

NOVEMBER 2024



EAST AFRICAN
CRUDE OIL PIPELINE
HOST COMMUNITIES

NEWSLETTER



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EACOP Host Communities demand COP29 to deal with climate change crisis as an emergency issue



Our Journey in Demanding Climate Justice: Africa's Oil Curse Unveiled

In this month's newsletter, we tackle the multinational greed and Africa's environmental resistance amidst the struggle of fighting climate change impacts at a grass root, regional and global level. We bring to you a clear mirror reflection and view of Nigeria's Niger delta experiences and Uganda's Albertine region in terms of the distraction caused by the fossil fuel industry to their livelihoods and biodiversity. The East meets the West- as we dive into the parallels between Nigeria and Uganda's oil affected host communities

HIGHLIGHTS

- Oil project affected Communities' story
- Shattered paradise
- From Nigeria's Niger Delta to Uganda's Albertine
- Challenges, Resistance and our demands.
- A Call to Action

In the shadow of global climate negotiations, a profound truth emerges from the depths of Africa's oil-ravaged landscapes: the real story of climate justice is not written in conference halls, but in the lived experiences of communities bearing the brunt of fossil fuel exploitation. As world leaders convened at 29th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan, discussing abstract climate strategies, vulnerable communities in Nigeria and Uganda prepared to share a far more visceral narrative of livelihood, environmental destruction and community resilience against the impacts of climate change.



Photos of farmlands, water bodies and communities affected by oil spillages in the Niger Delta



Photos of the oil activities displacing 100,000 of communities, destroying biodiversity habitants in the Albertine region of Uganda

Driven by an urgent need to expose the devastating parallels between the Niger Delta and Uganda's Albertine region, a delegation of East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project-affected communities embarked on a critical exchange mission. Our journey was more than a fact-finding expedition—it was a deliberate act of solidarity, documentation, and resistance. By tracing the 60-year legacy of oil industry devastation in Nigeria, we as community representatives sought to illuminate the impending environmental catastrophe threatening our own homeland, transforming personal suffering into a powerful call for continental and global climate justice. Our testimonies are an urgent need for all Africans to demand for climate justice now!

Oil project affected Communities' story; The Echoes of Destruction

Our communities, nestled along the winding creeks of the Albertine Graben which forms part of the western arm of the Great Rift Valley in East Africa, had once been a green palace, teeming with life. But that was before the multinational oil companies (Total Energies and CNOOC) arrived, unleashing a relentless onslaught of grief, pain and violation of human and environmental rights. As the oil companies together with Ugandan government commenced on the process of displacing over 100,000 people from our traditional lands, which we entirely depend on for our livelihoods, we were dispossessed and robbed of our rights, peace and freedom. The displacement processes were taken without due regard to the oil-affected people's livelihood, education, cultural and other rights. The aforementioned rights were abused, leading to increased household poverty, food scarcity and insecurity, unwanted teenage pregnancies, rampant school dropouts and loss of dignity among the affected households.

While the above over 100,000 people suffer today, Ugandans depending on green economic activities like agriculture, fishing communities and tourism also continue to lose their livelihoods on a daily basis due to oil impacts. Our livelihoods used to depend on free-ecosystem services and good climate, which have been impacted and continue to be threatened by the ongoing oil and gas activities. Also these oil activities are taking place in Albertine Graben in Uganda which is key biodiversity hot spot with over 70% of Uganda's national parks among others.

The pain of seeing our community's destruction and our family's suffering weighed heavily on our hearts. The lush greenery, the thriving fishing communities, the joyful community - all of it had been ravaged by the relentless greed of multinational oil companies. Today, our community's only resort is to fight for our children's future with passion to advocate for a greener and cleaner tomorrow.



EACOP HC engagement meetings to strengthen community resilience against oil and gas activities

Shattered paradise; How Shell's Oil Empire Turned the Niger Delta from Eden to Hell

The devastating toll of oil in Nigeria's Niger delta is one that has gone on for decades of years. The once-pristine waters of the Niger Delta, where children once swam freely and fishermen cast their nets into abundant waters, now runs black with oil due to foreseen crude spillage. At the 2024 Niger Delta Climate Change Conference held in Port Harcourt River state, elderly fishermen and farmers' voices trembled as they recalled their homeland's transformation. "Our rivers once teemed with fish and our soil burst with yams and cassava. Now?" They gestured to the rainbow-slicked water, where gas flares illuminate the sky like eternal funeral pyres. "Shell has turned our paradise into poison. Shell brought hell to us"

In Ogoni land, the first oil affected host community, the devastating legacy of six decades of oil exploitation unfolds like a Greek tragedy. Women gather at local clinics, their bodies bearing the weight of benzene poisoning and rare cancers. Men, once proud farmers and fishermen, watch helplessly as their wives miscarry and their children gasp for air in the hydrocarbon-heavy atmosphere. The soil, once fertile enough to feed generations, lies dead beneath their feet, contaminated by countless oil spills. As Shell prepares to abandon their operations and exit the Delta, they leave behind a haunting tableau: gas flares that turn day into night, water wells contaminated with carcinogens, and temperatures so extreme they mock the memory of the gentle climate that once blessed this land. The Ogoni people's story is written in the acid rain that falls from above and the oil that seeps from below – a testament to how corporate greed can transform a cradle of life into a valley of death. What a paradise lost!



