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Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) will today receive the Right Livelihood Award (RLA) at a ceremony that will be held in Stockholm, Sweden.

The award is given by the Right Livelihood to changemakers that are making a difference in society. Established in 1980, the award “honours and supports courageous people and organisations solving global problems”.

AFIEGO is being awarded due to the organisation's work of promoting climate justice and empowering communities to defend their rights amidst oil and other related activities in Uganda.

AFIEGO has worked with oil-affected and other host communities to defend their rights since 2006. Such communities include the oil refinery-affected one with over 7,000 people including over 3,500 women and 1,500 children.

The community was displaced by the Ugandan government from 13 villages starting in 2012. AFIEGO supported the community to defend its land, education, water, food and other rights.

Others communities that AFIEGO has empowered to defend their rights include communities affected by the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), Tilenga, and Kingfisher oil projects in Uganda.

These projects have affected tens of thousands of people and led to violations of their rights. They are also located in critical biodiversity areas and are a risk to our climate. AFIEGO works to address these challenges.

The chairperson of AFIEGO's Board says, “Every year, AFIEGO makes a real difference in the lives of oil-impacted families through influencing policies, empowering communities to resist injustices and demanding for accountability. We are therefore happy that AFIEGO is being recognised.”

He adds, “The award should energise AFIEGO to do more and create change, especially for the most vulnerable.”

Mr. Dickens Kamugisha, AFIEGO's CEO, notes, “Today's award to AFIEGO should inspire everyone, however small they may feel. AFIEGO is a small organisation that

empowers people to stand up to giants, to multinationals. Our work can often feel thankless, and we are villainised by the powerful people that we support communities to stand up to.

However, every year, we choose to withstand the pressure to defend vulnerable people, nature and the planet. Several other Ugandans and global citizens do the same. We hope that they will be inspired by our award to continue making a difference."

Ms. Caroline Ariba, an AFIEGO programme staff, says, "The award that AFIEGO is receiving isn't for the organisation and its staff only. It is for the communities that AFIEGO works with, AFIEGO's national and international partners as well as the families of AFIEGO staff. AFIEGO would not do the work that they do without the above people."

Mr. Kamugisha concludes, "As we celebrate AFIEGO today, we remain mindful of the various challenges that AFIEGO staff and other civil society organisations, especially those working in the extractives and accountability sectors in Uganda, face. We hope that these challenges, such as a repressed civic space, will be addressed by the Ugandan government and other stakeholders."

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