIEVEMENTS

Putting Virunga on the World Stage

Virunga and its campaign have brought Virunga National Park to an international audience in 190 countries. The campaign has also set a precedent for other world heritage sites in danger. BAFTA and Academy Award nominations have helped ensure an international presence on the largest possible platform for the film.

There were few journalists visiting or writing about Virunga until 2014, but since the film's premiere at Tribeca in April 2014, Virunga has consistently featured in news articles internationally. Almost two years on and stories continue to be published with National Geographic articles, an LA Times feature, Daily Mail coverage (reaching over 15,000 shares), two CNN news teams in the park and a PBS Newshour report accompanied by a live Q&A Twitter session and promoted by Ben Affleck.

Individual invitations for Virunga National Park Ranger and film contributor, Andre Bauma, Producer of *Virunga*, Joanna Natasegara, and Virunga National Park Ranger, Francine Bwizabule Muhimuzi, to speak on BBC News Hour and BBC World Service demonstrate that media coverage of Virunga National Park has followed the narrative of the campaign; transforming Virunga from a park facing multiple risks to a park that has the support of a local and international community and more specifically, a solution.

Partnership With Netflix

In the process of taking on a world rights contract for *Virunga*, the filmmakers report Netflix to be not only an understanding partner on the campaign but a willing and flexible ally. Without the traditional constraints of theatrical numbers, Netflix allowed a large amount of non-theatrical and influencer screenings integral to the



campaign. They also allowed wide distribution in Africa knowing the importance of the work to the issue. Working this way, with the distribution complementing and highlighting the campaign work, only further magnified the best of both sides, creating a snowballing press effect around *Virunga*.

In January 2016, Netflix announced they would be adding 130 countries to their slate, including every country across Africa. With the film now

accessible in every target territory (and beyond), the campaign team has managed to galvanize yet more support for its campaign goals and #TeamVirunga continues to grow steadily.

SOCO and its Vested Interest in Virunga

The team's engagement with the shareholder community, as well as the wider corporate/business community, began by showing the film for key high-profile companies & investors.

Significant pressure was put on SOCO by shareholders Aviva and Investec Asset Management who joined the media call for SOCO to address the film's allegations against them.

When the film came out, SOCO responded with a series of intimidating letters but nothing more. But feeling the growing global pressure, in June 2014 they acted. The day before the SOCO AGM, the campaign was dealt a harsh blow when SOCO publicly made a conditional agreement with the World Wildlife Foundation, which suggested they would cease all operations in the park. The film team report that this statement was in no way related to their campaign, and that it was made without consultation with key stakeholders, without an absolute commitment from SOCO to not explore for oil within the park's current borders regardless of its World Heritage status, and without any obligation on the company to meaningfully investigate the allegations put before them in *Virunga*, or subsequent Human Rights Watch and Global Witness reports, or the Daily Telegraph investigation.



“We are aware of allegations of wrongdoing made against SOCO International, its employees and agents connected to its activities in the Virunga National Park, including those made in the documentary film Virunga. We expect all companies to act appropriately and to the highest of standards, and encourage anyone with evidence of serious fraud, bribery or corruption to contact the Serious Fraud Office.”

—
The Rt. Hon. Hugo Swire
Minister of State at the
Foreign & Commonwealth Office

After a series of private briefings with the campaign team, in January 2015 one of SOCO's key shareholders, the Church of England loudly voiced their concern about SOCO's failure to engage with the allegations raised in the film. The Ethical Investment Advisory Group called on SOCO to give a clear commitment to leave Virunga as well as to conduct an investigation into their operations in the park. In an unprecedented move, the Fund publicly stated its dissatisfaction *“with SOCO's failure to adequately address the concerns raised in the movie and subsequent reports.”* At the time of writing, the announcement had been shared over 24,000 times on The Guardian's website (the majority of Guardian articles see just 1-2,000 shares).

Following this move from the Church, SOCO announced that they would carry out an internal investigation into their operations, however it quickly became apparent that the investigation was extremely limited and would in fact do little in terms of a full and transparent inquiry.

In June 2015, at SOCO's AGM

one year on from the WWF agreement, Global Witness released damning new evidence implicating SOCO in further wrongdoing in Virunga. Compounded by the company's failure to adequately address their previously publicized concerns, the Church of England had no other choice but to divest their £1.6 million stake in SOCO. This act was only the third time in five years that the church has divested from a company on ethical grounds.

