



STORIES OF PAIN & RESISTANCE

**UGANDAN
COMMUNITIES
SHARE THEIR
EXPERIENCES**

WITH TOTALENERGIES' OIL PROJECTS

VOLUME 1



APRIL 2024

Introduction

TotalEnergies, the French oil company, celebrated its 100-year anniversary on March 28, 2024. The company was established in 1924. As Total marks its centennial anniversary, Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO), a Ugandan non-profit that often comes face-to-face with the sad legacy that Total has left on oil-affected people's lives, is publishing a booklet with ten stories.


The stories are about people whose land has been compulsorily acquired for Total's Tilenga and East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) projects in Uganda. These people range from Gloria Twikirize, a 30-year-old single mother who says that stress and anxiety is Total's legacy in her life, to Jonan Kiiza, a youth who speaks of family disharmony and worsening of the lot of women in his family due to the Tilenga oil project.

Isma Bwowe also tells his story, which includes the worsening of his disability, loss of livelihood and a wife, thanks to the stresses brought about by the EACOP. The elderly Teddy Nakintu shares about the discrimination she and her family have faced, culminating into the EACOP Company's sub-contractors refusing to give them livelihood restoration items, contrary to the company having committed to provide all affected people with this assistance and to pay special attention to vulnerable people like the elderly.

Pitiyedi Mugisha discusses her family's displacement not once, but thrice over, and the hardships they are facing as a result. The elderly but strong-willed Leunia Okella Itho shares about her abandonment by her husband following compensation struggles.

We invite you to read the people's stories, people whose message to Total is that development is not measured in pipelines or profit margins, but in the dignity and well-being of all. The people say it is not too late for Total to make amends. Read their stories to find out how they want Total to support them to rebuild their shattered lives.





A stressful and hard life: That is the legacy of the EACOP in my life.

Gloria Twikirize,
30 years old; *Single mother from Hoima district*

A stressful and hard life: These are the only responses I think of giving when anyone asks me to list some of the positive and negative impacts that the EACOP land acquisition has had on me and my family.

I do not want anyone to ask me about positive impacts, because I have only known negative things because of the EACOP.

Food scarcity, worries about how to feed my children and nephew, income loss and a morbid fear to have more children as I am too poor now: that is the legacy of the EACOP in my life!

It all started in 2018 when people from EACOP came to my village, Kijumba, and told me that my land was going to be used





for a government project called the EACOP. (The EACOP is a planned 1,443km pipeline that is expected to transport crude oil from two oil fields in Western Uganda to the port of Tanga in Tanzania, and onto export markets. The pipeline is owned by TotalEnergies, China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) and the Ugandan as well as Tanzanian governments.)

The people informed me that they had been sent to measure my land and record the property that I was going to lose. I held the property in trust for my nephew, Matthias Ayesiga, whose father passed away. Ayesiga, who is seven years old, inherited his father's property.

I was assured that I would be compensated for the property lost to the EACOP. I accepted for my property to be assessed in expectation

of compensation.

However, when entitlement disclosures were made to me in 2023, I noticed that the compensation of Shs. 5 million (USD 1,274.5) was too little for the land amounting to three *misiri*, roughly equal to one acre, that we were losing. In September 2023, the EACOP people brought me a compensation agreement to sign. The agreement said that I was consenting to cede our land to the EACOP Company.

I did not want to sign the agreement because I was being given little compensation but I was in a lot of fear since others were signing. I had also been intimidated. I was told that I cannot get in a contest with government as they would win any court challenge. I was told that I would be taken to court if I refused to hand over my land.

I consented for my land to be taken but this was done very unwillingly and at the cost of my family's livelihood.

Today, I am a small-scale farmer. I grow crops such as cassava and beans, which I sometimes sell for

income.

Before our land was acquired, I was less anxious. I could farm our land, feed my three children and nephew and pay school fees in affordable schools. After our land was acquired for the EACOP, however, I cannot meet my family's needs and I feel bad. I changed my children's schools. The schools they are in now are of a lower standard of education.

I also can no longer give my children adequate food.

I feel so bad because I used to rent out some of the land that the EACOP project took and I would earn money for my family.

Forced to downgrade my children's education and unable to provide

them with adequate nourishment, I grapple with feelings of inadequacy and despair.

As TotalEnergies marks its 100th anniversary, I call on them to change their compensation ways. They were very unfair to us. The company also needs to remedy its wrongs by providing adequate livelihood support and skilling people affected by their projects so that they return to being self-sustaining.

*TotalEnergies acquired the land needed for the EACOP project on behalf of the other EACOP project developers.



My mother received only Shs. 2 million (USD 509.8) when she was displaced from 16 acres of land for Total's Tilenga project. This affected my schooling.

Jonan Kiiza, 24 years old;

Youth from Buliisa district

My name is Jonan Kiiza. I am 24 years old.

