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**BREAKTHROUGH IN 11-YEAR OIL REFINERY CASE: COURT DIRECTS PARTIES
TO CONDUCT JOINT VALUATION**

Today (May 21, 2025), the Hoima High Court heard the compensation case filed by oil refinery project-affected persons (PAPs) against the Ugandan government in 2014. Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) supported the people to file the case.

The people were displaced from over 29 sq. km of land by government starting in 2012. The land is located in Kabaale parish, Buseruka sub-county, Hoima district.

The people were displaced for the Kabaale Industrial Park which will be home to infrastructure such as an oil refinery, Hoima International Airport and petrochemical factories. The East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) will also start from this industrial park.

Today's hearing was presided over by Justice Vincent Opyene.

COURT PROCEEDINGS

Representing the Attorney General's office was Counsel Allan Mukama, while the oil refinery project-affected persons (PAPs) were represented by Counsel Peter Arinaitwe and Counsel Allan Bariyo. All the oil refinery-affected people except two that filed the case (plaintiffs), were present in court. So was a valuer that AFIEGO contracted to provide evidence to court that the people's property was under-valued, resulting in under-compensation.

During the hearing, the presiding judge expressed concern over the prolonged nature of the case, emphasizing that compensation matters should not be allowed to drag on for over a decade. As a result, and in a significant development, Justice Opyene directed the oil refinery PAPs and government to conduct a joint valuation exercise and urgently harmonize their position as regards the true value of the oil refinery-affected people's property.

The judge asked the aforementioned two parties to thereafter submit a joint valuation report and a consent agreement to court.

The directive requires the Chief Government Valuer and a private valuer appointed by the PAPs to work together over the next two months to establish a mutually agreeable compensation valuation. The outcome will be presented to court at the next sitting.

This development means that the PAPs could receive higher compensation than previously offered, especially if the new joint assessment reflects the true, updated value of their land and property.

NEXT STEPS

- 1. Joint Valuation Process:** Both parties' valuers are to meet, assess, and agree on fair compensation figures within two months.
- 2. Submission to Court:** A final joint valuation report and consent will be filed in court at the next hearing date.
- 3. Continued Monitoring:** The PAPs as well as their legal and advocacy representatives will monitor and ensure fairness in the valuation process.
- 4. The case will come up for mention** on August 27, 2025.
- 5. Court will also hear** the other issues that are raised in the case.

It will be recalled that in addition to seeking court's intervention over the compensation dispute, the PAPs are also seeking the following from court:

- A declaration that the compensation rates used by government to acquire the oil refinery land were outdated.
- A declaration that the use of cut-off dates through which land use restrictions were placed on the affected people's property was unfair and unconstitutional.
- A declaration that the compensation process violated the PAPs' rights under Uganda's Constitution.
- A directive to government to put in place regulations for the assessment and payment of compensation.
- An order to the government to pay general damages to the affected people.

REACTIONS

Mr. Innocent Tumwebaze, the chairperson of the Oil Refinery Residents Association (ORRA), said after the hearing, "The judge's directive is a welcome intervention. We hope that from here on, our case will be heard, concluded and justice served."

Ms. Amina Acola Amina, a Legal Associate at AFIEGO said after the hearing, "The directive we have been given today is vital for the resolution of the longstanding compensation dispute between government and the oil refinery project affected persons. We hope that government will take advantage of this opportunity to uphold the constitutional rights of the people by agreeing to pay them fair and adequate compensation."

ENDS

For more information, contact:

Mr. Innocent Tumwebaze

Chairperson, ORRA

innocenttwz@gmail.com

Ms. Diana Nabiruma

Senior Communications Officer, AFIEGO

dnabiruma@afiego.org



Some of the oil refinery-affected people, their lawyers and AFIEGO staff after the hearing