The company remained silent for some time and then in November 2015 they quietly stated that they no longer held the license for the Block V concession in which they had been exploring for oil.

The team are using Virunga's success as a precedent-setting case, not only for other world heritage sites at risk of exploitation, but also for vulnerable societies attempting to garner economic growth without further damaging their own communities. Virunga National Park is an ongoing inter-governmental issue and the team continues to be invited to discuss the issue by parliaments and committees, as well as at conferences from Davos to the

World Bank to Transparency International. It has been cited in key discussion forums such as the World Parks Congress on issues from corruption to environmental protection. The film and the team's ongoing commitment have ensured the conversation is at the top of the agenda across the bar.

Recognition of Local Partners

In January 2016, the Alexander Soros Foundation gave its annual Award for Activism in Environmental and Human Rights to two of the campaign's local partners – Bantu Lukambo, Director of IDPE and Alphonse Muhindo Valivambene of Réseau Cref. Both went to Washington, DC to meet with U.S. State Department officials, advocating for an investigation of SOCO's activities in the park.

Park Director Emmanuel de Merode and the rangers of Virunga continue to be recognized internationally for their incredible work. In 2015 Southern Sector Warden, Innocent Mburanumwe accepted the Rolex National Geographic Explorers of the Year award on behalf of all of the rangers whilst Emmanuel received the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation Biodiversity Award for his

outstanding commitment to the preservation of the biodiversity of Virunga.

Keeping Virunga Sustainable

The park has received steady donations over the last 18 months, which spiked at the time of the Netflix launch and the Oscar nomination announcement and even more around the week of the Oscars themselves. The filmmakers donated all profit from the Netflix licence fee and film award prizes to Virunga.

In addition to raising public awareness for the Park, the media have taken a much-expanded interest in the park's tourism industry. Virunga National Park was featured in the New York Times' "Top 52 places to go in 2016", Town & Country's Top 100 Best Hotels in the World and a forthcoming Condé Nast China piece is demonstrating Virunga's global reach. More importantly, since the film's launch in April 2014, tourism in the park has increased and the number of visitors is currently at an all time high. This is particularly important because of the prominent role tourism plays in Virunga National Park's ten-year initiative, the Virunga Alliance.

The Virunga Alliance

Built around the four pillars of economic development; tourism, hydroelectric power, agri-business and sustainable fisheries, the aim of the Alliance is to ensure the park as a source of stability and prosperity for those who live and work within a day's walk of its borders.

The filmmakers understood that the local partners knew exactly what needed to be done and how to do it, and thus supported them with capacity and logistics.

Along with IUCN NL, they developed an outreach and engagement plan with a participatory mobile cinema tour to show a series of short films. These films feature representatives of local civil society, from the fishermen of Lake Edward to the female rangers of Virunga National Park to employees of the Mutwanga hydroelectric power station.

The short films discuss the role of the park for the community and how it can enrich and

support those living and working in and around the region. The collaboration between the local partners and the film team meant they could facilitate this project, by shooting and cutting the films based on the partners messaging. The screening tour is enjoying a successful roll out across the region. With 24 screenings to date, there has even been one projection with the participation of political and administrative leaders, including the FARDC, the



National Police of Congo, MONUSCO (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo), the provincial Ministry of the Interior, civil society and local NGOs, and 23 screenings organized by partners Search for Common Ground (SFCG).

One of these films about the potential of the Virunga Alliance, was presented by the Head of the ICCN (Congolese Wildlife Authority) to delegates at the 39th World Heritage Committee Meeting in Bonn in July 2015. Member states displayed overwhelming support for the park, sharing their condolences for the rangers who have lost their lives protecting its universal value. The parties agreed almost unanimously on the subject of oil, expressing that a boundary modification should not be made to the park in order to allow for oil extraction. Others made a direct plea to the government to cancel all permits granting permission to mine for oil in Virunga National Park.

Unexpected Relationships

At the start of the campaign the filmmakers could never have anticipated that Violet Films (the impact producers) would continue to have such a fundamental relationship with Virunga National Park, long after the conclusion of the main film campaign. Violet Films now runs the park's strategy and communications and Joanna Natasegara was also recently made a trustee of the The Virunga Foundation.

Work Left to do

With so much momentum and good will created by Virunga and sustained by Violet Films, the film continues to leave a powerful legacy in the park.

Virunga National Park continues to go from strength to strength, with the Virunga Alliance forging ahead to bring a sustainable future to the communities of North Kivu.

