

#STOP EACOP

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Protests at Chinese Embassies in Uganda and Tanzania Condemn President Xi's Support for EACOP, Seven Arrested

KAMPALA, Uganda (27th May 2024) – Protests over the devastating community impacts of the controversial East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project and the associated oil field projects led to seven arrests outside the Chinese Embassy in Uganda on Monday. The StopEACOP coalition activists voiced concerns over Chinese President Xi Jinping's reported [endorsement](#) of the pipeline and China's [consideration](#) of financing the project through its state-owned banks and insurers. They had sat down on the grass across the road from the embassy - taking a principled decision not to leave until an official from the embassy received a packet of materials, which included [a statement of grievances and demands from CSOs](#), and a [petition from project-affected people](#). No official came out to engage them. Instead, the peaceful demonstrators were rounded up and arrested.

Simultaneous protests organized by civil society groups working with EACOP project-affected people in Tanzania took place outside the Chinese Embassy in Tanzania as well, with communities in both nations pleading that China and Chinese institutions refuse the pressure to give this project a lifeline. While the Chinese embassy officials in Tanzania accepted the materials from the protestors, those in Uganda ignored the request.

The arrests in Uganda's capital came as the activists attempted to deliver statements highlighting the severe economic, social, and environmental impacts on local communities and other project-affected people. Disrupted livelihoods, loss of land and coercive displacement without adequate compensation, lack of access to essential services at relocation sites, and environmental degradation were among the grievances expressed.

Those arrested were Barigye Bob, Katiiti Noah, Mwesigwa Newton, Byaruhanga Julius, Ndyamwesigwa Desire, Binntukwanga Raymond, and Jealousy Mugisha Mulimbwa. The seven have since been charged with unlawful assembly. Yesterday, after spending the night at Jinja Road Police Station, they were released on a police bond and are expected to report back to the police on June 6th 2024.

Since EACOP activities began in Uganda, families have been suffering, losing homes, land, and ways of life that have sustained them for generations. In Tanzania, project-affected people

whose land is needed for the EACOP project were given an eviction notice with an unreasonable deadline, causing distress and uncertainty for their families. The eviction disregarded their pending crop harvest, thereby undermining their livelihood.

The protests at the Chinese embassies follow an emotional [press conference](#) on Saturday, during which impacted community members from both countries shared heart-wrenching testimonies about EACOP's negative life-altering impacts. One project-affected woman emotionally narrated how the project proponents took advantage of their lack of education and presented them with lengthy documents about the project written in English, which they could not fully understand. According to the woman's testimony, affected people trusted the project proponents' promises of "heaven on earth" but are now facing famine and land grabbing, and children are dropping out of school due to loss of income for school fees. Despite repeated efforts by affected people and civil society to raise concerns, governments and the project developers have either widely ignored the voices of those displaced or actively repressed them.

The StopEACOP coalition and its allies, continue to call on Chinese leadership, banks, and other potential financiers to withdraw their support for EACOP, a clearly illegitimate project strongly opposed by people. We also urge them to invest instead in renewable energy solutions and respect community rights and environmental protections.

The StopEACOP coalition and its allies urge the international community to take notice of the escalating civil resistance and join the calls to halt this destructive and repressive project immediately.

Quotes

"China has great potential to create positive South-South developmental partnerships in Africa, which could challenge Western dominance and its exploitative practices. However, China's current relationship with the continent, as seen in its support for the EACOP project, often mimics these very same extractive, destructive and exploitative practices. We stand behind communities fully in their insistence that China should withdraw the support of the multiple Chinese state-owned companies for EACOP and respect the rights and aspirations of communities." - **Zaki Mamdo, StopEACOP Campaign Coordinator**

"The Ugandan government and Chinese Embassy in Uganda's silence regarding the arrests of peaceful protesters opposing EACOP is an indication of the suppression of dissent. We stand in solidarity with the activists who have been detained and support those who will continue to fight for their rights, the rights of affected communities and a sustainable future. This is another opportunity for China to show leadership by condemning the arrests and denouncing this controversial project." - **Samuel Okulony, from Environment Governance Institute (EGI)**

"We commend the courage of Tanzanian civil society groups who protested outside the Chinese Embassy. The acceptance of our materials by embassy officials in Tanzania offers a glimmer of

hope for constructive dialogue. We urge the Chinese government to follow suit and reject pressure to finance EACOP. Instead, China should support sustainable development initiatives in the region that empower communities and protect our environment." - **Richard Senkondo from Organization for Community Engagement (OCE)**,

"The world needs to hear the cries of our communities! EACOP is a dirty project that destroys our environment and our way of life. The Ugandan government's crackdown on peaceful protests is a shameful attempt to silence our voices. We will not be silenced! President Xi Jinping's endorsement of EACOP is a betrayal of climate action and a slap in the face to Ugandan and Tanzanian youth fighting for a better future. We urge all financiers to reject EACOP and support the growing movement for renewable energy solutions." - **Prisca Kajumba, Fridays for Future Uganda**

Photos and videos from yesterday's actions can be found [here](#).

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