

Sierra Leone Gola Rainforest becomes national park

December 4 2011, By CLARENCE ROY-MACAULEY , Associated Press

(AP) -- Sierra Leone's president is officially declaring the Gola Rainforest a national park.

A statement from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security says that the Gola Rainforest has been identified as a "Biodiversity hotspot" and is of global importance because of its rich variety of [plants and animals](#).

It said President Ernest Bai Koroma is making the declaration Saturday as part of a government action plan that recommends creating a national network of protected areas for terrestrial and wetland ecosystems across the country.

The Gola Rainforest [National Park](#) lies in the countries southeast at the border with Liberia.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds says the declaration of the over 71,000-hectare Gola Rainforest as a national park should subdue ongoing threats from logging and mining.

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