In December 2015, H.E. President Kabila opened the Matebe hydro-electric plant, which will bring 12,000 jobs to the region.



CONCLUSION

The fate of Virunga National Park was always a global issue but was not widely known before the film. The campaign to protect Virunga acts as a precedent-setting case for other world heritage sites in danger. It also works as a warning to international corporations working in fragile environments.

The allegations brought against SOCO International by the film were supported by local NGOs and civil society organizations working in and around Virunga National park. The success of the film and campaign put increased pressure on the company to end its exploration for oil within the protected World Heritage Site. This has forced SOCO to defend itself against criticism from shareholders, the media and NGOs.

Moving beyond the film, the team remains heavily committed to supporting the objectives of the Virunga Alliance - the intersection of civil society, private sector and state institutions working together towards sustainable

development goals in eastern Congo. Virunga Alliance aims to deliver large-scale opportunities to tens of thousands of Congolese men and women who are ready to rebuild the region and redefine the country's future.

"I love that the work to support the local groups was developed with them, and directly in response to their needs. Shining the light of the power of the park as a resource for local sustainable communities. SO refreshing. This is quite simple, but incredibly meaningful. The power of people on the ground resisting groups like SOCO, helping the rangers, fighting poachers, protecting the animals, everything depends on their faith in their park.

—

Review Panel

"*Virunga* is a powerful and challenging film. It has brought to the attention of many the story of Africa's oldest National Park, its people and wildlife. The bravery and dedication of the park wardens to communicate this story is deeply inspiring. The film resulted in serious questions being asked by investors about the actions and intentions of the London listed company SOCO International. As a result of the engagement that the Church of England Commissioners and Pensions Board conducted with the company we sold our holding in the company."

—

Adam Matthews, Head of Engagement, Church Commissioners and Pensions Board, The Church of England

WATCH THE FILM

[NETFLIX.COM/TITLE/80009431?LOCALE=EN-GB](https://www.netflix.com/title/80009431?locale=en-gb)

WEBSITE

[VIRUNGAMOVIE.COM](https://www.virungamovie.com)

TRAILER

[VIRUNGAMOVIE.COM/#TRAILER](https://www.virungamovie.com/#trailer)

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CONTACT

[VIRUNGAMOVIE.COM/#CONTACT](https://www.virungamovie.com/#contact)

ACT

[VIRUNGAMOVIE.COM/#TAKEACTION](https://www.virungamovie.com/#takeaction)



THE TEAM





THE FILMMAKERS



ORLANDO VON EINSIEDEL

Director / Producer

Orlando von Einsiedel is a multi-award winning filmmaker and has directed films spanning Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Arctic. Covering topics from a skateboard school in Afghanistan, to the tracking and arrest of pirates in West Africa, he has won over 70 international film awards. His films are known for powerful visual aesthetics, intimate personal stories and global investigations. 2014 saw the completion of VIRUNGA, Orlando's debut feature length documentary, for which he was nominated for an Academy Award. Orlando co-runs London based film production company Grain Media and is a director of Virunga Productions, a Community Interest Company.



JOANNA NATASEGARA

Producer / Impact Producer

Joanna is an award-winning producer and impact producer at Violet Films; currently the only company in the UK combining social impact strategy and film production. Violet is an ethical consultancy specializing in bespoke outreach campaigns and maximizing the social change potential for film and media projects. Joanna has extensive experience in documentary film having directed and produced documentaries covering social justice and politics and has recently worked on some of the world's most impactful feature documentaries. Most recently Joanna produced the Academy Award and BAFTA nominated *Virunga*.

OTHER KEY MEMEBERS OF THE TEAM

Executive Producers

Leonardo Dicaprio
Adam Del Deo
Jon Drever
Maxyne Franklin
Lisa Nishimura
Jess Search
Howard G. Buffett, CEO
Howard G. Buffett Foundation

Assistant Impact Producer

Abigail Anketell-Jones

Cinematographer

Franklin Dow

Editor

Masahiro Hirakubo

Composer

Patrick Jonsson

Composer & Music Producer, Original Song, "We Will Not Go"

J. Ralph



PARTNERS THAT ACTIVATE

Key Partners

Arcus Foundation

Core funding and strategic support as well as advisory assistance with conservation elements of the campaign

Bertha Foundation

Legal support and early film funding from both the Journalism and Connect Funds, focusing on local grassroots campaigning.

BRITDOC

Crucial supporter throughout the film production and campaign process, providing expertise and guidance to the team.

