



EAST AFRICAN
CRUDE OIL PIPELINE
HOST COMMUNITIES

REPORT FROM THE PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION OF OIL-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES CHALLENGING OIL AND GAS PROJECTS IN UGANDA

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Introduction

On April 15, 2024, East African Crude Oil Pipeline Host Communities (EACOP HC) organized a peaceful demonstration and delivered a petition to the President Of Uganda, The Chief Justice Of Uganda, The Minister Of Energy and Mineral Development, The Principle Judge demanding for the protection and respect of their human and environmental rights.

This demonstration emerged as a response to the concerns of over the recent court ruling ordering the eviction of 42 families in Buliisa District to make way for the Tilenga oil project without being compensated in line with Ugandan laws and international best practices.

These Forty-two families are on the brink of losing their homes and livelihoods due to an unjust eviction order. These families were offered inadequate compensation for their land, which is crucial for survival. Additionally, several families have unresolved land ownership disputes that were completely ignored in the court proceedings.

The following were the Objectives of the peaceful demonstration:

1. To immediately halt or stop the eviction order against the 42 households affected by the Tilenga oil project.
2. To stop all oil and gas activities that are continuing to undermine the human and environmental rights of the oil host communities.
3. To petition the president of Uganda and other relevant authorities to listen and address the highlighted grievances and demands of the oil affected communities immediately before the communities' start taking the law in their hands.
4. To expose the human and environmental rights violations executed by oil and gas companies in Uganda.
5. To put to end to any unsustainable oil and gas activities that undermines community livelihoods and environment.



Figure 1: Oil affected communities reading their petition in front of Hoima High Court

Proceedings

The demonstration was participated in by over 100 youth and women from the Albertine Region. It began at 8:00am EAT with preparations and a briefing from their lawyer on how to peacefully march through Hoima City streets to the High Court to present their petition.



Figure 2: Youths and Women from Villages of Kikuube and Hoima districts being addressed by the Lawyer.

The community members proceeded to Crown Hotel at 9:00 AM where they met with other oil affected communities from Bulisa district. They had with them Placards bearing messages such as **"Justice Denied," "Respect Our Rights," and "Stop Land Grabbing for Tilenga"** that highlighted their grievances and from there they began their peaceful demonstration to Hoima High Court.



Figure 3: The Oil Affected Communities began their demonstration

Upon arrival at the court premises, a community member Fred was selected to read and present the petition's contents before the gathered crowd. However, the initial attempt to deliver the petition was met with resistance from the court registrar, citing missing information. After rectifying the issue and obtaining signatures from community members, the petition was resubmitted, a copy with the Hoima High court registrar, another copy with Hoima district police commander (DPC), another one with Hoima city President representative (RCC). Subsequently, intervention by the District Police Commander (DPC) and the Resident City Commissioner (RCC), also briefed the communities and promised to deliver the petition to the office of the president and also arrange the meeting of the PAPs with the president.

At round 2:30pm, Oil project affected communities mobilized themselves back to their buses to travel back to their homes in Kikuube, Hoima and Bullisa district.



Figure 3: Fred and other oil affected communities standing before the Hoima High Court delivering their petition and demands

Some of the media outs from the protest

The demonstration was successfully carried out and it attracted various media houses and journalists that published about it, you could read about it here;

- <https://x.com/dailymonitor/status/1779875595138007264?s=46>
- <https://www.independent.co.ug/?s=tilenga+land+owners+stor+m+hoima+court>
- <https://kazi-njemanews.com/hoima-oil-refinery-paps-protest-delayed-justice-on-compensation-case/>
- <https://ugandaradionetwork.net/story/tilenga-landowners-stor+m-hoima-high-court-demand-for-justice->
- <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/locals-prote+st-compulsory-land-acquisition-in-uganda-s-oil-belt--45934+86>

Residents protest unfair compensation

HOIMA

By Wilson Ashenge

Several residents yesterday morning staged demonstrations at a High Court over the court ruling, ordering the eviction of 42 families in Bulisa district to pave way for the Tilenga oil project.

The residents, led by Emmanuel Ongyeer, said landowners were offered significantly lower compensation than the real value of their land.

"We are demanding government intervention and revaluing of the land because the money which we were given was less compared to the size of our land," Ongyeer said. He also said the court ruling, delivered within four days and after one hearing, raises serious concerns about procedural fairness that requires effective judicial remedy.

"The desire to save time and expedite the proceedings does not justify disregarding such a fundamental principle as the right to adversarial proceedings," Ongyeer said.

