



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kampala

### **CLARIFICATION ON MINISTRY OF ENERGY ALLEGATIONS: AFIEGO DID NOT STOP REFINERY PEOPLE FROM PARTICIPATING IN RESETTLEMENT'S COMMISSIONING** **Government failures did**

Reference is made to an August 9, 2017 press statement in which the Ministry of Energy made unfounded allegations against Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO), a public policy research and advocacy NGO dedicated to influencing energy policies to benefit the poor and vulnerable. AFIEGO would like to set the record straight through clarification on these untrue allegations.

The press statement, which was in reaction to an August 8, 2017 [press release](#) by AFIEGO and the refinery PAPs, alleges that AFIEGO is leading a crusade against the resettlement of the PAPs. The statement also alleges that AFIEGO was “refusing” the PAPs to participate in a commissioning exercise of 46 houses for the refinery PAPs by government. The commissioning exercise took place on August 10, 2017 in Kyakaboga, Hoima and was officiated at by Hon. Simon D’Ujanga, the Minister of State for Energy.

AFIEGO would like to state that we did not “refuse” the refinery PAPs from participating in the commissioning of the resettlement. In an August 8, 2017 meeting held at Nyahaira P/S, Hoima district between the Ministry of Energy and the refinery PAPs, the PAPs, at their own accord, resolved to boycott the commissioning of the resettlement in which only 46 houses have been built for over 80 families, contrary to the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) report for the refinery project in which government had committed to build houses for each of the affected households on land bought by government on a case by case basis.

Since 2012 when government put a cut-off date on the refinery land stopping the refinery-affected people from using their land to grow perennial crops, build houses and others, AFIEGO has worked and supported the affected people to engage government at all levels including engaging parliament, Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC), the Inspectorate of Government, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, Ministry of Lands, Hoima local government, all MPs from Bunyoro sub-region, Bunyoro Kingdom, religious leaders and others, all in an effort to stop injustice. Further, in March 2014, we supported the refinery-affected people to file a case in

the high court of Uganda for redress but three years down the road, the refinery-affected people are yet to get justice. We therefore call upon government to appreciate that AFIEGO's aforementioned press release that was issued on August 8, 2017 in partnership with the leaders of the refinery-affected people was a continuation of our efforts to fight injustice and human rights abuses by some government officials against citizens. We are committed to ensure that every citizen across the country including the refinery-affected people live in an environment of equity, social justice and respect for human rights.

Instead of blaming the boycott of the commissioning exercise on AFIEGO, the government officials who have been managing the refinery land acquisition and resettlement processes should immediately apologize to the nation for the suffering they have caused to the refinery-affected people, especially the 93 households who on the basis of government promises in the 2012 RAP report for the refinery project opted for relocation. Over five years of waiting for compensation have seen many PAPs' families break down, children miss education due to collapsing of schools in the area, collapsing of health services and increased poverty amidst isolation.

The government officials who are threatening AFIEGO are the same people who defaulted on government's promises to provide the following to each of the households which opted for relocation: (i) Never to put the affected people in a special settlement but buy land for each household on a case by case basis; (ii) Provide land titles for each household to be relocated; (iii) Build a house for each of the affected households and; (iv) Provide electricity, water, roads and other basic needs to the affected people. Due to the broken promises, some of the people who had opted for relocation have since then demanded and changed to cash compensation after five years of waiting.

In addition, after five years of waiting, only 46 of the 93 households which opted for relocation will receive houses from government. Remember, while the people who opted for cash were given a 30 percent disturbance allowance on the total value of their property, the households which opted for relocation did not get the amount contrary to the law. The PAPs had hoped that the disturbance allowance would be used by government to build them houses but after five years of waiting, some will neither get the houses nor the money/disturbance allowance. We believe that this is corruption, incompetence and injustice against the refinery-affected people by some government officials who want to cover up such injustice through threats to NGOs that are defending the downtrodden.

In addition, government has set up resettlement area that is not only culturally inappropriate for rural extended households who live close to their animals and gardens but it is threatening NGOs fighting injustices too. The government officials who are threatening AFIEGO should come out and tell the nation how they expect over 70 households on plots of 50 X 100 to live in one place with their goats, sheep, cows, hens, gardens, stores, cultivate and engage in other agricultural necessities.

Moreover, after five years of waiting, the affected people are being told by government that the promised land titles, water, electricity, good feeder roads, community center, commercial centre and others will be installed in the near future. The government that has delayed the relocation of

the refinery-affected people and is responsible for their suffering and several injustices is the same one that wants to amend Article 26 of the Constitution to make legal this kind of injustice against the poor, women, children and other vulnerable groups.

For some government officials to allege that the refinery PAPs boycotted the commissioning of the resettlement because AFIEGO made them to is therefore a sign that the government officials in charge of the refinery land acquisition and resettlement process do not appreciate the suffering they have caused to the PAPs. They think that the PAPs do not understand the failures of government.

The Ministry of Energy also alleged that AFIEGO “forcefully” moved the refinery PAPs to Kyakaboga to construct houses for the families that are not getting any, yet the houses were built by the PAPs after a meeting and consensus with the UHRC and Ministry of Energy officials. Unfortunately, those grass thatched houses were later burnt and despite police presence in the area, no arrests have been made to date. Where does government want the PAPs who will not get houses to go? Why doesn’t government give them their disturbance allowance of 30 percent and they use it to build houses? This is the injustice AFIEGO is fighting and we hope that government and all those who respect human rights, especially the rights of women, children, elderly and others will continue to support our work.

It is the broken promises, six years of waiting, poverty, broken families, lack of education for children, broken health services and other injustices that made the PAPs boycott the commissioning of the resettlement. They did not see reason to celebrate and participate in an exercise in which government had defaulted on her own promises. And yes, like other land acquisitions, government may be proud to force affected people to accept and live with injustice but mistrust and suspicion will remain. Yet, no country can achieve equitable developed amidst citizen deprivation.

AFIEGO reiterates her commitment to continue working with the government and other stakeholders to ensure that government officials who cause injustice against citizens are punished. We call upon the Chief Justice of Ugandan to ensure that the High Court hears and determines the 2014 refinery-affected people’s case with the speed it deserves. Remember, justice delayed is justice denied. We also call upon government to investigate the actions and failures of the responsible officials, arrest and prosecute them for the suffering they have caused to the refinery-affected people; the officials’ actions are in violation of the Constitution.

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**ENDS**

**For more information, contact:**

**Ms. Diana Nabiruma**

**Senior Communications Officer, AFIEGO**

**[dnabiruma@afiego.org](mailto:dnabiruma@afiego.org) or +256 782 280073**