I come from Kasinyi village, Ngwendo sub-county, Buliisa district. I love Buliisa because of its environment. I like the undulating hills and flat lands. The land is also fertile in some areas, making farming possible.

Our ancestors kept trees but these were in recent years cut for charcoal so we no longer have big trees. We, however, have shrubs. I would like to plant some trees to modify the climate.

I like playing football and reading novels. My favourite footballer is Sergio Ramos, who used to play for Real Madrid. He also played for Paris Saint Germain.



I am a student and I completed my Ordinary Level studies in 2023. If I complete secondary school, I would like to study Journalism and Communication at either Makerere or Kyambogo universities in Uganda. This is dependent on my school fees being available.

I live with my mother, a single parent, as well as my brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces. We live in an extended family. In Buliisa, most families are extended in nature. We live on a 100ft by 50ft plot of land, that TotalEnergies bought for us when the company displaced us under the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) 1. We were displaced for the Tilenga Industrial Area where a Central Processing Facility is being constructed.

We were told that the Central Processing Facility will clean Total's oil of impurities before it is transported to Hoima, to be taken to export markets via the EACOP.

Before my mother was displaced, she was living on 16 acres of land in Kasinyi. The land was passed down by my great grandfather, the late Mr. Erisa Byahuka, to his children, who also bequeathed it to their children, including my mother, Ms. Margaret Nyakato.

My mother lived on the land for over 40 years before she was displaced. My maternal aunt also lived on the same land.

When my mother was displaced, TotalEnergies paid my family Shs. 80 million (USD 20,392) for the 16 acres of land, disturbance allowance, crops and other property. It was little money, but it also had to be divided amongst the grandsons and granddaughters of Mr. Byahuka. My mom got Shs. 2 million (USD 509.8) only for the land!

Why? Families are complicated, especially in places where men are considered more important than women. Because the land from which my mother was displaced belonged to her grandfather, the Shs. 80 million (USD 20,392) that Total paid for compensation was divided amongst Mr. Byahuka's children, who were eight in number. My mother got money on behalf of her mother, the late Ms. Majune Erisa. Other children or grandchildren of Mr. Byahuka also got some of the compensation.

The family of eight divided Shs. 80 million but the women got less, and men got more. The women in the family, including my mom and her sister, who were the only ones living on the land before their displacement,

were given Shs. 6 million (USD 1,529.4) only. There is disharmony in the family because of this unfairness todate.

My mother divided the Shs. 6 million that she got on behalf of her mother's family with her three siblings. That is how she ended up with compensation of only Shs. 2 million! Total compensated families that were displaced under RAP 1 with Shs. 3.5 million (USD 892.17) per acre of land acquired. My mother, who got only Shs. 2 million, could not replace the 16 acres that she lost. In fact, she did not replace any of the land that she lost because we were given little compensation and because Total failed to adequately protect women's interests during the compulsory land acquisition.

As a youth, I was affected negatively by the project because I dropped out of school. My mother used to cultivate and sell crops from the 16 acres of land that Total took. When the land was taken, she had nowhere to grow crops and raise our school fees.

