



October 2, 2024

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MASAKA & KAMPALA**

**EACOP PROJECT AFFECTED PERSONS (PAPS) DISAPPOINTED BY HIGH COURT
RULING**

The Masaka High Court yesterday (October 1, 2024) issued a ruling against the 80 Project Affected Persons (PAPs) with interests in 41 parcels of land affected by the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP). The people are from Lwengo, Kyotera, and Rakai districts in the Greater Masaka sub-region.

The ruling came after the Government of Uganda (GoU), through the Attorney General, filed a case against the affected people on August 20, 2024.

The ruling, which was delivered by Justice Lawrence Tweyanze, allows the GoU to deposit the affected persons' compensation in court.

Court also granted the following orders requested by the GoU:

- Vacant possession of the affected people's land so that it may be used for the EACOP project activities.
- Eviction and demolition orders against the affected people.
- Being discharged from any liabilities arising out of any claim and/or order arising out of the orders being sought by government.

However, court declined to provide for costs of the case to be paid by the affected 80 land owners or estate administrators or estate beneficiaries as was requested by the government.

Mr. Cosmas Yiga, one of the affected people from Kyotera district said after hearing the court ruling, "Losing this court case is heartbreaking but I will not give up fighting for what is right. As PAPs [project-affected persons], we are suffering deeply. Even those who received compensation are struggling. People's crops were destroyed and families are left desperate. We deserve better and I will keep standing for justice."

Mr. Dickens Kamugisha, the CEO of Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO), remarked, “We are disappointed with this ruling; however, our resolve to fight for justice remains unwavering and we invite citizens to join us in this fight. Today, these poor families have been affected by a ruling that indirectly amends Article 26 of the 1995 Uganda Constitution. Tomorrow, other citizens could be affected. Citizens should defend their rights by using legal means to hold the judiciary accountable, while making it more pro-people.”

He added that consultations would be undertaken with the affected people and this will inform the next course of action.

AFIEGO supported a team of lawyers who extended support to some of the affected people.

Counsel Peter Arinaitwe, one of the lawyers that represented the affected people, stated, “We will continue to support our clients in seeking fair compensation through all available legal avenues. Should the affected people choose to appeal the ruling, we will support them.”

Mr. Yisito Kayinga Muddu, the coordinator of Community Transformation Network (COTFONE), said, “We are deeply disappointed by the Masaka High Court's ruling against the PAPs impacted by the EACOP. Despite the setback, we stand in solidarity with the PAPs and commend their resilience. We urge the government to engage in meaningful dialogue and ensure equitable treatment. This ruling strengthens our resolve to continue advocating for marginalised communities and prioritising their welfare in development.”

COTFONE works with EACOP-affected people to defend their rights.

The affected communities are calling for action from various stakeholders. They are urging:

- **The Ugandan government to uphold its constitutional obligation** to provide fair and adequate compensation as outlined in Article 26 of the Constitution. They demand a review of the compensation processes to ensure that vulnerable communities are not further marginalised.
- **The judiciary to engage in self-reflection, reform and become more pro-people** while avoiding being used to abuse citizens’ rights.
- **Security forces including the Uganda Police to avoid being used** by the GoU and corporations to intimidate citizens. During a case hearing that took place on September 12, 2024, the Masaka High Court was heavily guarded by the Uganda Police, with admittance to the court being only given after police clearance. This was unusual.
- **Ugandans and all people of goodwill to provide solidarity** and support to the affected people as they seek justice.

ABOUT THE EACOP

The EACOP is a planned 1,443km pipeline that is to be constructed from Western Uganda to the port of Tanga in Tanzania. The pipeline is expected to transport crude oil from the Tilenga and Kingfisher oil fields in Uganda to export markets.

The EACOP is owned by TotalEnergies E&P, which holds a 62% stake, while the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) owns 8%. The Ugandan and Tanzanian governments own 15% shares each.

TotalEnergies has been responsible for overseeing the acquisition of 2,470 acres of land from approximately 3,660 households in Uganda with an estimated population of 24,770 people.

For further information, contact:

Ms. Diana Nabiruma,
Senior Communications Officer, AFIEGO
dnabiruma@afiego.org

OR

Head of Communications,
COTFONE: communication.cotfone@gmail.com