

The ENERGIZER

AFIEGO's Monthly Newsletter



September 2020; Issue 9

**THEME: SECRET EACOP AGREEMENTS AND THE GIVEAWAY OF BUGOMA FOREST:
A DARK FUTURE FOR UGANDA AMIDST OIL**



The president of Uganda, H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, Mr. Patrick Pouyanne, the CEO of Total, and Ugandan government in addition to Total officials at the signing ceremony for the EACOP Host Government Agreement (HGA) this month.
Photo: Courtesy



Some of the arrested Save Bugoma Forest Campaign members who were detained at Hoima district police station this month.

In this newsletter:

- Left in the dark: Government violates EITI spirit in EACOP Host Government Agreement processes
- Court case to stop Hoima Sugar's destruction of Bugoma forest set to be heard
- Save Bugoma Forest Campaigners set to report to police
- Pictorial of our activities
- Lobbying
- In the media
- Upcoming events

Space House, Buwate P.O. Box 34913, Kampala;
Tel: +256 393228323
Email: afiego@afiego.org
Website: www.afiego.org



This month, on September 11, 2020, government and Total signed the Host Government Agreement (HGA) for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project. Thereafter, on September 13, 2020, the governments of Uganda and Tanzania signed an HGA for the same project.

The signings were lauded as a major milestone that bring Uganda closer to producing crude oil and to economic benefits. But, do they?

Prior to signing of the HGAs, Uganda had been admitted into the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in August 2020. The EITI promotes transparent and accountable management of oil and gas in addition to mineral resources in member states.

Transparency is underscored because of the belief that without access to information, citizens cannot effectively participate in the management of resources and cannot hold governments accountable to enable citizens to benefit from oil, gas and mineral resources.

When the Ugandan government signed the HGAs, they stopped at informing citizens about the signings. Disclosure of the contents of the HGAs as regards the obligations, costs, risks and others to be borne by Ugandans as regards the EACOP project were not shared. Ugandans were only informed that the agreements were signed for their good and that they would benefit from them.

The above went against the spirit of EITI which encourages member countries to undertake full disclosure of licenses, contracts and agreements that are signed

or issued to oil and other companies.

Indeed, the lack of full disclosure portends no good for Ugandans. As failure to disclose agreements in the electricity and other sectors has shown, secret agreements promote corruption which results in massive costs on citizens. For instance, secrecy facilitated the signing of a bad Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for the Bujagali hydropower dam.

While Ugandans were promised that they would enjoy low power tariffs when the dam was commissioned, this did not happen. Instead, the bad secretly signed agreement resulted in increased power prices when Bujagali dam was commissioned in 2012. Today, Ugandans still pay high power prices and government is still borrowing to buy down the Bujagali tariffs.

In our **Word from CEO and Partners** therefore, we discuss the implications of signing of secret agreements in the oil sector and call on citizens to demand that the EACOP HGAs are fully disclosed by government as part of its commitments to comply with EITI principles.

In addition, this month, we bring you a **News** item through which we share highlights about our and partners' efforts to save Bugoma forest from land grabbing, sugarcane growing and oil threats. Through the news item, we inform you about the court case to stop Hoima Sugar's destruction of Bugoma forest that will be heard on October 2, 2020. That same day, two Save Bugoma Forest Campaigners who were arrested and released on police bond over a planned protest to protect Bugoma forest will also report to police.

In addition, on the same day, we plan to file a suit against all the police officers who illegally arrested and detained our fellow campaigners.

Away from the above, this month, AFIEGO and our partners implemented a number of activities that are captured in the **pictorial** section. For instance, in partnership with 350 Africa.org, we organised a workshop through which civil society organisations (CSOs) developed a campaign strategy to guide their activities on the EACOP project.

Further, with our partners under the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign, we filed for a temporary injunction from court to stop the destruction of Bugoma forest by Hoima Sugar Ltd. This followed the issuance of an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) certificate of approval to Hoima Sugar by NEMA in August 2020. The certificate allowed Hoima Sugar to destroy Bugoma forest. The application for a court injunction is meant to stop this.

