



EAST AFRICAN **CRUDE OIL PIPELINE** **HOST COMMUNITIES**



CLIMATE JUSTICE & GENDER JUSTICE.

Our journey as EACOP affected women in
reflection of the 16 Days of Activism




Welcome to Our Inaugural Newsletter

Dear Readers,

We are thrilled to launch our inaugural newsletter at a pivotal moment in our collective journey—during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence as climate justice advocates and women environmental human rights defenders in the Albertine region. This is no coincidence. As women and girls fighting against destructive fossil fuel projects like the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), we recognize that our struggle is inseparable from the fight for gender justice, climate justice and human rights.

Understanding the 16 Days of Activism: Our Context

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign that runs annually from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to December 10 (Human Rights Day). <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/unite/themes>



This campaign serves as a critical platform for activists worldwide to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls. For us, women environmental human rights defenders (WEHRDs) in the Albertine region fighting against the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), these 16 days hold profound significance—they represent a moment to make visible the violence we face simply for defending our land, water, and communities.

This year's theme—"End Digital Violence Against All Women and Girls"—resonates with urgent clarity in our lived reality. Women defenders challenging EACOP face harassment and threats not only in physical spaces but increasingly through digital platforms. Mobile phones have become conduits of intimidation to the women in the environmental and climate justice space. Women defenders in the Albertine region receive threatening calls and messages warning them to stop their activism. Anonymous numbers deliver warnings in the middle of the night. Our lived concerns are information viewed as a threat by oil corporations, government agencies and security bodies, exposing us to further harassment. Social media campaigns spread false narratives about women defenders, painting us as obstacles to development or foreign agents, deliberately undermining our credibility and silencing our voices.



What is digital violence! – the use of technology of any form to harass, threaten, stalk, and silence individuals. When a woman environmental defender receives a threatening text message after speaking at a community engagement about an issue like water contamination, displacement or unfair compensation being caused by the EACOP project in our communities, that is digital violence.

When our images as —Kijumba, Kikuube, Hoima, Buliisa women gathering community engagements to defend our livelihoods and demand for accountability from oil companies—are manipulated and shared online to discredit our work, that is digital violence.

When surveillance technology tracks trail our movements and communications, creating a climate of fear, that is digital violence. These attacks are designed to push us out of public spaces, to make us afraid to speak, to isolate us from our communities and fellow defenders.

But digital violence is only one facet of the multidimensional violence that women and girls in the Albertine region endure. Through this newsletter, we expand the conversation beyond digital threats to illuminate the full spectrum of gender-based violence that intersects with environmental destruction and fossil fuel extraction. We document how land displacement becomes economic violence against women. We expose how the influx of oil workers catalyses sexual exploitation and assault. We analyse how excluding women from decision-making spaces is itself a form of structural violence that perpetuates our vulnerability.

Thus, this newsletter is born from that recognition. It becomes our tool for resistance—a space where we name all forms of violence that women and girls face in EACOP-affected communities, where we connect these experiences to global patterns of extractive violence, and where we build solidarity powerful enough to transform our reality.

THE INSEPARABLE STRUGGLE: WHERE CLIMATE MEETS GENDER JUSTICE

For years, we've witnessed how the climate crisis disproportionately impacts women and girls—from displacement due to extreme weather to increased violence in climate-stressed communities. Violence against women and girls affects one in three women, and climate disasters often exacerbate this crisis. Women environmental defenders face threats both online and offline as they protect their communities and territories.

During these 16 Days, we recognize that our activism must address the intersections: when we advocate for climate action, we advocate for those most vulnerable. When we demand climate justice, we demand an end to all forms of violence that silence, harm, and exclude women and girls from decision-making spaces.



The Systematic Erasure of Women's Economic Power.

Land displacement has stripped women of their primary means of survival.

Thousands of hectares of fertile agricultural land—land that women farmed for generations—have been seized for pipeline infrastructure, oil wells, and access roads. When families receive compensation—in spite it being unfair—it is overwhelmingly paid to male heads of households, even when women are the primary cultivators. Women watch their farms disappear beneath machinery and crude oil, their economic independence vanishing with the soil.

Water contamination has multiplied women's labor and endangered their children.

Oil exploration and pipeline construction have polluted rivers, streams, and wetlands that communities depend upon. Women, who bear primary responsibility for water collection in 72% of Albertine households, now walk three to five times further to find clean water—distances that transform a daily task into an exhausting ordeal that consumes hours they once spent farming, caring for children, or engaging in income-generating activities. Contaminated water sources mean higher rates of waterborne diseases, and it is women and girls who provide the care when children fall sick.

The destruction of wetlands has eliminated traditional safety nets.

Women in the Albertine have historically relied on wetland resources—papyrus for craft-making, fish, medicinal plants, as supplementary income sources and food security buffers during agricultural lean seasons. EACOP's infrastructure has drained, polluted, and destroyed vast wetland ecosystems, cutting off these vital lifelines and pushing women deeper into poverty and dependence.

Violence That Follows the Pipeline.

The influx of oil workers and the disruption of community structures have triggered a documented surge in gender-based violence that the project developers have failed to adequately address. Sexual exploitation and transactional sex have exploded in oil-affected communities. The sudden influx of predominantly male workers with disposable income into impoverished communities has created conditions ripe for exploitation. Young girls are increasingly engaging in transactional sex with oil workers to survive economically increasing school drop-out rates, while reports of sexual harassment and assault in and around project sites have multiplied. The temporary nature of oil jobs means men move on, leaving behind pregnant girls, single mothers, and shattered families.

Domestic violence has intensified as male unemployment and household stress escalate.