He said they are demanding the immediate halting of the eviction and compensation process until an independent expert conducts a thorough, inclusive and transparent



Residents protesting at Hoima High Court on Monday over the ruling ordering the eviction of 42 families in Bulisa district, to pave way for the Tilenga oil project



Rates used to compensate oil and gas project affected persons are generated by the district local governments.

review. They also called for a fair and adequate compensation for the affected landowners based on independent valuation and in consultation with the community.

"The Government should address the outstanding land disputes and unclear land ownership issues before proceeding with the project.

They should guarantee the affected communities' right to a fair process and access to justice by affording them an opportunity to present their case in a reasonable time

and by properly examining the submissions, arguments and evidence adduced by the parties," Ongyeer added.

Rachael Tugume, a resident of Kabalele sub-county in

Hoima district, said she was only offered sh500,000 for her land measuring 0.08 acres.

"Our late father distributed land to us before he died in 2016. When the valuers came,

they told me that I qualify for only sh500,000. I declined to accept it because I didn't have any alternative piece of land to sell to me with my two children," she said.

"The Government should carry out an impartial investigation into the allegations of collusion between government officials and oil companies, and ensure speedy and expeditious adjudication of oil-related community cases," Tugume said.

At the Hoima Chief Magistrates Court, Chief Magistrate George Mutandinda held a closed-door meeting with some of the affected people.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Although TotalEnergies is the lead developer under the Tilenga project, the entity is acquiring the land on behalf of the Government of Uganda.

Once the land is acquired, it is registered under the Liganga Land Commission and the energy ministry as the land user, not TotalEnergies or another entity.

Every valuation and compensation made for properties under the oil and gas projects is approved by the chief government valuer because they form part of the recoverable costs, which will be recouped once production commences in 2025.

Solomon Muyita, the energy ministry spokesperson, said rates used to compensate oil and gas project affected persons are generated by the district local governments.

They are later verified and confirmed by the chief government valuer.

He added, "Even immediately there are grievance mechanisms where those who do not agree with the valuation can appeal. Those who opt to go to court, we follow the court decision."

Muyita said those who are not contented with the recent court ruling can appeal.

He accused the group of being misled by a section of civil society organisations who are against oil and gas developments in Uganda.

TILENGA LAND ACQUISITION

The Tilenga project is operated by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production (TEP) on behalf of the four Vendors Partners comprising TEPU with the majority participating interest of 54.67%, the China National Offshore Oil Company with 28.33% and the Uganda National Oil Company with 15%.

The project includes putting in place facilities to support the production of petroleum from six oilfields located in Bulisa and Nwoya districts.

Overall, 4,693 people have been compensated, representing 95% completion.

Outcomes of the Action:

1. Hoima high court received the PAPS petition and committed to fast-track the hearing and the determination of the Oil refinery court case by July 8, 2024.
2. The representative of the office of the president in Hoima committed to deliver the concerns of the PAPS to the President.
3. None of the Action participants was arrested or harassed.
4. The media captured the action and amplified the voices of the PAPS.

Conclusions:

1. The demonstration served as a powerful means of amplifying the voices and demands of oil affected communities and also drawing attention to the need to stop unsustainable developments in Uganda and Africa at large, it also indicated the importance for continued mobilisation of community led social movements, advocacy and dialogue.

1. The need for promoting justice for everyone regardless of one's social or economic status. And it should be done timely and promptly to stop communities from taking the law in their hands.
2. Lastly, despite of the success, there are still cases of intimidations and harassments of community mobilizers aiming at stopping them from doing their work of stopping the ongoing injustices.

Recommendations:

1. There is a great and urgent need to mobilize and equip the mobilizers with knowledge and skills in actions, messaging and how they can continue doing their work in a such closing civic space
2. Legal Support: Provide legal support and guidance to ensure that the rights of the community mobilizers and members are upheld throughout the process.

Next Steps:

1. **Continued Actions:** As oil affected communities we will continue to organise actions and social movements until our demands are addressed.
2. **Advocacy:** We will continue with our advocacy and community awareness on the need to stop all unsustainable developments within our communities.
3. **Follow-up Meetings:** Organize follow-up meetings with our fellow community mobilizers, PAPs, government officials and oil companies to monitor the progress on addressing our concerns.
4. **Documentation and Dissemination:** We will continue to document and report on all the case of human and environmental rights violations being executed by oil and gas companies within our communities .