Copeile

Fisherman's collective in Vitshumbi, local partner and Virunga Alliance partner; we worked closely with them on both local and international advocacy.

Howard G. Buffett Foundation

Long-term partner of Virunga National Park, funding the recently opened Matebe Hydro-Electric plant. Howard G. Buffett also assumed the role of the film's Executive Producer

Innovation for Development and Environmental Protection (IDEP)

Local partner and Virunga Alliance partner working in North Kivu communities around Virunga to promote conservation and collaborating on local and international advocacy.

International Union for Conservation of Nature, National Committee of The Netherlands (IUCN NL)

Virunga National Park partner and key partner to the Virunga film campaign, working with local partners in North Kivu, as well as facilitating screenings such as the Dutch Development Bank events.

Investec Asset Management (IAM)

Key partner for reaching business/investment communities, co-hosted London and Cape Town premieres as well as facilitating a range of other screenings.

Leonardo DiCaprio, Executive Producer

In addition, his foundation went on to support conservation projects in Virunga National Park

Netflix

Global distributor, open to working with the film team to maximise exposure and think creatively about the film's release.

Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

Virunga National Park and film campaign partner — hosting the film's edit suite at London Zoo

Virunga Foundation

Working in a co-management agreement with the park authorities at ICCN to protect and develop Virunga National Park for future generations. This partnership led to the establishment of the Virunga Alliance - an ambitious plan to use the park's resources sustainably to support socio-economic growth in the region.

11th Hour Project

Core campaign funding as well as invaluable strategic support connecting the campaign to the right people and helping to build vital relationships.

ORGANOGRAM

TRADITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

Producer:
Joanna Natasegara

Director:
Orlando Von Einsiedel
Grain Media

Executive Producer:
Leonardo Dicaprio

Theatrical Bookings;
International and
Domestic Distribution:
Netflix

IMPACT CAMPAIGN

Impact Producer:
Joanna Natasegara
Violet Films

Assistant Impact Producer:
Abigail Anketell-Jones
Violet Films

Impact Assistant:
Fleur Nieddu
Violet Films

Fundraising, Theatrical,
Publicity, Project Management,
Media Strategy, Graphic Design,
Legal, In-house Consultant,
Strategy Development,
Development and Management
of Partnerships, Translators,
Interns, Legal, Social Media,
Partnership Management
and Community Screenings:
Violet Films

PRODUCTION BUDGET

\$1,000,000

Production Funders

- CBA Worldview
- Arcus Foundation
- Bertha/Britdoc Journalism Fund
- IUCN NL
- The Funding Network

IMPACT CAMPAIGN BUDGET

\$1,000,000

Impact Campaign Funders

- IUCN NL
- Kindle Project
- Fledgling Fund
- Arcus Foundation
- 11th Hour Project
- Bertha/Britdoc Connect Fund





PRESS

Battle for Virunga: The fight to save Africa's oldest national park

Virunga National Park has become the battleground in a new conflict, as conservationists fight off the advances of rebel militias, poachers and a powerful oil company

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Armed rangers escort Virunga's director Emmanuel de Merode into the village of Nyakakoma on the shore of Lake Edward Photo: Martin Fletcher

By Martin Fletcher
8:00AM BST 06 Sep 2014

Print this article

Democratic Republic

3.45pm on April 15 Emmanuel de Merode, the Belgian-born, British-educated head of Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, left the city of Goma for the 90-minute drive north to the headquarters of Virunga in Rumangabo. The road was once paved, but decades of constant warfare in this part of eastern Congo have taken its toll. Today it is a ribbon of rock and rutted mud, scarcely negotiable except in four-wheel-drive vehicles.

De Merode was alone in a Land Rover marked with Virunga's emblem, a mountain gorilla. After 45 minutes he reached one of the few stretches lined not by wooden shacks and swarms of people engaged in the daily hunt for survival, but by dense tropical vegetation. He saw a man to his left lift an AK-47 and open fire. Others shot from the opposite side. Eight bullets hit the vehicle. Four smashed through the windscreen. One hit him in the chest, breaking four ribs, puncturing his right lung and passing through his liver. A second went through his abdomen.