When land is taken and livelihoods destroyed, men who once provided for their families face unemployment and emasculation. Studies across extractive zones confirm the pattern we see in the Albertine: economic stress triggered by oil projects correlates with increased intimate partner violence. Women bear the brunt of male frustration and the collapse of traditional economic structures.

Women environmental defenders face targeted intimidation and violence.

The women of the Albertine who dare to speak against EACOP—who organize their communities, document abuses, and demand accountability—face arrests, surveillance, online harassment, and physical threats. This is violence designed specifically to silence women's leadership and exclude them from decisions about their own territories yet they are the core foundation of community resilience and empowerment.

Captivity of patriarchal cultural Norms towards women EHRDs.

Beyond the direct violence inflicted by EACOP operations, women in the Albertine region face deeply entrenched patriarchal cultural norms that compound their vulnerability and constrain their resistance. Cultural traditions dictate that women should not speak in public forums on land and resource matters—norms that were weaponized during EACOP consultations where women are excluded, silenced, or dismissed as emotional. Customary law prevents women from owning land in their own names, meaning compensation was paid to male titleholders even when women were primary cultivators, leaving widows and divorced women with no legal claims to land they farmed for decades.



Systematic structural-social pressure on women EHRDs.

Women defenders also face intense pressure around "respectability"—those who speak out publicly are accused of being bad mothers, sexually promiscuous, or culturally inauthentic, accusations deliberately and manipulatively used by oil companies and officials to discredit their activism. This structural exclusion has devastating consequences: protection policies fail to address gender-specific risks, compensation structures replicate patriarchal ownership patterns, resistance movements lose crucial women's expertise, girls learn that women's voices don't matter in shaping their futures, and climate solutions remain incomplete without women's participation and knowledge.


This is why Climate Justice IS Gender Justice thus the convergence of struggles

Those who claim climate action and gender equality are separate issues have never stood in the Albertine or in the Niger Delta and watched a mother dig in poisoned soil, hoping to feed her children. They have never witnessed a girl abandon school because her family's land compensation went to her father's new wife. They have never heard the stories of women who resist the pipeline and face retribution for their courage. This is why we stress it out in this edition that climate injustice reflects gender injustice, thus this is why these struggles can not be separated:



1. Women and girls are disproportionately harmed by both climate breakdown and fossil fuel extraction.

Globally, women represent 80% of people displaced by climate disasters. In the Albertine, women bear the triple burden of climate vulnerability, oil project impacts, and systemic gender discrimination. When droughts intensify due to climate change, it is women who face food insecurity first.



When EACOP destroys water sources, it is women who walk further. When extreme weather meets oil pollution, it is women who nurse the sick. The climate crisis and fossil fuel violence converge in women's bodies and daily lives.

2. Excluding women from climate solutions perpetuates both injustices.

Research demonstrates that climate projects with meaningful women's participation are more effective, equitable, and sustainable. Yet women in EACOP-affected communities were systematically excluded from consultations about a project that would transform their lives from the very start. When women cannot participate in decisions about energy futures, land use, and resource management, this reproduces the same patriarchal structures that enable both gender-based violence and environmental destruction.

3. Women's knowledge and leadership are essential to climate solutions.

The women of the Albertine possess generations of ecological knowledge—they understand soil regeneration, water conservation, biodiversity protection, medicinal and sustainable agriculture. They are already leading renewable energy cooperatives, reforestation efforts, and climate adaptation strategies in our communities. Silencing women defenders and destroying women's livelihoods doesn't just harm individual women—it eliminates the very expertise we need to build climate-resilient, fossil-free futures.

Thus, both struggles demand the dismantling of extractive systems. The same mindset that views women as property to be controlled views the Earth as a resource to be exploited. The same systems that concentrate power in male hands concentrate wealth in fossil fuel corporations. The same violence that silences women defenders protect oil company profits.

We cannot dismantle one without dismantling the other. Climate justice requires confronting patriarchy. Gender justice requires ending fossil fuel extraction. They are the same fight.

THE PATH FORWARD: RESISTANCE AS SURVIVAL, SOLIDARITY AS A STRATEGY

The oil companies and government officials want us to believe that EACOP brings progress, that we must sacrifice our land and livelihoods for national development, that women's concerns are secondary to economic growth. We reject these lies with every fibre of our being. The women of the Albertine are not waiting for permission to lead. They are organizing cooperatives, documenting abuses, protecting wetlands, teaching sustainable agriculture, and building the fossil-free future that governments refuse to imagine. They are demonstrating that resistance to EACOP is not obstruction—it is survival. It is the defence of life itself.

Our newsletter exists to amplify their voices, to connect their struggles to the global movement for climate and gender justice, and to build the solidarity necessary to stop EACOP and transform the systems that enabled it. **Because when women and girls can thrive, communities thrive. When communities can protect their territories, the planet can breathe. And when we connect these struggles across borders and identities, we become unstoppable.**

As we reflect on COP30's mixed outcomes and the ongoing crisis of gender-based violence, we're reminded that transformation doesn't happen in conference halls alone—it happens through sustained, grassroots activism. It happens when we refuse to accept inadequate progress. It happens when we link our struggles and build movements powerful enough to demand the world we deserve. The pipeline may be built on violence, but our resistance is built on justice. And justice, ultimately, is more powerful than oil.

Stand with us. Speak out. Act now.

Together, we will build a world where both people and planet can thrive—free from violence, free from exploitation, and grounded in justice. Join the conversation: [#16DaysOfActivism](#) [#ACTtoEndViolence](#) [#ClimateJustice](#) [#GenderJustice](#)

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