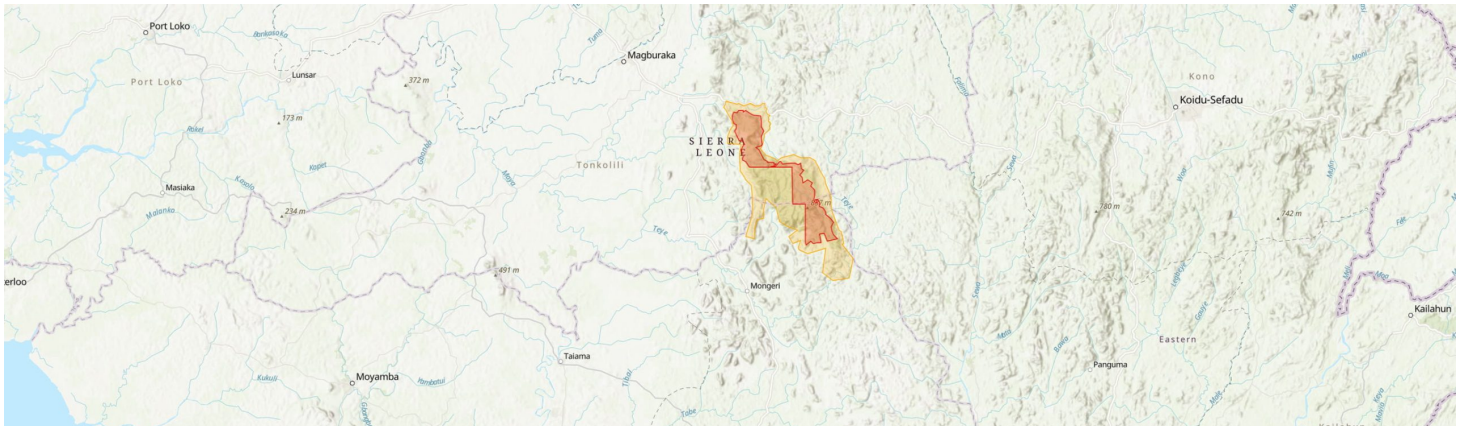


Kangari Hills

SIETIPA18



Country: **Sierra Leone**

Administrative region: **Southern (Province)**

Central co-ordinates: **8.51000 N, -11.67000 E**

Area: **328.9km²**

Qualifying IPA criteria

A(i), C(i)

IPA assessment rationale

This site qualifies as an IPA due to the presence of at least seven threatened species that trigger criterion A(i), as well as criterion C(i) as this site contains >10% of threatened low altitude evergreen forest habitat nationally.

Site description

The Kangari Hills IPA is located across the boundary of Tonkolili and Bo Districts, spanning the Northern and Southern Provinces of Sierra Leone. It falls within the Kuniike Barina Chiefdom. The nearest large towns are Baomahun on the southern border of the IPA, Matotaka, approximately 10 km to the northwest, and Yele, about 12 km to the southwest.

This IPA corresponds to the Kangari Hills Forest Reserve (KHFR), a forest reserve designated for utilization. In 2021, a large-scale gold mining license was granted to FL Gold Limited, with 27% of the IPA now occupied by the mining concession (GoSL, 2024). Mining activities are expected to continue until the lease expires in 2091 and are anticipated to have substantial long-term impacts on the site. Additionally, a smaller gold mining license (0.23 km²) was granted to XIN YIN Company Limited from 2021 to 2033 along a northern waterway, but this license is currently suspended.

The IPA's core boundary has been delineated to reflect the most intact habitat remaining outside the main mining concession. This area is considered the highest priority for protection and was defined in consultation with the Director of Forestry, Mrs. Karemo-Garnett (pers. comms. 2025).

Botanical significance

The Kangari Hills IPA supports one of the largest remaining areas of primary forest in Sierra Leone (GFW, 2011) and lies within the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot (CEPF, 2015). The site is of high botanical importance due to its botanical richness and the presence of globally threatened species. A recent survey recorded 68 tree species from 38 families within the Kangari Hills Forest Reserve (Fayiah et al., 2022), highlighting the site's conservation value.

Several plant species of global conservation concern have been

recorded within the IPA. *Oxyanthus andjigae* (Luke #15205), an Endangered tree, is known from only four localities globally, with this site representing the only confirmed occurrence in Sierra Leone. *Placodiscus pseudostipularis*, also known from the site and listed as Endangered, is a small tree restricted to relatively undisturbed moist forest in the Upper Guinea region. *Cassia aubrevillei* (Luke #15145), another Endangered species, is known in Sierra Leone only from this locality.