Emmanuel de Merode. PHOTO: Martin Fletcher

The Land Rover's engine died. De Merode grabbed his own AK-47, climbed out and took cover in the trees. He fired wildly until his assailants fled. 'I stayed there 20 minutes, but knew I was quite badly wounded and if I didn't get to a hospital it didn't look good,' he recalls. Two

of Congo
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In Democratic Republic
Of Congo



The Gorilla Doctors of
the DR Congo



Gorillas at risk



Children maimed
during M23 attack on
Goma in DRC



Cycle of displacement
in Democratic
Republic of Congo

The Telegraph

The Telegraph
By Martin Fletcher
06 September 2014
**Battle for Virunga:
The Fight to Save Africa's
Oldest National Park**

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/democraticrepublicofcongo/11075473/Battle-for-Virunga-The-fight-to-save-Africa-s-oldest-national-park.html>




New York Times
By Jeffrey Gettleman
15 Nov 2014
Oil Dispute Takes a Page
from Congo's Bloody Past


AFRICA

Oil Dispute Takes a Page From Congo's Bloody Past

Oil Dispute Takes a Page From Congo's Bloody Past


By JEFFREY GETTLEMAN NOV. 15, 2014





SLIDE SHOW | 8 Photos
Oil vs. the Environment in an African Park

Uriel Sinai for The New York Times

 Email

VIRUNGA NATIONAL PARK, Democratic Republic of Congo — The trouble started when a British company suddenly appeared in this iconic and spectacularly beautiful national park, prospecting for oil.

Villagers who opposed the project were beaten by government soldiers. A park warden, who tried to block the oil company, SOCO International, from building a cellphone tower in the park, was kidnapped and tortured. [Virunga's](#) director, a Belgian prince, [was shot](#) and nearly killed hours after he delivered a secret report on the oil company's activities.

Much like the fight over drilling on federal lands in the United States, the struggle over oil exploration in Africa's national parks is a classic quandary, pitting economic development against environmental preservation.

But out here, the quest for oil seems to be more volatile, and the stakes are arguably higher — on both sides.

While West Africa has been a major hydrocarbon producer for decades, new technology like deeper drilling has led to a bonanza of new energy discoveries here on the continent's east side.

Oil companies are now circling several African parks like this one, home to critically endangered wildlife, such as colossal silverback mountain gorillas, among the last of their kind.

But development is far more than just a buzzword here. The people in the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#), Tanzania, northern Kenya, Uganda and Mozambique — all places of recent hydrocarbon finds — are among the poorest in the world, many without electricity or clean water, their children often facing relentless illness and few prospects.

African governments say they have a moral obligation to pursue anything that might lift their countries out of grinding poverty, including drilling for oil in pristine natural environments.

Church of England divests from Soco oil firm over Virunga operations

CoE sells £1.6m stake, citing ethical concerns over UK firm's controversial plans to drill in the Congo national park that's a last stronghold for endangered mountain gorillas



📷 A villager takes part in the Draw the Line, Save Virunga national park campaign against Soco's proposals to drill for oil in the world heritage site, July, 2013 in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Photograph: Brent Stirton/WWF-Canon/AFP/Getty Images

The Church of England (CoE) has sold its stake in a British oil and gas company over allegations of bribery, corruption and human rights abuses and what it said was the company's failure to unequivocally rule out drilling for oil in Africa's oldest national park.

London-listed Soco International has been criticised in the past two years by conservationists including [WWF](#) and [Sir David Attenborough](#) for its attempt to drill in Virunga in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which is a world heritage site and home to around half the world's mountain gorillas.

The church was [sufficiently alarmed by the allegations](#) that it asked the company to conduct an independent public inquiry into them, but at its recent AGM Soco refused to publish the scope or outcome of the inquiry.

That prompted the Church Commissioners, which manage the CoE's £6.7bn investment fund, to divest their entire £1.6m holding from Soco in what they called a "last resort". The stake was sold on Friday.

The divestment is only the third time in five years that the church has divested from a company on ethical grounds. In 2012 [it sold its shares in News Corporation in protest at phone-hacking](#) and in 2010 [it sold its holdings in Vedanta Resources](#) over human rights concerns linked with the company's mining operations in India.

"We have called time because without the changes we sought this is not a sustainable or ethical investment for church funds," said Edward Mason, head of responsible investment at the Church Commissioners. "We take engagement with companies very seriously. In this instance Soco has not responded positively or sincerely to the concerns we raised."

Adam Matthews of the church's ethical investment advisory group said they started engaging with Soco over their concerns in 2013, and intensely since late 2014 after a [Congolese military official linked to the company](#) was apparently filmed offering a bribe to opponents, and [a park ranger was assaulted by soldiers](#) after trying to stop Soco erecting a mast in the park.