In addition, with our partners under the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign, we organised a press conference and called for the boycott of Hoima Sugar. We also held a number of strategic meetings to plan for the campaign.

Further, this month, AFIEGO staff, Save Bugoma Forest Campaigners and members of the media were arrested over a planned protest to protect Bugoma forest from oil and sugarcane threats among others. Members of the media

were arrested for covering the arrest of the campaigners.

With our partners, we provided legal and other support to the arrested to ensure their release. Some were released on bond and have to continue reporting to police while others were released without any charge.

We implemented other activities that are captured in our pictorial section.

In our **lobbying** section, we bring you a CSO statement that we released calling on the presidents of Uganda and Tanzania to prioritise environmental conservation and community livelihoods over the EACOP. This followed signing of the EACOP HGAs. We also bring you a press statement that we issued demanding for the release of AFIEGO staff and the Save Bugoma Forest Campaigners in addition to members of the media following their arrest. We also issued a press statement calling for a boycott of Hoima sugar.

In **in the media** section, we bring you some of the articles that were published from our media interviews in addition to articles that staff and our partners wrote and were published by the Ugandan, UK and Congolese media. The articles are part of our public education and lobby efforts. We hope that you will enjoy the newsletter.

Editorial team:

Diana Nabiruma

Sandra Atunsiguza

Balach Bakundane

LEFT IN THE DARK: GOVERNMENT VIOLATES EITI SPIRIT IN EACOP HOST GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT PROCESSES

On September 11, 2020, the Ugandan government signed the Host Government Agreement (HGA) for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project with Total.

An HGA is an “agreement entered into between a Host Government and project investors ... relating to the pipeline system” .

It is an important agreement that defines several issues including the ownership of the project, the security for the people along the pipeline route and others.

It is not yet clear under which law the EACOP HGAs are being negotiated and concluded as well as how they will be enforced.

Regardless of this, the aforementioned HGA was signed and news of the signing was shared by both the Ugandan president and Total.

Two days later, on Sunday September 13, 2020, the Ugandan president and other delegates travelled to Chato in Tanzania where the Ugandan government signed the EACOP HGA with the Tanzanian government.

The signings were lauded as a major milestone that bring Uganda closer to producing crude oil and to economic prosperity.

“I presided over signing of the Host Government Agreement [HGA] for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline [EACOP] project between government and Total.

[Oil] will bring money which we shall use to develop infrastructure, science and technology,” the president posted on his Facebook account following signing of the HGA with Total.

On signing of the HGA with Tanzania, the Ugandan president noted that he and the Tanzanian president had “agreed that the remaining agreements be fast-tracked including the Tanzanian HGA and we quickly carry out the implementation of [the] EACOP project.”

No information was given for Ugandans to understand what the contents of the HGA were and whether they were in their interest.

Citizens were only informed that signing of the HGAs was good for them. Yet we know that the single biggest problem that explains why all African oil producers including Nigeria, Angola, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Libya and many others continue to suffer the oil curse is because of corruption facilitated by secret (untransparent) dealings.

Secret dealings allow politicians to ignore issues of environmental and human rights, livelihoods, land rights of communities, equity and social justice while focusing on quick revenues that are more often than not misused.

This is why initiatives such as Publish What You Pay (PWYP) and Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) commenced to promote transparency in the management and use of oil and other extractives.

LACK OF ADHERENCE TO SPIRIT OF EITI IN EACOP HGAS

It is notable that before signing of the HGAs, Uganda had been admitted to EITI in August 2020. EITI is a global standard that “promote[s] open and accountable management of extractives resources”.

The 2019 EITI standard **encourages** member states “to publicly disclose any contracts and

licenses that provide the terms attached to the exploitation of oil, gas and minerals that were [or are] entered into before 2021”.

The disclosure includes the publication of contracts and licenses in their entirety.

