



EAST AFRICAN  
CRUDE OIL PIPELINE  
HOST COMMUNITIES

East African Crude Oil Pipeline Host Communities  
**NEWSLETTER**

**OCTOBER 2024**

**Beneath the surface; Environmental  
Costs of Oil and Gas Explorations.**



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## Beneath the surface; Environmental Costs of the Oil curse on the Albertine Graben.

Welcome to our inaugural newsletter, in this month's edition, we bring to you issues and scenes happening behind the closed doors of the Albertine Graben and oil host communities. We bring to your attention the environmental and social toll of the oil and gas extraction activities taking place in the Murchison Falls National Park in the Albertine Graben today. Since the discovery of oil in the Albertine, the activities that come along with these developments are notorious for their detrimental impacts on the environmental conservation efforts. In the context of the Tilenga oil project, the ramifications are manifold. The construction of oil rigs, oil wells, pads, and extensive pipeline networks have disrupted

the fragile ecosystems within the park. This ambitious endeavor, championed by Total Energies with support of profit thirsty insurers, raises serious concerns about potential ecological harm, especially to the rich biodiversity found within and around the stunning Murchison Falls National Park. This UNESCO World Heritage site is home to a remarkable array of wildlife, being the first gazetted game reserve in 1926, the oldest, most visited and largest conservation area which lies at the northern end of the Albertine rift valley where the sweeping Bunyoro escarpment tumbles into vast palm dotted savanna which has been particularly affected by these oil and gas projects.



## The Elephant crisis; Oil and Gas Incursions threaten Biodiversity

The grave impact of the ongoing oil and gas activities by Total energies in the Murchison fall national park. Currently Total energies is developing 420 oil wells, 31 oil pads, a number of flow lines, feeder pipelines, access roads and a huge oil rig running 24/7 inside the

Murchison. These activities have caused immense –untold impact on the habitats of these wildlife and also caused significant irritation and tremor to these animals forcing them to flee out of the park and start invading the host communities.



Since 2017, when Total energies commenced on its activities in the park, there has been nothing but disaster. Murchison Falls National Park stands as a breathtaking sanctuary, teeming with diverse wildlife and serving as a vital bridge that connects the natural world with the lives and stories of local communities. The ongoing invasion of elephants and buffalos into local communities has escalated dramatically, prompting urgent concerns about human-wildlife conflict. As oil activities encroach on wildlife habitats, elephants are increasingly forced to venture into

agricultural lands which has resulted in to food insecurity in the area, multiple deaths of people due to wildlife attacks and killings, high levels of school dropouts among others this invasion poses a significant threat to human safety within the park host communities.

For instance, on March 7, 2022, Abdul Emmanuel a Primary five student aged 15 years was killed by the elephants. As well as the following community members from Murchison fallsnational park host communities were attacked and lost their lives by elephants

- On February 16, 2022, Amumpaire Benon of 19 years old was killed by the elephants
- On March 25 th 2022, Katulinde Bridget of 23 years old, was also killed by the elephants
- On June 20, 2023, Beropamungo Janet of 45 years was killed by the elephants
- On December 12, 2023, Ungiera Mogo of 61 years lost his life by the elephants



Additionally, a number of farmlands and gardens have been destroyed by the elephant and buffalo invasion in the villages. This has made it very difficult for communities to get a viable source of livelihoods to sustain their families. The host communities are living this revelation all thanks to the oil curse that is full of nothing but grief. Murchison Falls National Park is not just a sanctuary for wildlife; it is a crucial component of Uganda's ecological balance. The implications of such environmental degradation extend beyond the park itself, affecting the broader ecological network that sustains both wildlife and human populations.

## Community Resilience: Defending Murchison Falls Against Total's Invasion

In response, communities have been mobilizing, organizing and engaging in non-violent actions challenging the oil developments by the greedy multinational oil companies and demanding recognition and support for their plight. They have also written a number of petitions calling on Total energies, the government of Uganda on the urgent need to stop these violations. However, both oil companies and the government have decided to give the host communities a deaf ear, the promises of oil companies to address these conflicts often fall short, leaving local communities feeling neglected and marginalized. The responsible parties still continue to deny and take responsibility of the invasions of wildlife. The most unfortunate thing is that these communities are being intimidated, harassed and others being illegally arrested as a way of stopping them from fighting for their rights.



## Community Demands, Neglected Voices and Divestment from Fossil Fuels

The demands of oil host communities are crystal clear: they seek better compensation mechanisms for the damages caused by Totalenergies, halt of oil activities in the park, improved safety measures, and a commitment to green sustainable development practices. However, these calls are frequently overlooked in favor of corporate interests. The neglect of community needs exacerbates worry and tensions, but further fuels resistance and resilience against the oil extraction activities that disrupt their way of life.

In light of these pressing issues, it is imperative that financial institutions and governments reconsider their support for the fossil fuel industry, particularly in sensitive areas like Murchison Falls National Park. Rather than investing in oil activities that threaten biodiversity and community welfare, stakeholders should prioritize sustainable tourism and environmentally friendly initiatives. By shifting focus towards preserving Uganda's natural treasures, we can safeguard wildlife, protect ecosystems, and support local economies without compromising the integrity of our environment and the existing cohabitation and peace that has always been there before these oil and gas extraction practices started out. Together, we can demand for a future that prioritizes green sustainable economy, ensuring that Uganda's rich biodiversity and the livelihoods of its people are not sacrificed at the altar of oil profit.

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## 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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