Photos of Ogoni communities in the Niger Delta affected by Shell oil and gas activities

From Nigeria's Niger Delta to Uganda's Albertine: A Prophecy of Environmental Apocalypse

The shadows of Nigeria's Niger Delta loom over Uganda's Albertine region, where the East African Crude Oil Pipeline threatens to unleash a familiar environmental nightmare. Just as Shell transformed the Niger Delta into a toxic graveyard, the EACOP project risks turning primeval landscapes into a wasteland of ecological destruction. Indigenous communities stand at the sheer drop, watching as their fertile lands, critical wildlife habitats, and generations of traditional life face potential annihilation by the relentless machinery of fossil fuel extraction.

It was this personal struggle at individual basis that prompted us to join the growing movement for climate justice in our community, working as a community based journalists- reporting and documenting the negative impacts of oil and gas activities on our community livelihoods and environment.

Thanks to our partners and link-minded organization that enabled us to travel to the Niger delta to share our experiences and also witness the suffering of the Niger delta communities from the negative impacts of oil and gas activities for the past 60 years. As to our return home, together with our community based journalists, we will continue to strengthen our community resilience against oil and gas activities and demand for a cleaner and greener renewable economy for our communities and the generations to come after us.



Some of the photos with our partners and like-minded organisations fighting for climate justice during and after the conference.

Such exchange learning experiences also help to appreciate the fact that our struggles are the same and we must work together, speak with one voice to demand for climate justice now! Why should we wait for hell to come to us yet we can stop it now! As community based journalists and observers, now we know very well that these challenges are fueled by a common thread: the pursuit of profit at the expense of people and the planet by multinational corporations, often backed by financial institutions and our corrupt government officials.

Challenges, Resistance and our demands.

Since we joined the struggle of fighting and demanding for the protection and promotion of our human and environmental rights, we have witnessed a number of challenges ranging from illegal arrests, intimidations and harassments from government security agencies all aiming at stopping us from doing our work of defending the rights of vulnerable communities and the environment. Additionally, the adamant reaction of the Global North leaders continuously discussing of policies that only support green washing other than taking action to pay up for the climate debt and ably finance the damages caused by the greedy multi-national oil companies and their partners in the fossil-fuel industry. However, our collaborations and partnership with like-minded organizations, has enabled us to continue doing our work amidst the closing and shrinking civic space and repression from our governments and oil companies. Our communities have demonstrated remarkable resilience and creativity in their resistance of the shared struggle for climate justice.



Photos from some of the non-violent actions organised in Port Harcourt Nigeria and Hoima city in Uganda

Our demands to global leaders, governments, and stakeholders are clear and non-negotiable: immediately cease all harassment of environmental and human rights defenders; enforce strict environmental protection laws with proper monitoring; provide fair compensation to displaced families including support for alternative livelihoods; protect indigenous rights and cultural heritage; establish a clear timeline for phasing out extraction activities while investing in community-owned renewable energy projects; ensure transparent governance with community participation in decision-making; and create direct climate financing mechanisms that benefit affected host communities. Our dreams for the future are not one of continued extraction and exploitation, but rather, of a sustainable equitable path forward - one that respects the rights and aspirations of the local communities. Communities continue to mobilize and organize community-led non-violent actions and evidence-based advocacy, calling on all stakeholders to stop oil and gas activities, and further increase funding and investments in just clean renewable alternatives for better sustainable livelihood support.

A Call to Action

Unshackle Africa: Demanding Reparations from Oil's Colonial Destruction.

As the conference drew to a close, we stood before the assembled delegates, our eyes burning with determination and inspiration "Our struggle is not just about the Niger Delta and the Albertine region," we declared. "It is about the future of our planet, the well-being of our children, and the fundamental right to live in a healthy, sustainable green environment. We call upon the world to stand with us and champion the vision of a just, green future that we all deserve."

The need for African countries to work together under all circumstances and demand for climate justice is paramount- to hold oil companies accountable and pay up for their damage caused to our mother land. As the global leaders participated in the COP29 in Baku, the global north should pay up for the climate debt it has brought to the African continent by considering climate financing through promotion of just clean energy alternatives. Despite of that fact, we as African countries, its high time to innovatively work together to bring this fossil fuel legacy to

a halt. It's time to change the narrative. As wise female writer once said, "For the master's tool will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change" It's high time we use our own tools to win this game.



EACOP oil project affected women and youth call for action

Some of the links from the exchange learning experience.
<https://rightsindvelopment.org/news/climate-change-niger-delta/>
<https://x.com/Eacophostcmt/status/1851550536601846169?t=jvnsdfrQQDqTNNjrNFOciQ&s=03>
<https://x.com/Eacophostcmt/status/1849140596276974039>

Get Involved

Your participation is crucial! Join our efforts to promote sustainable development, advocate for climate justice, and safeguard community rights. Whether it's attending a workshop, sharing your story, or joining a local initiative, your voice matters and the change we fight for begins with us.

About us.

EAST AFRICAN CRUDE OIL PIPELINE HOST COMMUNITIES (EACOP HC): is an association of EACOP affected communities based in the Albertine region of Uganda, EACOPHC is dedicated to promoting sustainable environmental use, human rights and land rights of vulnerable communities. The organization was formed in 2019 to promote and advocate for the protection of environment and human rights in areas affected by the proposed East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP)

EACOP HC works with oil project affected communities, youth, women, religious and local government leaders to ensure promotion of environmental justice and human rights in the EACOP oil project affected areas. Through lobby, research and community education, EACOP HC works with vulnerable communities, cultural, religious and local government leaders to ensure that natural resources are utilized in an environmentally conservation manner and land rights of vulnerable communities are protected.

Reach out to us with your questions, suggestions, or to contribute to our next newsletter. Together, we can create positive change and build a sustainable future for all.

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