In Uganda, the 2008 National Oil and Gas policy provides for EITI. The 2015 Public Finance Management Act commits government to the principles of transparency. While EITI remains a voluntary initiative, to show its commitment to the objectives of EITI, the Ugandan government should have provided the following information to Ugandans as regards the EACOP HGAs:

- The rights and obligations of each country under the agreement;
- The construction, operational and decommissioning costs of the pipeline and who carries them;
- In particular, the cost of the EACOP project, where the funds for the project are likely to be borrowed and the envisioned repayment terms;
- Who maintains ownership of the transported crude oil and the pipeline infrastructure;
- The environmental and land rights safeguards of the project and who is responsible for their enforcement;
- Agreed benefits such as how profits, royalties and others will be shared;
- Taxes to be paid and by whom;
- The legal framework that will govern over the project including laws that still need to be put in place;
- How disputes between the two host countries will be resolved to avoid affecting the pipeline and;
- The role and participation of other stakeholders including civil society and others citizens among others.

IMPLICATIONS OF SECRECY

The above information would have enabled Ugandans to determine if government signed good HGAs on their behalf and, whether or not to accept or reject the agreements.

Citizens have a right to participate in decisions that affect their resources and wellbeing. The two governments therefore needed to enable citizens to get timely information including on the trade-offs involved in the project. Untransparent dealings undermine these rights and citizen participation.

Moreover, secret dealings portend no good. The Ugandan government has previously signed secret agreements, after which immense promises to improve citizens' lives were made. But, no benefits were realised.

For instance, while developing the Bujagali, Isimba and Karuma hydropower dams, government promised Ugandans that they would enjoy lower power tariffs when the dams were completed and commissioned.

When Bujagali dam was completed in 2012 however, power tariffs shot up as a unit of power from Bujagali dam cost Ugandans a whopping over \$12 cents, an unaffordable price. The president blamed the bad secret agreement that was signed, noting that Ugandans got a bad deal as secrecy facilitated corruption.

Todate, Ugandans continue to pay high power prices despite reported efforts by government such as refinancing of Bujagali dam to lower power prices.

In addition, despite the commissioning of Isimba dam, the power tariff is yet to be lowered with Ugandans (domestic consumers) paying nearly as much as Shs. 1,000 for a

unit of power. Like the Bujagali dam Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), the Isimba dam PPA remains secret.

SECRECY IN HGAS

Ugandans are seeing the same secrecy in the oil sector. As earlier noted, the signed HGAs for the EACOP project have not been published. Moreover, the following are alarming:

- Citizens remain in the dark as regards not only the terms and conditions of the HGAs but other agreements such as Production Sharing Agreements (PSAs) signed between government and oil companies. Citizens have to rely on government promises that they are getting good deals, yet government has proven to be unreliable through making promises that are not kept.
- Oil host communities are key stakeholders in the oil and gas sector but these too remain unaware of what is going on as regards the EACOP. The project-affected people were last engaged by the project developers in September 2019 when Total suspended activities on the EACOP project. Today, the president and his government are apparently signing agreements that will benefit communities who remain un-consulted and in the dark.
- In addition, parliament, the institution that represents the will of the people also largely remains in the dark. MPs have not reviewed and publically discussed the EACOP HGAs to provide oversight, enable citizen understanding of the contents of the HGAs and to hold government accountable. This can only facilitate the signing of bad agreements that favour oil companies and a few individuals at the expense of Ugandans.
- Amidst the above, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and other institutions of Uganda continue

to violate environmental laws governing the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) processes for the EACOP. Per environmental laws, a decision on the EACOP ESIA should have been made and communicated to Ugandans already. This is yet to happen.

- Moreover, there is immense opposition to the EACOP project and to oil activities that are being conducted or have been allowed in national parks, lakes, rivers, forests and other ecosensitive areas in Uganda and Tanzania. The mitigation measures that have been provided by oil companies to avoid, minimise or mitigate the impacts of the EACOP and other related oil projects are inadequate. As a result, court cases have been filed in Uganda and France. This calls into question the legal basis of oil activities by government and Total. It also leads to questions such as: Why are the governments and companies rushing to conclude agreements before the determination of court cases that have a bearing on the EACOP project?

RECOMMENDATIONS

This month, between September 29 and 30, 2020, the 6th Annual Oil and Gas Convention was held in Uganda; the convention was organised by the Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum alongside government. Hearing government officials speak at the conference, one would be left to believe that Uganda is on course to ensure that Ugandans participate in and benefit from the oil sector.