"These are really serious events. There's no evidence it was directly committed by the company, but it was associated with its activities," said Mason. "It was the

theguardian

The Guardian

By Adam Vaughn

01 July 2015

Church of England Divests from SOCO oil firm over Virunga Operations



Huffington Post
Howard G. Buffet, Richard Branson and Desmond Tutu Op-Ed
04 April 2015
New Troubles at the Gates of Virunga

huffingtonpost.com/richard-branson/virunga-national-park_b_5222851.html

H

New Troubles at the Gates of Virunga

🕒 04/27/2014 02:13 pm ET | Updated Jun 27, 2014

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Richard Branson
Founder, Virgin Group

🐦



Desmond Tutu
Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town



Howard G. Buffett
President, Howard G. Buffett Foundation

Oil exploration could be devastating to Africa's most iconic national park -- and its people.


The British company SOCO International has recently begun surveying for oil in Virunga National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site located in Africa's eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Virunga is home to a significant portion of the world's roughly 880 remaining mountain gorillas. Although extracting oil from Virunga is prohibited by current DRC and international law, SOCO maintains its efforts are preliminary, exploratory, legal and designed to bring economic benefits and jobs to the people of DRC.

Our collective experiences in Africa and our direct knowledge of these specific circumstances compel us to another conclusion. This week the documentary

It is also impossible to exaggerate the abject poverty and suffering of the people of the DRC, and most especially the one million people who live within one mile of Virunga's borders. DRC, particularly the east, is incredibly rich in mineral wealth yet it consistently ranks at the bottom on every global measure of human development. Conflict and instability are the norm, and have been for decades, thanks to scores of armed groups sparking periodic violence and unrest. An estimated five million or more people have perished from conflict and its consequences over the last 15 years. Lasting peace will only come when there is a better alternative: economic development that benefits the many, not the few.

The three of us have long histories of supporting the protection of Africa's unique natural resources, wildlife, habitats and its people. We have enormous respect for the role private investment can play in development. We see an opportunity in Virunga and elsewhere to go beyond traditional aid to help local economies grow. Notably, there is a well-considered economic plan for the region called the Virunga Alliance that the park's own chief warden, Emmanuel de Merode, has developed and the park's director general has endorsed. It is already showing impressive progress.







So when we hear of an outside investor claiming that this time will be different and "the people" will benefit from their country's riches, forgive us if we disagree, especially as these explorations are illegal according to DRC and international law. The more likely scenario is a handful of people will get rich from SOCO's activities. The vast majority of Congolese will continue to suffer, and the world will be complicit in initiating the slippery slope of subjugating a World Heritage designation for profit.

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British oil company Soco says no longer holds Congo block permit

KINSHASA



British oil firm Soco International said on Tuesday it no longer holds the exploration licence for a block in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo where it ceased operations last year amid environmental and human rights protests.

Soco conducted seismic testing last year on Block V, about half of which lies within the Virunga National Park, Africa's oldest national park and home to the endangered mountain gorilla.







The controversy surrounding oil exploration in the park was the subject of last year's Oscar-nominated documentary film "Virunga".

"Soco has ceased to hold the Block V licence," the company said in a single-sentence statement on its website.


A spokesman for the company said in an email that Soco had decided not to renew its licence at the end of its contract with the Congolese government.

The chief of staff to Congo's oil minister told Reuters he was unaware of any change in the block's status.

(Reporting By Aaron Ross; Editing by Joe Bavier and Greg Mahlich)




PHOTOS




Editor's choice

Our top photos from the last 24 hours.

**REUTERS** THE WIDER IMAGE

Photojournalism reimagined for every screen





UK Reuters
Kinshasa
03 Nov 2015
**British Oil Company
SOCO says no longer holds
Congo Block Permit**



HUGE CHEERS

Huge cheers to all our partners who have worked together over the past year to realise this program.

In particular we would like to recognise the significant work invested in the Impact reports which were produced by Erin Sorenson in collaboration with the team at BRITDOC and then lovingly visualised by Involved Design in London.

The Impact Award trophies which were designed and manufactured by Susan Banks, Professor at New World School of the Arts in Miami and photographed by Arion Doerr in New York.

Finally the graffiti art made for this year's announcement was created by Victor Ving, working on location at the Container Yard in Los Angeles. In a film concept devised by BRITDOC and executed by Director and DOP Dallas Sterling and Producer Shelby Hill.

Thank you one and all.

docimpactaward