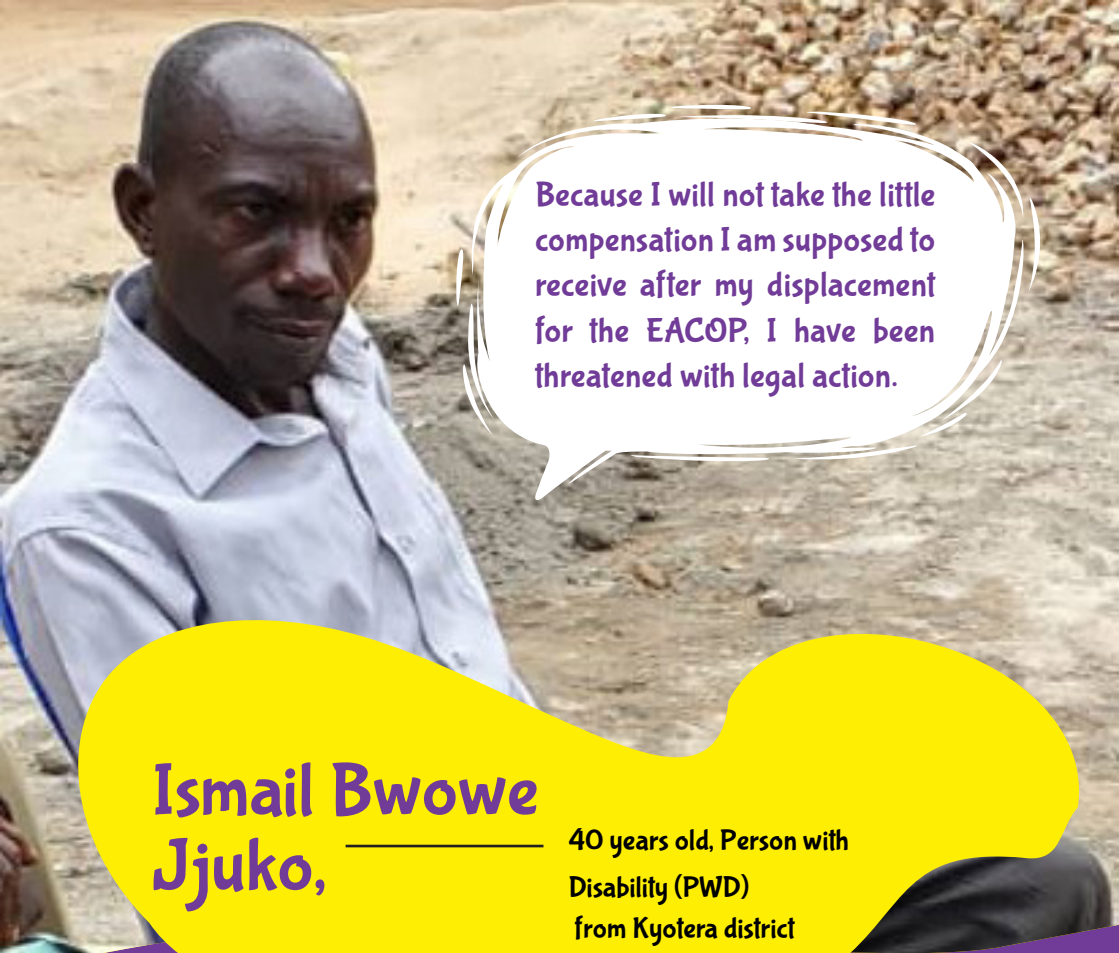
By the time the compulsory land acquisition project started in 2017, I was in secondary school, in Senior 1. I dropped out of school until visitors brought by AFIEGØ supported me with school fees. I returned to school in 2023. I skipped Senior 3 and sat

my Senior 4 exams. I had spent three years out of school.

Other youth in Buliisa are also suffering. They lack land to grow food, build houses and start families. This is because their family land was taken. Our families were poor, and when they received little compensation, they did not buy adequate replacement land. Youth in Buliisa are now going to become like youth in Buganda. When one clocks 18 years, the family will let them go. Before, youth were given land by their parents.

Because of the oil project, land values in Buliisa appreciated. Land also became an economic asset and very few people can give land to their children. Families have also broken up. It is sad! Youth also aren't getting oil jobs to the extent that we were promised. Where the youth get jobs, they engage in menial labour.

I know someone who studied catering and has a certificate but he is laying beds, and washing clothes in the Tilenga camp in Buliisa. I also know someone who studied driving and has a permit but he is a casual worker in the Tilenga Industrial Area. He is driving wheelbarrows! Those of us with parents complaining over low compensation can never get jobs!



Because I will not take the little compensation I am supposed to receive after my displacement for the EACOP, I have been threatened with legal action.

Ismail Bwowe Jjuko,

40 years old, Person with
Disability (PWD)
from Kyotera district

I am differently-abled. People in Uganda would say that I am lame. I was born able-bodied but when I was about seven or eight years old, I suffered from a childhood accident that left me lame. The EACOP project made my condition worse, and worsened my life.

But allow me to tell you my story

from the beginning.

I was born and raised in Kituntu village in Kyotera district. My grandfather, Mr. Rajabu Kyajakuziba, and grandmother, Ms. Amina Ndagire, raised me.

Kituntu village was very beautiful while I was growing up. We had a lot of trees and open spaces where



children played football.

My grandfather was a leader in the Islamic faith and he owned a lot of mailo land. He gave some to the Muslims in Kituntu and they constructed Kituntu Muslim Primary School, where I started my schooling.

When I turned seven, I was transferred to Kabale–Kooki Primary School. I used to play football at the school and it was while playing there that I stepped into a hole and broke my leg. I did not receive the right treatment and became lame from thereon. I recall someone from Concern Africa, who were paying my school fees, tried to get me the right treatment at Kitovu Hospital but because the doctors there wanted to amputate my leg, which was rotting, my parents took me from the hospital. I was treated by a local bonesetter and regained use of my leg, though I had to limp to be able to walk.

Regardless of my state, I enjoyed my childhood. I used to play football because it made me forget that I was lame. Interestingly, adults' awareness about my condition was heightened when I played football. They used to get entertained, seeing this little lame boy playing hard football.

Before my grandparents passed away, they used to ask me what I wanted to be. I would tell them

that I wanted to be a footballer. My grandparents however told me that I couldn't play football because I was lame. I then told them that I admired lawyers and doctors. I wanted to become a lawyer.

Unfortunately, I stopped schooling in Primary 7 because my grandfather, who used to pay my school fees, passed away. He was a coffee farmer and loved me very much. He passed away in 1997. I dabbled in farming, and later trained as a mechanic when my grandfather passed away.