Additional threatened species documented at the site include *Cryptosepalum tetraphyllum*, *Guibourtia leonensis*, and *Lophira alata*, are all valuable timber species assessed as Vulnerable. The site also provides habitat for the near-endemic liana *Landolphia macrantha* (Vulnerable), which is threatened across most of its range in Sierra Leone.

A possible occurrence of *Tarenna hutchinsonii* (Luke #15263), a Critically Endangered tree species previously known only from a single historical collection in Sierra Leone, was noted during surveys; however, due to uncertainty in the identification, this record has not been included in the formal assessment. The Upper Guinea endemics *Asystasia scandens* and *Sclerochiton vogelii* subsp. *vogelii* have also been recorded at the site, although both taxa remain unassessed for extinction risk.

Reviewed by:

Xander van der Burgt, The Royal Botanic Gardens Kew

Fanny Massally, The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Habitat and geology

The Kangari Hills IPA is characterised by lowland evergreen forest (Cole, 1968), with some riverine forest and minimal representation of deciduous forest (ESA, 2017). While the core area remains largely intact, the forest edges show significant signs of disturbance, ranging from farmbrush to secondary forest stands. *Ochthocosmus africanus* (syn. *Phyllocosmus africanus*, Ixonanthaceae) has been identified as a dominant tree species within the site (Kargbo et al., 2022), indicating the presence of secondary forest structure (Savill & Fox, 1967). Geologically, the Kangari Hills lie within the Sula Mountain greenstone belt. This formation is rich in economically valuable minerals, including diamonds.

Conservation issues

There is currently extensive artisanal gold mining occurring along the northeastern periphery of the IPA, as well as within the formal mining lease area. These activities are contributing to ongoing habitat degradation. Since 2001, primary forest cover has declined dramatically, particularly in the southern portion of the reserve, which is now highly fragmented and largely degraded. Slash and burn agriculture is steadily eroding remnant forest at the site.

Site assessor(s)

Gabriella Hoban, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Date of first assessment:

1st May 2025

IPA criterion A species

SPECIES	QUALIFYING SUB-CRITERION	≥ 1% OF GLOBAL POPULATION	≥ 5% OF NATIONAL POPULATION	1 OF 5 BEST SITES NATIONALLY	ENTIRE GLOBAL POPULATION	SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT	ABUNDANCE AT SITE
<i>Guibourtia leonensis</i> J. L'Herminier	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	
<i>Landolphia macrantha</i> (K.Schum.) Pichon	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	—	—	
<i>Lophira alata</i> Banks ex Gaertn.f.	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	
<i>Placodiscus pseudostipularis</i> Radlk.	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	—	—	
<i>Oxyanthus andjigae</i> Sonké & O.Lachenaud	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	—	—	
<i>Cryptosepalum tetraphyllum</i> (Hook.f.) Benth.	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	
<i>Cassia aubrevillei</i> Pellegr.	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	—	—	

IPA criterion C qualifying habitats

HABITAT	QUALIFYING SUB-CRITERION	≥ 5% OF NATIONAL RESOURCE	≥ 10% OF NATIONAL RESOURCE	1 OF 5 BEST SITES NATIONALLY	AREAL COVERAGE AT SITE
Low-altitude evergreen forest and gallery forest	C(i)	✓	✓	✓	266

General site habitats

GENERAL SITE HABITAT	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE
Forest - Subtropical/Tropical Moist Lowland Forest	—	
Artificial - Terrestrial - Subtropical/Tropical Heavily Degraded Former Forest	—	
Artificial - Aquatic - Excavations (open)	—	

Land use types

LAND USE TYPE	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE
Extractive industry	27	Major
Harvesting of wild resources	—	Minor

Threats

THREAT	SEVERITY	TIMING
Agriculture & aquaculture - Annual & perennial non-timber crops - Small-holder farming	High	Ongoing - stable
Energy production & mining - Mining & quarrying	High	Ongoing - stable
Biological resource use - Gathering terrestrial plants	Low	Ongoing - stable
Natural system modifications - Fire & fire suppression - Increase in fire frequency/intensity	Medium	Ongoing - stable

Protected areas

PROTECTED AREA NAME	PROTECTED AREA TYPE	RELATIONSHIP WITH IPA	AREAL OVERLAP
Kangari Hills Forest Reserve	National Reserve	IPA encompasses protected/conservation area	98

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