However, based on the impacts that oil-affected people in Bunyoro and elsewhere have suffered including increased poverty, destabilisation of education, increased teenage pregnancies, environmental degradation, incomplete ESIA processes and others, it is clear that the rhetoric on Ugandans benefitting from the oil sector is just that, rhetoric.

In addition, hiding of information from the people in whose interest government is reportedly working affirms the above.

To promote transparency and accountability in the oil sector through information sharing, the following should be done:

i) Government should publicise the HGAs that were signed with Total and the government of Tanzania. The agreements were signed on Ugandans' behalf and citizens have a right to access and influence them.

ii) In addition, parliament should put in place an EITI law. A number of key EITI principles are voluntary including that on fully disclosing contracts and agreements signed before January 2021. In a country like Uganda where it is hard to implement binding laws, it is difficult to see how voluntary principles can be respected to achieve the aims and goals of EITI. An EITI law is a necessity to facilitate enforcement and compliance to ensure transparency and accountability in contracts among others.

iii) Further, citizens need to demand for the above actions to be taken. Citizens and communities should engage their MPs for

the above actions to be implemented. Citizens can also file cases in court to enforce the right of access to information and challenge bad agreements.

iv) Citizens should also demand that an independent cost-benefit analysis of the EACOP project is undertaken. While the EACOP project developers have noted that the EACOP is economically viable and have listed economic benefits such as the EACOP project increasing jobs, analyses by Assaye Risk, the Netherlands Commission on Environmental Assessment (NCEA) and others show that the project faces major risks such as increasing Uganda's debt stress and that the project's economic benefits are exaggerated respectively.

Yet the EACOP will affect forests, wetlands, lakes, rivers and other ecosensitive areas that support agriculture, tourism, fisheries and others. These sectors, which are Uganda's most profitable, should not be destabilized for a project that is not economically viable, is environmentally risky and poses immense climate threats.

v). Finally, courts should urgently determine oil and other related cases to ensure that impunity and the violation of environmental and human rights are stopped and those responsible are punished.

By CEO and Partners

COURT CASE TO STOP HOIMA SUGAR'S DESTRUCTION OF BUGOMA FOREST SET TO BE HEARD Save Bugoma Forest Campaigners also set to report to police

On October 2, 2020, court will hear the case through which the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign is demanding that a temporary injunction to stop the destruction of Bugoma Forest by Hoima Sugar Ltd is given.

The court case was filed following the issuance of an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) certificate of approval to Hoima Sugar by the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA).

"We filed the court case on September 2, 2020 soon after the ESIA certificate was issued. We want court to stop any activity by Hoima Sugar on the Bugoma forest land.

These activities such as sugarcane growing, setting up an urban centre, engaging in eco-tourism and others are contained in the ESIA certificate that NEMA issued to Hoima Sugar Ltd," Mr. Vanex Watebawa of the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign says.

Mr. Dickens Kamugisha, the chairperson of the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign and AFIEGO's CEO, adds, "We hope that the temporary injunction will be effective until the cases that were filed in High Court demanding for cancellation of Hoima Sugar Ltd's ESIA certificate of approval are successful.

We filed these cases in September. We are hopeful that court will rule in our favour. NEMA failed to invite for public comments and failed to organise public hearings on the Hoima Sugar ESIA report.

These and other actions violated the EIA [Environmental Impact Assessment] laws, requiring cancellation of the ESIA certificate.

Just this month, high court nullified the law on rural electrification funds over Ministry of Energy's failure to consult stakeholders and to follow set procedures.

Court noted that 'When a statute provides for a consultative technique or public and private participation, then the courts are duty bound to regard it as a mandatory procedural requirement, breach of which may result in invalidation of the delegated legislation.'

This is a good precedent that gives us hope that we will win."



Some of the Save Bugoma Forest Campaigners and their lawyer following a September 11, 2020 hearing for a temporary injunction to stop destruction of Bugoma Forest. A court ruling on the case will be made on October 2, 2020.

