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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
KAMPALA, UGANDA**

MISSING FILE DELAYS HEARING OF EACOP-AFFECTED PEOPLE'S CASES

Hearing of two cases filed by seven households whose land is being compulsorily acquired for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) in the Greater Masaka sub-region was deferred yesterday (August 18, 2025) after the case files went missing.

The cases include applications for an interim and temporary/main stay of execution that the affected people filed in December 2024 with the support of Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO).

Through the cases, the households are seeking court's intervention to stop the Ugandan government from evicting them and demolishing their property to make way for the EACOP project. The cases were filed before the Masaka High Court.

BACKGROUND

The people's case arose from an August 2024 case that was filed by the Ugandan government. Through the case, government sued 80 people with interest in 41 parcels of EACOP-affected land. The people were from Lwengo, Rakai and Kyotera districts in Southern Uganda.

Government sued the people because some rejected compensation for their EACOP-affected land on grounds that it is low. Others lacked letters of administration while others were absentee landlords.

Government asked court to allow it to deposit the affected people's compensation in court. Government also prayed for eviction and demolition orders against the people.

In October 2024, Justice Lawrence Tweyanze of Masaka High Court ruled that government could deposit the affected people's compensation in court and could evict them as well as demolish their property.

The people filed an appeal, and the interim as well as temporary stay of execution, to stop their eviction and demolition of their property for the EACOP project.

DISAPPOINTED BUT NOT GIVING UP

Following failure by the Masaka High Court to hear the people's cases, the affected people and their lawyers expressed disappointment, but they noted that they would not give up the pursuit for justice.

Mr. Cosmas Yiga, an applicant and EACOP-affected person, said, *"We are deeply disappointed. Justice delayed is justice denied and it is disheartening that the judiciary which should protect our rights is instead playing games with vulnerable people's lives. Our lives are hanging in the balance."*

Ms. Kizza Nambatya, an affected person and another applicant, said, *"I feel disappointed that the judge at Masaka High Court did not hear our case. It is troubling and suspicious that our file could simply go missing. As a woman and a mother, I carry the burden of worrying about my family's survival. Still, I will not give up, I will continue to speak up for my rights and rights of my community at large."*

Mr. Peter Arinaitwe, one of the lawyers of the affected people said, *"It is unfortunate that the people's file could not be located and the applications could not proceed. The affected people are on the verge of eviction and are counting on court to salvage the situation. Having spoken to the judge who assured us that the matter would be given fresh dates, we want to give court the benefit of doubt and hope that the affected people get justice when their case is finally heard."*

WAY FORWARD

The affected people's cases are to be heard by Justice Fatuma Nanziri Bwanika of Masaka High Court. The judge observed that once the clerk locates the affected people's file, new hearing dates will be shared with the affected people's lawyers.

.....**ENDS**.....

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