

Liberian residents say foreign firm threatens their land rights

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GRAND CAPE MOUNT COUNTY, Liberia — Residents say a Malaysian company has cleared thousands of acres of their land in western Liberia.

A report released Wednesday by the Rights and Resources Initiative says weak land rights have allowed companies like Sime Darby to claim African land and resources. They reported similar concerns in South Sudan.

Farmers in the area say Sime Darby lured them into agreeing to vacate so they could plant palm trees for oil, but drastically underpaid compared to their promised prices.

Workers hired by the company also say they are poorly paid.

The company denied all of the allegations in a statement, saying they pay fairly and that they have not evicted any landholders by force.

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