It is notable that on the same day that the court case for a temporary injunction will be heard, two Save Bugoma Forest Campaigners who were arrested on September 15, 2020 and charged with inciting violence to cause unlawful demonstration will report to police in Hoima as part of their bond terms. The campaigners were released on September 17, 2020 on police bond.

"It is unfortunate that our colleagues have to travel from Kampala to Hoima to report to police following an illegal arrest and

defective charges. The travels are time consuming and also require resources. They take away from efforts to protect Bugoma forest.

We want to put an end to police's arbitrary arrests which are hampering conservation efforts. We therefore intend to file court cases against the individual police officers who arrested our Save Bugoma Forest Campaign colleagues in addition to AFIEGO staff and members of the media," Mr. Kamugisha says.



Some of the Save Bugoma Forest Campaigners (in police cells in the photo on the left and in the centre with shoes in hand in the photo on the right) who were arrested, charged and have to report to police on October 2, 2020

It is notable that in addition to the two Save Bugoma Forest Campaigners who were arrested on September 15, 2020, other campaigners, AFIEGO and ORRA staff in

addition to members of the media who were reporting on the campaign were arrested on September 16, 2020 and released on the same day without charge.

"This clearly shows that the campaigners were not arrested for committing any offence but to intimidate and create fear to scare citizens away from the struggle to save Bugoma forest from oil and sugarcane threats," Mr. Kamugisha adds.

Before their arrest, the Save Bugoma Forest Campaigners had planned on holding peaceful protests through which stakeholders would march from Kikuube and Hoima districts to Bugoma forest.

The protests were meant to create public awareness and rally for public support to protect Bugoma forest from oil, land grabbing, sugarcane and other threats.

Today, efforts to protect Bugoma forest continue. In addition to the court cases, other planned activities include mobilising stakeholders to stand in solidarity with the campaigners who will report to police, supporting media field visits to Bugoma forest, organising other regular media engagements to keep Bugoma forest woes on the public agenda and filing court cases to challenge the constitutionality of the giveaway of Bugoma forest land to Bunyoro Kingdom among others.

Pictorial of our activities

AFIEGO AND 350 AFRICA.ORG SUPPORT MEETING FOR DEVELOPMENT OF EACOP CAMPAIGN STRATEGY



On September 21 and 22, 2020, AFIEGO in partnership with 350 Africa.org organised a meeting during which 20 CSOs working on the EACOP project developed a campaign strategy.

The meeting, which was participated in by CSOs from all the Ugandan regions affected by the EACOP project, took place in Kampala.

The campaign strategy that was developed will be used to defend communities' land rights, the environment in addition to the civic space of communities and CSOs affected by or working on the EACOP project among others.

In the photos are AFIEGO staff and CSOs working on the EACOP project during the meeting.



SAVING BUGOMA FOREST: AFIEGO AND OUR PARTNERS CALL FOR BOYCOTT OF HOIMA SUGAR



On September 27, 2020, AFIEGO and our Save Bugoma Forest Campaign partners held a press conference in Kampala during which we called on Ugandans and all stakeholders of goodwill to boycott Hoima sugar.

The campaign members also called on Ugandans to ostracize the owners of Hoima Sugar who will destroy Ugandans' livelihoods with the destruction of Bugoma forest.

The call for a boycott is part of the actions that are aimed at stopping the destruction of Bugoma forest by Hoima Sugar Ltd.

In the photos are some of the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign members and members of the media during the press conference.

AFIEGO AND PARTNERS IN MEETING TO DRAW STRATEGIES TO SAVE BUGOMA FOREST



Prior to the above press conference, on September 18, 2020, AFIEGO and our partners under the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign held a meeting in Kampala.

During the meeting, we drew strategies to further the campaign to save Bugoma forest from land grabbing, oil and sugarcane threats.

The meeting was also used to discuss ways to safeguard the civic space of the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign members following the arrest of some campaigners.

Strategies to safeguard the civic space and to support efforts to save Bugoma forest were drawn.

In the photo are some of the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign members during the meeting.

