

26th August 2024

Memorandum of Demands

To:

- East African Crude Oil Pipeline Co. Ltd,
- TotalEnergies
- The Chinese Ambassador to Uganda
- The Chinese National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC)
- The Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda

From:

- Oil Project-Affected Communities in the Albertine Region of Uganda

Subject:

Urgent Appeal against the Continued Violations of Human and Environmental Rights by the EACOP Project, for an End to EACOP and Justice for all Impacted Persons

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Introduction

We, representatives of communities affected by the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project, urgently bring to your attention the grave concerns and grievances resulting from the ongoing activities of the EACOP project. This memorandum outlines the numerous human and environmental rights violations inflicted upon our communities and the threats posed by EACOP to Uganda's sustainable development prospects. We call on TotalEnergies, the Chinese government, CNOOC, and the Ugandan Parliament to halt all activities related to EACOP, to adequately and meaningfully address our concerns and to prioritise development projects which will meaningfully uplift our communities and ensure access to energy, healthcare, education, housing and adequate nutrition.

Grievances and Concerns of the Affected Communities

1. Human Rights Violations

- ***Intimidation and Harassment:*** Many of us, across impacted communities, have been subjected to intimidation and harassment, including judicial threats and retaliation, to force acceptance of unfair and/or inadequate compensation for our land and properties. The pressure to agree to these terms without proper legal and community consultations has left many vulnerable and in precarious socio-economic standing without adequate opportunities for recourse.

- **Arrests of Environmental and Human Rights Defenders:** Grassroots activists who are standing up for our rights have faced continuous arbitrary arrests and threats. These actions undermine our right to peaceful protest and freedom of expression and have left many impacted communities feeling unable to voice our grievances and seek justice for the trauma and hardship we have been made to endure.
- **Displacement and Evictions:** We have witnessed and experienced the ongoing displacement and evictions of families without adequate compensation or adherence to international best practices. This includes the ongoing demolition and destruction of homes without following proper processes for the relocation of impacted communities. These displacements have destroyed our livelihoods and have destabilised our communities while threatening our futures and socio-economic security.
- **Gender-Based Violence and HIV:** The influx of workers from the oil companies has led to an increase in gender-based violence and a rise in HIV cases within our communities, exacerbating existing social issues. In the Kingfisher region, the deployment of military personnel to protect the Chinese National Offshore Oil Corporation's (CNOOC) and TotalEnergies' drilling activities has also resulted in numerous abuses of instances of sexual abuse and violence against women.

2. Threats to Uganda's Local Economies

- **Disruption of Local Economies:** The EACOP project has already disrupted, and threatens to continue undermining, Uganda's diverse local economies, particularly in agriculture, tourism and fishing. By prioritising profits for multinational corporations, the project deprives local communities of our economic autonomy and our ability to sustain ourselves. Already many impacted community members have been unable to continue cultivating crops due to land loss and relocation to infertile lands. Likewise, communities along Lake Albert are routinely denied access to fishing waters.
- **Inadequate Livelihood Restoration:** The livelihood restoration initiatives implemented by the project are irrelevant, ineffective and incompatible with our local context. The provision of non-native seeds and inorganic fertilisers has further degraded our farmlands, leading to food insecurity and loss of income.
- **Economic Inequality:** The EACOP project will generate profits for a few elites, while the majority of Ugandans bear the brunt of environmental degradation and economic displacement. This model of development is inherently extractive, exploitative and unsustainable.

3. Environmental and Biodiversity Impacts

- **Destruction of Biodiversity:** EACOP and its associated Tilenga and Kingfisher projects pose major threats to some of Uganda's most critical ecosystems, including in the Murchison Falls National Park. The disruption of these ecosystems

threatens wildlife and biodiversity, with long-term consequences for our environment and green economy initiatives.