I had relocated to Kampala and was working as a mechanic when I learned that TotalEnergies would be acquiring about a quarter acre of my land for the EACOP. In May 2018, I travelled from Kampala to the mosque in Kituntu where TotalEnergies held a meeting with project-affected persons. I told the meeting that I needed travel to and from Kampala for any meetings that were held and that this was expensive for me. I asked when the company intended to pay me as I wanted to minimise my travels. They said that they would be able to pay me in six months.

I asked them what would happen if they hadn't paid me in a year. They informed me that if they hadn't paid me by May 2019, they would pay me an interest of 30% of my

compensation. I was happy.

However, my happiness turned to anger when I saw the compensation that Total wanted to pay me. The company wanted to pay me Shs. 7 million (USD 1,784.35). We haggled until they agreed to pay me Shs. 12 million (USD 3,058). Mark you, my banana and coffee plants were also affected by the project. My property was assessed while I was in Kampala and I was informed that the following crops of mine were affected by the pipeline: 36 mature coffee plants, 48 immature coffee plants and bananas. Some of my coffee plants that had started flowering were assessed as being immature! Very little money was paid for immature plants. When it came to bananas, saplings were not assessed.

Because the compensation that I am supposed to receive is too little, I have refused it. Total's sub-contractors have tried to sweet talk me and have

sent emissaries to convince me to take their little pay. I have refused and when they visited me the last time at my home, I raised a very big alarm, the way Baganda do when a thief besieges them. I will not take Total's little money. In fact, I have told my wife and children that even if I died, they should not take Total's money if they don't change and pay better.

In February 2024, I received a January 2024 letter inviting me for a meeting in Kampala to discuss my refusal to accept compensation. The letter said that I am going to be sued and my compensation will be deposited with court. Whatever anyone says, I will not take little compensation.

My message to Total is: Before you celebrate 100 years, treat human beings as human beings. Don't take people's property for a pittance. I am a lame man, yet they want to take my property for free. That is unfair!



We got married in 1995 and lived a self-sufficient life but not anymore, thanks to Total's Tilenga project in Buliisa district.

Pitiyedi Mugisha,

47 years old, Female land user from Buliisa district

You know my name: it is Pitiyedi Mugisha. I am 47 years old and I am a mother of ten children. Of these, seven are biologically mine, while three are my brother's. My brother passed away and I took on his children.

I was born and raised in Kasinyi village in Buliisa district and when I came of age, I got married to my husband, Mr. Jealousy Mugisha. We got married in 1995 and lived a self-sufficient life until TotalEnergies

came to our village. The company displaced me and my family members not once, not twice, but thrice!

In this story, I tell the tale of the three times I have been displaced, and how I am suffering indignities.

Before my displacement, I was a farmer, and dabbled in agri-business.

I am a woman, and women are rarely landowners in my village. That means that even though I engaged in farming, I was not a landowner.



I was a land user, and part of the land which I farmed belonged to my husband's family. This land is located in Kisomero village, Nile parish, Ngwendo sub-county, Buliisa district. I used to grow cassava, maize, sweet potatoes and other crops for our home consumption and for sale.

I also rented land in Kasinyi village where I was growing crops as well as trees for timber. I planted the trees for commercial purposes. Timber in Buliisa is expensive and it is used for building. When one plants trees and they mature and one sells timber, one makes good money. I wanted to secure my family's future by planting trees.

In February 2019, my husband received an urgent phone call from the L.C.1 chairman of Kisomero village, Mr. Okumu Eken. Mr. Okumu told my husband, "You come, you come; your land is going to be taken for the Tilenga oil project." The land was acquired under Resettlement Action Plan 3A. (Land under Resettlement Action Plan 3A was acquired by TotalEnergies for wellpads, trunk lines, access roads and other infrastructure.)


I was using part of that land, which measures 2.5 acres, to grow crops. With my husband, we rushed to

Kisomero from Kasinyi village. We found that Atacama, Total's sub-contractor, had planted pegs in our land. Atacama told us that Total needed a 30-meter corridor for a Tilenga oil project pipeline.

Atacama asked me and others to stand in the pieces of land we were using to grow crops. Other people, besides myself, were also land users in the affected pieces of land. The land had small boundaries. Each of us had areas where we grew crops. Our details were captured, and so were our number of affected crops.

A cut-off date through which we were stopped from using our land to grow crops that take long to mature such as cassava was placed on our property in 2019. I was not compensated until 2023. The compensation I got for my crops was little. Because I was a land user and not a landowner, I was not compensated for the land. This means that I lost land on which I used to grow food for my family and for sale.