AFIEGO AND PARTNERS IN EFFORTS FOR RELEASE OF SAVE BUGOMA FOREST CAMPAIGNERS



On September 15 and 16, 2020, AFIEGO staff, Save Bugoma Forest Campaigners and members of the media were arrested.

Following their arrest, AFIEGO and our partners supported efforts such as co-ordinating legal assistance, pressuring police for their release through media engagements, mobilising international support and others.

Due to these efforts, the arrested were released; some were released without any charge while two were charged and released on police bond. The two campaigners who were released on police bond are expected to report back to police on October 2, 2020.

AFIEGO and our partners are supporting efforts to enable the campaigners comply with their police bond requirements.

In the photos are some of the campaigners following their release (top photo) in addition to some of the media engagements undertaken by AFIEGO for the release of the campaigners.



AFIEGO AND PARTNERS FILE COURT CASE TO STOP DESTRUCTION OF BUGOMA FOREST BY HOIMA SUGAR



On September 2, 2020, AFIEGO and our partners under the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign filed a court case for a temporary injunction to stop destruction of Bugoma forest by Hoima Sugar Ltd.

Court heard the case on September 11, 2020. A ruling on the case will be made on October 2, 2020.

The court case was filed following issuance of an ESIA certificate to Hoima Sugar by NEMA, paving way for destruction of the forest.

In the photo are some of the Save Bugoma Forest Campaigners and their lawyer following the September 11, 2020 hearing.

Other court cases were also filed this month for cancellation of the ESIA certificate that was issued to Hoima Sugar Ltd by NEMA. We will keep you updated on these court cases.

Lobbying

This month, AFIEGO and 14 other CSOs issued an open letter through which we called on the presidents of Uganda and Tanzania to prioritise environmental conservation and community livelihoods over the EACOP. This followed signing of the EACOP HGAs.

In addition, with our Save Bugoma Forest Campaign partners, we issued a press statement demanding for the release of AFIEGO staff and the Save Bugoma Forest Campaigners following their arrest this month. We also issued a press statement calling for a boycott of Hoima sugar. These lobbying products are captured below.

September 15, 2020

Your Excellencies,
OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENTS OF UGANDA AND TANZANIA: CHAMPION ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY LIVELIHOODS OVER THE EACOP

The undersigned civil society signatories take this opportunity to thank you Your Excellencies for the good work that your governments are doing in building our countries. In particular, we thank you for the continued struggles to move our poor people out of poverty and to tame the worsening environmental destruction in and beyond our national borders.

While the above is the case, the undersigned signatories note with concern that on Sunday September 13, 2020, you President Yoweri Kagame Museveni of Uganda and President John Pombe Magufuli of Tanzania signed the Host Government Agreement (HGA) for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project at a ceremony that was held in Chato, Tanzania.

It should be noted that the EACOP is part of and can only exist on the basis of the Teleriga and the Kingfisher oil projects located in the Albertine Graben in Uganda. The Albertine Graben is one of the most ecosensitive and biodiverse regions in Uganda and the world.

The graben hosts over 70% of Uganda's critical ecosensitive protected areas including Murchison Falls National Park, Bugungi and Kabwaya game reserves, River Nile, Lake Albert in addition to Budongo and Bugoma central forest reserves.

Others include many sacred natural sites and territories in addition to many other delicate biodiversity resources. Unfortunately, Your Excellencies, the planned EACOP is a huge threat and risk to these ecosensitive resources.

While signing the HGA however, these huge risks and threats were not discussed. Instead, the promise of jobs and other economic benefits were. For instance, it was said that construction of the EACOP would result in foreign direct investment (FDI) of \$3.5 billion in Uganda and Tanzania in addition to creating over 18,000 jobs in Tanzania.

It was also said that Uganda and Tanzania would split the profits from the EACOP with Uganda earning 40% of the profits while Tanzania will earn 60%.

Further, in Uganda, H.E. Yoweri Kagame Museveni reassured citizens that signing of the agreements helped Uganda to move closer to producing oil to benefit Ugandans. The above

1



SEPTEMBER 27, 2020

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.
SAVE BUGOMA FOREST ACTIVISTS LAUNCH BOYCOTT FOR HOIMA SUGAR

We the undersigned CSOs, environmental activists and members of the public under the umbrella Save Bugoma Forest Campaign 2020 are saddened that government has turned a deaf ear as Bugoma forest is being decimated under its watch.

