

February 23, 2022

**The Chairperson,
Uganda Human Rights Commission,
Kampala-Uganda**

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: PETITION FROM HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS (HRDs) AND THE OIL
AFFECTED COMMUNITIES AGAINST HARASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION BY
SECURITY AGENCIES IN THE DISTRICTS OF BULIISA AND HOIMA**

Introduction

This petition presents the previous and current human rights violations of the HRDs and oil-affected communities in Hoima and Buliisa districts.

Like many other HRDs who speak out against oil-related issues, the Oil and gas Region Human Rights Defenders Association (ORGHA) members have repeatedly been threatened and intimidated. In recent weeks, some have received anonymous threatening phone calls. Civil society and affected communities have been unable to meet and speak freely about the impacts of oil projects which is against their constitutional right assembly. This is unacceptable. Moreover, this type of response by the Ugandan authorities sends a chilling message to all those who may attempt to assert their rights or defend the rights of others, thereby contributing to the destruction of civic space in Uganda

Human and Environmental rights activists under the "Oil and Gas Human Rights Defenders Association" (ORGHA) consider the increasing harassment by law enforcement officers to be illegal and baseless as some of the ORGHA members have been arrested and others forced to abandon their work. The activists are concerned that the Resident District Commissioner (RDC), DISO, and Police disband their gatherings/meetings for unjustified reasons hence the disproportionate restriction to their freedom of assembly and their freedom of expression.

Below are some incidents of intimidation and harassment which have been faced by HRDs in Buliisa in the year 2021, Unfortunately, we anticipate there will be more in 2022 as mentioned below;

- On 7th October 2021, the RDC, DISO, District Community Development Office (DCDO), and Police officials in Buliisa district closed the ORGHA contact office hosted by the Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) and Navigators of Development Association (NAVODA) and stopped meetings organised by ORGHA to sensitize Project affected Persons (PAPs) in the Albertine region on how to demand fair, prompt and timely compensation. ORGHA activists' battle with multinational companies

and their subcontractors, some greedy local and National authorities, and corrupt officials in matters of land grabbing and inadequate and delayed compensation when they attempt to defend vulnerable groups such as poor project affected persons, children, and women.

- On 25th May 2021 an ORGHA member, Mr. Maxwell Atuhura was arrested at Adonia Hotel Buliisa Town by Police on orders of RDC and DISO Buliisa district. He spent more than 48 hours in cells in Buliisa and Hoima Central police stations and he was released on police bond and charged for unlawful assembly (Ref: BULIISA GEF/04/2021). To date, the police still have some of his belongings like two phones, a field camera, recorder, diary, class notes, and some documents of his work. Furthermore, the regional CID sitting at Hoima Regional police station asked Maxwell to write a letter asking for his property, which he did however, he has never received his property
- On 7th October ORGHA's certificate of registration, constitution, minutes, board resolutions, and other papers in a file were forcefully confiscated by the DCDO for reasons unknown to members. When the chairperson, ORGHA followed up on the issue, the DCDO revealed to him that the file was given to the RDC.

Thereafter Mr. Jos Mugisa the chairperson of ORGHA was arrested on October 14, 2021, when he was accused of violence and verbal abuse within his family. He was then remanded to Masindi prison until November 10, 2021.

- The signposts of ORGHA's partners AFIEGO and NAVODA were vandalized and taken to an unknown place on 19th October 2021. According to neighbors, armed men came at around 11 pm in the night and ordered everybody to enter their houses, and the following day, the signposts were missing. This incident happened one week after the DCDO had informed one ORGHA member to have the signposts removed or else, they would use force on orders of the RDC. We reported the theft of those signposts to Buliisa Central police (SD REF: 21/19/10/2021) but no follow-up was done by the police. Something happened for the second time. Secondly, Mr. Maxwell's house was broken into by unknown people who made away with school items. He reported the case to the same police station under reference number (SD 34/24/05/2021) but nothing was done.
- Some HRDs have to report the police station for endless police bonds. For instance, Mr. Maxwell Atuhura reports on police bonds since 27th May 2021. We believe security agencies are working to continuously intimidate and harass HRDs so they are unable to protect the rights of communities as well as protect the environment.

On June 2021 many ORGHA members were summoned under unclear circumstances to Buliisa Central police station over meeting PAPs in their villages. Among those summoned through a phone call to make statements, included Mr. Onen Charles, Ms. Judith, and Mr. Geoffrey.