My family does not have enough food today. We are buying food; something we had never done before this [Tilenga] project. We had food security, but not anymore. Moreover, as a farmer, when you are not cultivating or digging, you miss many things. When you sell crops, you buy



school uniforms, sugar, clothes and others for the children. When you are not growing crops like we aren't, you cannot buy the above items. My children are suffering.

In 2019, the land that I was renting to grow trees and other crops was also compulsorily acquired under the Tilenga Resettlement Action Plan 5. The land was acquired for an access road to the Central Processing Facility (CPF) and Avogera Health Centre in Buliisa district. I was paid little compensation because again, as a woman, I was a land user, and not a landowner. But even landowners complain that they received little compensation. Maybe if that land had not been acquired, my husband and I would have been better able to take care of our children.

However, what hurts me most is the forced displacement that we suffered under Resettlement Action Plan 1. Our land was acquired by Total for the Tilenga Industrial Area, where the Central Processing Facility is being built. My husband and I had three houses on that land.

We had a house with two rooms. One room was for our daughter and another was for my husband and I. We also had another house that

was for our sons. Further, we had an animal shelter.

Total did not want to replace our houses, arguing that we were not primary residents. Total wanted to compensate us for the land only. My husband refused the compensation and government sued him and eight others. In 2021, the High Court in Masindi ruled in government's favour and said that our compensation should be deposited in court. AFIEGO supported us to appeal the ruling but the case has never been fixed for hearing.

We live in distress today. Because Total refused to construct for us a house, my family and I live in a one-bedroom shelter. I share a room with my daughter and my husband. We have no privacy and dignity. My poor sons cannot live with us. Every night, they walk for 350 metres to a neighbour's place to sleep there. Moreover, because of strong winds and rain, one of the walls of the house we live in collapsed. We are doing really badly.

As Total marks its 100-year anniversary, I ask them to be fair to communities. They should provide houses for those they displaced and pay adequate compensation.



Do you want to know what the Tilenga oil project's legacy is in my life? A broken family!

Leunia Okella Itho,

Elderly woman from Buliisa district

Do you want to know what the Tilenga oil project's legacy is in my life? A broken family! Before I speak about the Tilenga project, let me introduce myself properly. My name is Leunia Okella Itho. I am 71 years old. I was born and raised in Pakwach in the West Nile region in Uganda.

In 1977, I got married to a man from Buliisa and I moved to the district. I

settled in the district and we lived in relative peace.

In 2018, however, TotalEnergies' sub-contractors on the Tilenga oil project came to my village in Buliisa. The village is called Avogera. We were informed that our land was going to be acquired under Resettlement Action Plan 3A. (Land under Resettlement Action Plan 3A



was acquired by Total for wellpads, trunk lines, access roads and other infrastructure.]

Our property was assessed with mine being assessed in my absence. When the sub-contractors on the Tilenga project brought me disclosure forms in 2019 showing me my affected property, I was shocked! Major crops of mine, especially cassava (mature and young), cowpeas and trees were not included in the assessment. Only my moringa, banana and pineapple plants, which were inter-cropped with the cassava, were captured. I refused to sign the disclosure form. Instead, I signed a grievance form.

A Community Liaison Officer (CLO) did another assessment to capture my missing crops. In 2020, before my missing crops were captured on the disclosure form, however, the Tilenga project land acquisition sub-contractors told me that I needed to sign my compensation form. They told me that if I did not sign for my compensation of Shs. 1.4 million (USD 356.9), it would be deposited in the bank and the amount would keep reducing due to bank charges. The Shs. 1.4 million was my compensation for crops only.

I was scared and I unwillingly signed

for the little compensation. I was informed that my missing crops, and orphan land, which had been assessed, would be valued and I would receive compensation later on. Nothing has been done up to date!

Surprisingly, in early February 2024, a Community Liaison Officer from Total came inquiring if my grievances were handled and requested for my grievance form. I gave her the form. She tried to convince me to close the grievance before my grievances were handled. I refused!

In late February 2024, another Community Liaison Officer came and claimed that my grievance was closed. I said that it was not. I was advised to open a new form and Total handles my issue. I do not understand these people's behaviour!

Away from the compensation for crops, my husband and I lost half an acre of land. My crops were on that land. My husband was convinced to accept cash compensation for the land, while I wanted land for land. My husband and I needed to be on the same page to receive our compensation. Total's officials and the company's sub-contractors have tried all possible ways to make me to accept cash compensation

for my land. They even tried to use my husband but my children and I refused. We want land for land.

My husband was angry with me and he left! He took his clothes and put up with another woman!

Look at me, I am an old woman. I am in my final years and should be resting. However, I have lost a husband, and land that I have never been compensated for. Today, I have little land to grow food. This means that I cannot take care of

my grandchildren. I am a mother of six, and a grandmother of many. I worry about providing food for my household all the time.

As Total celebrates 100 years of its existence, I ask them to think about how people, especially the women, affected by their projects are suffering. Total should pay women and others compensation due to them. The company should also initiate projects for affected women to support their livelihoods.