For the last one month, we have been investigating, and found that Hoima Sugar Ltd has disregarded the concerns of Ugandans calling for the protection of Bugoma forest land. It's saddening to inform you fellow Ugandans, and the world that Hoima Sugar Ltd is already rapidly shaving down 21 square miles of the forest to plant sugarcane fronting ESIA certificate issued by NEMA that which we are challenging in court.

It's also saddening to note that Uganda police force and the Uganda people's defense forces are protecting Hoima Sugar to destroy a Natural resource like Bugoma forest instead of protecting first the interests of Ugandans who want the forest conserved for the numerous ecological functions. Its sad that instead of the security forces protecting the right of Ugandans to enjoy a right to clean and health environment provided for under Article 39 of the Constitution, they are protecting those who are destroying our environment.

Articles 209 and 212 of the Constitution of Uganda, mandates the Uganda Peoples Defense forces (UPDF), Uganda Police Force (UPF) and other sister security agencies to protect the interests of Ugandans and their property and, to respect their rights. It's shocking to note that the security forces are the ones protecting Hoima Sugar to destroy the forest wondering whose interests they are serving.

On 17th September, 2020, Hoima central police station OC Mphabisi Tomson Tom arbitrary arrested WEMNET Staff (Joshua Mutale, Venex Watebawa and Samuel Kayiwa) who have been investigating and exposing those behind the sale of Bugoma forest. WEMNET is a member of Save Bugoma Forest Campaign (SBC). While on 18th the same man arrested 5 journalists who had gone to his office to follow-up on the arrest of the 3 veteran journalists. The Four include, Jackson Kasule of BBS TV, Vincent Kisiko of Radio one, Ismail Kasoha of Vision group. The

September 16, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
KAMPALA & HOIMA
CIVIL SOCIETY DEMAND FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF THEIR MEMBERS AND AN END TO POLICE INTIMIDATION

Civil society actors and tourism operators working under the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign (SBC) to stop illegal sugarcane growing and oil activities in Bugoma forest and the ecosystems around the forest are *demanding for an immediate release of nine of their members who were arrested by police in Hoima district.*

"Our members travelled to Hoima to participate in a peaceful demonstration aimed at stopping the destruction of Bugoma forest for sugarcane growing and to stop the risks of oil activities to critical biodiversity resources.

Two of our group members were arrested on their way to a radio talkshow at Spice FM in Hoima. The two were set to discuss the risks and dangers of destroying Bugoma forest for sugarcane growing and allowing oil activities in critical biodiversity areas including rivers, lakes, national parks, forests, wetlands and others.

The talkshow was also aimed at providing information on the planned peaceful protests where the civil society leaders were supposed to walk from Hoima and Kikumba districts to Bugoma forest reserve to address a press conference," Mr. Dickens Kamugisha, the CEO of AFIEGO and a member of SBC, says.

It is notable that the planned protest was aimed at expressing displeasure with government agencies that have committed to give away Bugoma forest for sugarcane growing.

It was also to expose how the rush for oil exploitation has attracted dubious companies that are consorting with government to conduct illegal and irregular Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA), issue ESIA certificates of approval, proceed with illegal activities in forests, national parks, rivers, lakes, wetlands and others without complete and approved mitigation

1

In the media

This month, staff, research associates and youth champions wrote newspaper articles that were published in the leading newspapers. The media also published articles from the media interviews we held this month. Some of the published articles are captured below.

Environmental activists mobilise against Hoima Sugar products over Bugoma forest

By Kazi Njema Reporter - September 25, 2020



Dr Dickson Kamugisha, Save Bugoma Campaign Chairman addresses journalists on Sunday against destroying Bugoma forest.

A group of environmental conservation activists have announced a series of activities aimed at mobilising Ugandans to boycott products of Hoima Sugar Limited over the company's stance on Bugoma Central Forest Reserve.