- **Climate Change:** The EACOP project is expected to emit an estimated 375 million metric tonnes of carbon over its 25-year lifespan, significantly contributing to global climate change. This contradicts any commitments to sustainable development and international climate agreements and will exacerbate the harsh conditions that ordinary people in Uganda, and across the world, will endure as a result of climate change.
- **Human-Wildlife Conflict:** The oil activities have fueled significant increases in human-wildlife conflicts, particularly in the Buliisa and Nwoya districts. This has led to the loss of lives, destruction of crops, and further exacerbated tensions between communities and wildlife.

4. Cultural and Social Impacts

- **Desecration of Cultural Sites:** The EACOP project has uprooted graves and destroyed culturally significant sites without proper consultations or respect for our traditions. This has caused deep emotional and psychological distress within our communities. These issues have been compounded by relocation to housing units and lands that are culturally inappropriate and which separate family structures and lifestyles.
- **Social Disruption:** The presence of oil company workers has led to increased early pregnancies, school dropouts, and the erosion of social structures in many of our communities. Our communities are being torn apart by the social upheaval caused by this project including due to the loss of livelihood and displacement of people.

Demands:

Given the severe and wide-ranging impacts of the EACOP project, we demand the following immediate actions:

1. Immediate Suspension of EACOP Activities

- Halt all activities related to the EACOP project and conduct transparent consultations with affected communities in order to ensure that our grievances are properly understood and meaningfully addressed.

2. Protection of Human Rights

- **End the Harassment and Intimidation:** Cease all forms of intimidation and harassment against project-affected persons (PAPs) and ensure that communities are able to express our grievances and have them meaningfully acknowledged and addressed while ensuring our safety in line with Ugandan laws and international best practices.

- **Hands Off Environmental Defenders:** Immediately stop the illegal arrests and harassment of grassroots environmental and human rights defenders who are advocating for our communities.

3. Environmental and Economic Justice

- **Protection of National Parks and Biodiversity:** Stop all oil activities in national parks and protected areas, and ensure that biodiversity is preserved for future generations.
- **Livelihood Restoration:** Implement livelihood restoration programs that are contextually relevant, sustainable, and developed in consultation with local communities. This includes providing native seeds, appropriate livestock, and other resources that align with our cultural and environmental needs.

4. Accountability and Reparations

- **Reparations from TotalEnergies:** We demand that TotalEnergies pay reparations for the damage already caused to our communities, including environmental degradation, loss of livelihoods, and cultural destruction. This should account for the true value of our losses, including land, homes, livelihoods and psychological wellbeing.
- **Withdrawal of Chinese Support:** We call on the Chinese government and its state-owned financial and insurance entities to immediately withdraw their support for the EACOP project. China's involvement in this project contradicts the principles of South-South cooperation and undermines the development of truly sustainable and equitable partnerships.
- **Protection of Environmental Defenders:** Demand that both the Chinese and French governments publicly condemn the ongoing violence against land, human rights, and environmental defenders in Uganda and ensure their protection.

5. Sustainable Development Alternatives

- **Invest in Renewable Energy:** We urge the Ugandan government to stop the EACOP project and its associated Kingfisher and Tilenga oil drilling projects. Instead, focus on ensuring energy access and economic opportunities through investments into decentralised, community-led renewable energy systems that are sustainable, inclusive, and aligned with the needs and aspirations of Ugandan communities.
- **Genuine South-South Development Partnerships:** We call on the Chinese government to engage in development partnerships that challenge Western imperialism and contribute to meaningful development in the Global South. These partnerships should prioritise access to substantive freedoms such as education, healthcare, housing, employment, and adequate nutrition for all.

Conclusion

The EACOP project represents a significant threat to the people, environment, and future of Uganda. The grievances outlined in this memorandum are not just concerns of the affected

communities but are indicative of broader systemic issues related to the exploitation of natural resources in the Global South. We stand united in our demand for justice, accountability, and sustainable development. We urge TotalEnergies, the Chinese Government, and the Ugandan Parliament to act decisively in response to our demands and to prioritise the well-being of the people and the environment over corporate profits.

Signed,

Representatives of EACOP Project-Affected Communities in the Albertine Region of Uganda