Why at this old age of mine am I involved in the fight of my life with EACOP?

Teddy Nakintu,

Elderly person from Lwengo district

The world had just come out of the second big war (World War II) when I was born on October 10, 1945. I was born in Minziro—Geera, on the border between Uganda and Tanzania.

Ugandans, and even Tanzanians, fought in that war. It is as if the year I was born was a precursor of what would come later on in my life.

Otherwise, what else could explain why at this old age of mine (78) I am involved in the fight of my life with EACOP?

The company is acquiring part of the land where I live in Lwengo district for their pipeline. In March 2018, officials who identified themselves as working on behalf of Total came with the chairman of our village, Mr. Abdu Segawa, and told my family that our land was needed for the EACOP.

I am a widow, and though I gave birth to twelve children, I have only one surviving son, Kasimu Katoogo. I also have ten grandchildren.

Pegs were planted in my land to



show where the pipeline would pass. When I saw those pegs, all my peace disappeared. I have only known sorrow and disease since.

The pipeline is supposed to pass only a few metres from my home. If anyone stood at the edge of my house, they would be able to throw a stone where the pipeline would pass. Even I, who is no longer energetic because I am so sickly these days, would be able to throw that stone.

I don't want to live near a pipeline. The noise and dust during the construction activities would make even strong youthful people sick. Now, what about me? I am also worried about my house. It could develop cracks due to the vibrations from the construction activities. I have heard that this happened in Bunyoro.

I am also worried about crime. Imagine me, a vulnerable old woman living in a construction area where a lot of migrant workers are. Anything can happen.

I have so many worries, so much so that I have developed high blood pressure. I used the compensation that

was paid to me for my land that was taken for the EACOP on treatment. I did not use it to replace the land taken for the project!

I have tried to engage the EACOP Company so that they physically relocate me without success. In November 2023, for instance, I wrote to the EACOP Company asking them to relocate me from near their planned pipeline. I want them to acquire the land on which my house is sitting, so that I can acquire land elsewhere and build a house.

In the letter that I wrote to the EACOP Company, I informed them that I live with some of my grandchildren, some of whom are below the age of 10. I indicated that I was afraid that living so near the EACOP construction site will increase my grandchildren's risk to construction accidents.

I also told the company that I was worried that my house could develop cracks during the EACOP construction, not to mention the fact that my blood pressure could increase due to the vibrations from the construction works.

The company wrote back to me saying that they would not relocate me, and should my house develop cracks, they would repair it.

This made me sad. I am an old woman. I was living in peace before this pipeline, and caused no one any harm. I wonder why I am being punished. All I ask is for the EACOP Company to relocate me.

Because I have been complaining, I have also not received the livelihood restoration assistance

that the company is giving to other community members. Other affected people have been receiving seeds but because my son, who is speaking on my behalf, has raised my grievances, he is always told that we are not on the list of people that are to receive livelihood restoration.

Just this month (March), he was chased away when the livelihood restoration assistance was being given out.



I am a prisoner on my own land. Can you believe that? A prisoner on my own land!

Fred Balikenda,

44 years old, Buliisa district

I grew up in the open savanna lands of Buliisa. I was raised in Kirama village where I still live today. I had a good childhood. My father had some money because he was a fisherman, farmer and businessman. He provided life's necessities for my siblings and I. Life was simple yet fulfilling.

When I came of age, I established my own home in Kirama village, Kigwera sub-county, Buliisa district. I married a wife and we were blessed with some children. I continued to enjoy

the open savanna lands of my village, where freedom and joy abounded.

In July 2018, however, my world was turned upside down when TotalEnergies informed me that my family of 14 members was going to be displaced for the Tilenga oil project. We were displaced under the Tilenga project Resettlement Action Plan 2. [Total acquired land for wellpads, flowlines and access roads under the Tilenga Resettlement Action Plan 2].



When I first heard that I was going to be displaced, I was filled with dread. I thought to myself: where will I put my children and other family members? I liked where I lived. I used to grow crops and raise animals to take care of my family. We were comfortable.

I could not resist my displacement, however, because we know that the Ugandan government is empowered to compulsorily acquire land for public projects, among other things. When offered a choice between cash and in-kind compensation, I opted for in-kind compensation. Total was supposed to construct a replacement house for me and my family members.

Before Total had completed my replacement house, however, the company told me that my family and I were to be temporarily relocated. That was in February 2022. I asked myself: what are these people thinking? I have never rented a house in my life. The concept of renting houses is alien to a lot of us rural people. I am also a farmer. I raise animals. I wondered how I would live in a rented property with my animals. Further, my family is big. I wondered if we could comfortably live in a small rented house.

I resisted the temporary relocation and when I did, Total erected a chain

link fence around my home. Imagine my family and I that used to roam the savanna lands fenced up! We felt mentally tortured! We felt like we had been imprisoned in our own land!