The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) gave nine square miles which is part of Bugoma forest to Hoima Sugar Limited to grow sugarcane, a move that has not augured well especially with conservationists and tourism enthusiasts.

Ugandan lawmakers reject plan for Murchison Falls hydropower dam

Activists praise decision to reject energy ministry's proposal to dam the world-famous waterfall



Murchison Falls is one of the most powerful waterfalls in the world, and is sited in Uganda's largest and most visited national park. Photograph: Yasuyoshi Chiba/AFP/Getty Images

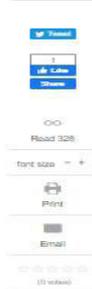
Conservationists in Uganda have hailed a bipartisan decision to reject the government's plan to construct a hydro-power dam at the country's biggest tourist attraction.

Lawmakers unanimously adopted a report by the 28 member parliamentary f Energy

BUGOMA: A GARDEN OF EDEN UNDER THREAT

CSOS DEMAND FOR RELEASE OF SAVE BUGOMA FOREST CAMPAIGNERS

September 16, 2020 | Written by Earth Finds | Published in Environment | 0 comments



COURTESY (PHEK) Two of our group members were arrested on their way to a radio talk show at Spice FM in Hoima.

Civil society actors and tourism operators working under the Save Bugoma Forest Campaign (SBC) to stop illegal sugarcane growing and oil activities in Bugoma forest and the ecosystems around the forest are demanding for an immediate release of nine of their members who were arrested by police in Hoima district.

"Our members travelled to Hoima to participate in a peaceful demonstration aimed at stopping the destruction of Bugoma forest for sugarcane growing and to stop the risks of oil activities to critical biodiversity resources.

Two of our group members were arrested on their way to a radio talk show at Spice FM in Hoima. The two were set to discuss the risks and dangers of destroying Bugoma forest for sugarcane growing and allowing oil activities in critical biodiversity areas including rivers, lakes, national parks, forests, wetlands and others.

The talk show was also aimed at providing information on the planned peaceful protests where the civil society leaders were supposed to walk from Hoima and Kikuube districts to Buomira forest

Nema sued for allowing sugarcane growing on forest land

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 16 2020



Security personnel inspect a section of Bugoma Central Forest Reserve in August 2016. Conservationists have asked court to quash the environment and social impact assessment approved by the National Environment Management

Parliament rejects plan to construct dam at Murchison Falls

The Independent | September 27, 2020 | NEWS | Leave a comment



Parliament's Committee on Natural Resources and Environment rejected the proposal to conduct a feasibility by gov't to construct a hydro-power dam at Uhuru Falls in Murchison Falls. The committee proposed that the said funds should be used to diversify Uganda's energy mix away from hydropower.

Upcoming events

October 2, 2020; Kampala: Court case hearing on application for an injunction to stop destruction of Bugoma forest by Hoima Sugar

October 2, 2020; Hoima: Supporting Save Bugoma Forest Campaigners to report to police

October 2, 2020; Kampala: Filing a court case against police officers who illegally arrested Save Bugoma Forest Campaigners

October 5-16, 2020; Albertine and Greater Masaka: Supporting community petition processes on the EACOP project

October 12-16, 2020; Albertine and Greater Masaka: Media engagements on petitions on the EACOP project

October 19, 2020; Kampala: Radio talkshow on the relevance of citizen participation in EACOP processes

October 27, 2020; Kampala: Petitioning government and oil companies over EACOP failures

October 27, 2020; Kampala: Press conference on EACOP failures and petitions

October 30, 2020; Hoima and Kikuube: Community empowerment meetings to protect Bugoma forest

About Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO)

Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) is a public policy research and advocacy organisation dedicated to influencing energy policies to benefit the poor and vulnerable. Based in Kampala, Uganda, the organisation was born out of the need to contribute to efforts to turn Africa's energy potential into reality and to ensure that the common man and woman benefits from this energy boom. Through lobbying, research and community education, AFIEGO works with communities and leaders to ensure that energy resources are utilised in a way that promotes equitable development, environmental conservation and respect for human rights.

Our Vision

A society that equitably uses energy resources for socio-economic development

Our Mission

To promote energy policies that benefit poor and vulnerable communities