Further, the access roads that we used to use were fenced off too. Our animals could not access food and they died. My children dropped out of school due to the death of our animals, which we used to use to generate income.

My wife was also affected as the access roads that she used to use to go and collect water or firewood were closed. We also used to use the access roads to access toilets, as ours had collapsed and because Total told us not to set up any new developments after a cut-off date was placed on our property, we did not set up a toilet. When Total fenced us off, they took away our dignity.

Total eventually completed my replacement house in 2023 but I refused to relocate to it. I told the company that they needed to pay me damages to cover the losses that I incurred when they turned me into a prisoner on my own land. We held a few negotiations with the company and these failed. The company refused to pay me.

In December 2023, the Ugandan government sued 42 families that were involved in disputes with Total. The Ugandan government sued us because Total is acquiring land on government's behalf. Uganda's laws empower government, and no one else, to compulsorily acquire land.

The case against the 42 families was filed, heard and ruled upon by the High Court in Hoima district in four days. Can you imagine that? The court said that our compensation could be deposited in court. I am supposed to be forcibly relocated!

I am waiting for Total or its sub-

contractors to forcibly relocate me. I have told anyone who will listen that should they dare try to relocate me without compensating me for the damages they have caused against me, I will pitch a tent outside my land and sleep there. I will not leave my land before I am paid.

My message to Total as they celebrate their 100th year anniversary is: compensate me for the human rights violations committed against me and my family. In addition, if I had the power, I would tell the company to go back to their home country (France). They have caused enough trouble in Buliisa.



I am in pain. A lot of it. I cry a lot, hoping that the pain will cease, but it stays with me.

Doreen Bikara,

47-year-old widow, Buliisa district


I am in pain. A lot of it. I cry a lot, hoping that the pain will cease, but it stays with me. Sometimes I feel like I am an animal. Like I am nothing! Like I do not matter! I have not always felt this way. I had a good life before I heard about TotalEnergies' Tilenga oil project that is hosted in my home district, Buliisa.

I was born on November 7, 1976 to Ms. Specioza Bujune and Mr. Cosmas Kasoro. I was born in Kirama village, Kigwera subcounty Buliisa district. This is where I was raised. I lived among my kith and kin from the Nyakamwoli clan. Traditionally, my

people own land communally, based on our clan system.

My parents were careful in the way they raised us. They taught us discipline and to respect others as well as ourselves. I did not get a chance to go to school but I cannot say why. My parents did not tell me why they did not take me to school. As a child, I participated in doing the household chores and in farming.

In 1995, I got married to my first husband, Mr. Stanley Byarugahara, and we had five children. He was poisoned and he died.



Thereafter, I got married to my second husband, Mr. Samuel David. Unfortunately, he drowned in Lake Albert and passed away on March 8, 2018. His death was painful, even more so because he left me with two-month-old twins. We had been married for one year when he passed away.

I was living on land belonging to my husband's clan, the Basiita, when my husband passed away. I tried to continue living there but my in-laws mistreated and insulted me. I left, and returned to my family's clan land in Buliisa.

I was warmly welcomed and comforted by my family. They also gave me space to put up my small house, which I shared with my seven children. I built the house myself, but my uncle supported me.

It was while living there that on February 27, 2024, Total's Community Liaison Officer and other people came to my home. They told me to demolish my house and cut the plants I had on my land. I was given up to March 5, 2024 to have done the above, lest armed forces be brought in to forcibly evict me.

I asked Total's Community Liaison

Officer and the people he was with: why don't you compensate me, a poor widow, so that I go and look for somewhere else to stay? They refused and said that I must leave.

In March 2024, I got a hammer and knocked down my house. I demolished it due to fear. I also cut my watermelon plants. I had over 300 plants of watermelon, which I destroyed. I did this because I did not want armed forces being brought to my home as promised by Total's Community Liaison Officer.

I also distributed my children, the youngest of whom are my five-year-old twins to relatives and started living at a church, Kirama Mircale Centre.

I am in pain today. I feel like my children, who lost their fathers, have lost another parent. I cannot live with them. I have no dignity, and my life is a mess.

At the church, I have no privacy and children play with my bedsheets. I also stay up at night until congregants are done with their prayers. I also have to be ready to wake up any time people come to the church in need of prayers. Some people come in when they are possessed by demons! The terror I feel is indescribable! I am grateful to the

church, however, because they have provided me with shelter.

I and six other family members were evicted from our land for the Tilenga oil project without compensation. Between us, we had over 2,610 plants on three acres of land including watermelon, cassava, neem trees, *musizi* (indigenous) trees and others. My family members destroyed their houses, and some of their plants. Some are holding onto their plants but they are being intimidated by district security officials who are telling them that they must cut down their trees for the Tilenga project.

We did not get compensation because our land was claimed by another family. The land has been in our family for many years but because of oil in Buliisa, land grabbing has increased. Sometimes I wonder why oil was discovered in Buliisa. That oil is bad! I feel like it came to kill us people of Buliisa!

If I could speak with Total, I would tell them: Total, you come and listen to us. Compensate us and respect women as well as children's rights. Treat us like the human beings we are.

Alice Kemizano,

49 years old, EACOP-affected widow
from Kakumiro district

**I will not exchange my
12-roomed house for the
EACOP standard houses,
which have few rooms. No,
I will not.**

I am a widow and this is one of the properties that my late husband left me. My husband and I moved to Mabegere village in Kasana town council in Kakumiro district from Ntungamo district.

Some of our relatives had emigrated here and we followed them. We set up a life for ourselves, and our six children. I started engaging in large- and small-scale farming, which I do today. I grow cassava, coffee, mangoes, bananas and other crops.

I also rear animals and I am involved in the animal feeds business. I was engaged in my farming business when

in 2017, I saw some white people. They came to my home and informed me that they have discovered oil in Uganda.

They further told me that the government has allowed them to extract the oil and that they were going to construct a pipeline to transport the oil. They informed me that their pipeline will be passing in my land and promised to give me a lot of money to start my life afresh somewhere away from the pipeline.

On hearing that I was going to receive a lot of money, I accepted and told the people that they could use



my land. However, when they later disclosed the compensation that they were to pay for my four acres of land, 12-roomed permanent house, fruit trees such as mangoes and avocados, indigenous trees as well as plants such as cassava, coffee and others, the money was too little!

I refused the compensation and engaged in a protracted fight with EACOP until August 2023 when it was agreed that I would be compensated for my land and crops, but not my house. The company said that they would replace my house but I told them I can't accept the standard houses they build for people as my house is big. I was then told that my house would not be acquired.

I have no problem with Total. I had some problems because they delayed to pay widows like me but after they paid me, I have no problem with the company. I must, however, admit that I am worried. What if these people come and start constructing their pipeline and they destroy my house, which will be near the pipeline? I am not sure that I am safe.

As Total Energies marks its 100th year anniversary, I ask them not to interfere with our land that has not been affected by the project. I also hope that my house will not be destroyed during the EACOP construction activities.



After the EACOP project came, I no longer have enough land. I am forced to rent land to grow food.

Rachael Tugume,

29 years old, Hoima district

Before the EACOP project came to my village, some Ugandans would perhaps have described me as a lucky woman. While women in Uganda rarely inherit land, I inherited some in Kijumba village in Hoima district.

My land came in handy because as a single mother with two biological children and as a caretaker of two other children, I needed land to make a living. I used to use this land to engage in farming and I planted crops such as ginger, turmeric, cassava and beans. We consumed some of the

crops at home, while I sold the rest to earn an income.

My land was my prized asset. In 2018, however, people who introduced themselves as being from NewPlan came to my land. NewPlan is a sub-contractor of Total that is acquiring land for the EACOP on the company's behalf.

The people surveyed my land and told me that it was going to be taken for the EACOP. They asked how I acquired the land and I told them that I inherited it. After they had surveyed



and assessed my property, they promised to return with assessment results.

After two years, they brought me assessment forms that indicated that I was to receive Shs. 500,000 [USD 127.45] for 0.089 acres of land. I did not understand these measurements because we measure our land in *misiri*, or plots. My affected land was one plot, whose market value was Shs. 4 million [USD 1,019.6]. My land is near a main road, making it more valuable.

I was also informed that I would receive money for my affected crops, which were on the land that was to be taken for the EACOP. Some of my crops were not listed on the assessment forms.

Given the fact that I was not happy with the compensation that I was to be given, I complained and I was advised to fill a grievance form. I did. Later, however, I was requested to close the grievance on the grounds that my issues had been resolved, yet they had not. I refused to close the grievance.

In December 2022, however, I accepted to receive compensation and signed for it as I had a lot of debts. My grievances were yet to be resolved but I was desperate.

In 2023, people from the EACOP Company brought me consent forms to sign but I refused as my grievances had not yet been handled. I had requested them to show me clear demarcations showing where their pipeline would pass in my land but they did not. On my refusal to sign the consent forms, the people from EACOP Company met with our village local council chairperson who signed the consent form before I did.

Todate, I have not given consent for my land to be taken for the EACOP. That project has changed my life. Before it came to our village, I used to have adequate food and enough land, which was fertile. After the project came, I no longer have enough land. I am forced to rent land to grow food for my family. This land is not fertile yet whether you get yields or not, you have to pay rent to the landowner. I am incurring a lot of costs to provide food for my family. My income also reduced, and I have been forced to take my children to village schools, which do not provide good quality education.

As Total Energies celebrates 100 years of its existence, I ask them to think about our suffering. Our human rights have been violated and no one should celebrate another's suffering.

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