Our Demands

ORGHA and her partners, we demand the following:

- Baseless cases on ORGHA members should be dropped as they seem to be merely aimed at punishing them for their human rights activities.
- Open our partners' office in Buliisa with immediate effect.
- The Police should return Mr. Maxwell's property that was confiscated during his arrest.
- Illegal verbal orders from the RDC must stop. Let all communication be clearly written.
- The security agencies in Buliisa should stop unnecessary arrests and interference in ORGHA's work.
- Cease any further harassment of ORGHA, AFIEGO, NAVODA, and other CSOs in Uganda.
- A public apology by police should be issued to the victims of this harassment and their families.
- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical integrity and psychological well-being of ORGHA members as well as all human rights defenders in Uganda.
- Put an end to any form of surveillance, intimidation, and harassment, including judicial harassment against HRDs in Uganda.
- Concrete actions should be taken to stop the repeated attacks on HRDs and journalists.

Conclusion

We thank you and your office for the good work towards the protection of human rights in the country. As ORGHA members, we hope that our demands in this petition are addressed with post and haste.

Signatures

We the undersigned call for immediate action,

Table 1

Table 1. Summary of the results of the regression analysis.

Variable	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	t-Statistic	Significance Level
Age	0.05	0.02	2.5	0.01
Gender	0.10	0.03	3.0	0.001
Education	0.08	0.02	4.0	0.0001
Income	0.12	0.04	3.0	0.001
Health	0.06	0.02	3.0	0.001
Marital Status	0.04	0.02	2.0	0.05
Occupation	0.07	0.02	3.5	0.0001
Religion	0.03	0.02	1.5	0.1
Political Party	0.05	0.02	2.5	0.01
Region	0.06	0.02	3.0	0.001
Urban/Rural	0.04	0.02	2.0	0.05
Time	0.03	0.02	1.5	0.1
Constant	1.50	0.10	15.0	0.0001

Year	Page	Page	Page	Page
1980	100	100	100	100
1981	101	101	101	101
1982	102	102	102	102
1983	103	103	103	103
1984	104	104	104	104
1985	105	105	105	105
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2025	145	145	145	145

Year	Month	Day	Event	Location	Notes
1950	Jan	1
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Sl. No.	Name	Registration No.	Grade	Remarks
1	Abhishek Kumar	10101	10	Pass
2	Adarsh Kumar	10102	10	Pass
3	Amit Kumar	10103	10	Pass
4	Anshu Kumar	10104	10	Pass
5	Arjun Kumar	10105	10	Pass
6	Ashish Kumar	10106	10	Pass
7	Ashish Kumar	10107	10	Pass
8	Ashish Kumar	10108	10	Pass
9	Ashish Kumar	10109	10	Pass
10	Ashish Kumar	10110	10	Pass
11	Ashish Kumar	10111	10	Pass
12	Ashish Kumar	10112	10	Pass
13	Ashish Kumar	10113	10	Pass
14	Ashish Kumar	10114	10	Pass
15	Ashish Kumar	10115	10	Pass
16	Ashish Kumar	10116	10	Pass
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18	Ashish Kumar	10118	10	Pass
19	Ashish Kumar	10119	10	Pass
20	Ashish Kumar	10120	10	Pass
21	Ashish Kumar	10121	10	Pass
22	Ashish Kumar	10122	10	Pass
23	Ashish Kumar	10123	10	Pass
24	Ashish Kumar	10124	10	Pass
25	Ashish Kumar	10125	10	Pass
26	Ashish Kumar	10126	10	Pass
27	Ashish Kumar	10127	10	Pass
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29	Ashish Kumar	10129	10	Pass
30	Ashish Kumar	10130	10	Pass
31	Ashish Kumar	10131	10	Pass
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33	Ashish Kumar	10133	10	Pass
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36	Ashish Kumar	10136	10	Pass
37	Ashish Kumar	10137	10	Pass
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40	Ashish Kumar	10140	10	Pass
41	Ashish Kumar	10141	10	Pass
42	Ashish Kumar	10142	10	Pass
43	Ashish Kumar	10143	10	Pass
44	Ashish Kumar	10144	10	Pass
45	Ashish Kumar	10145	10	Pass
46	Ashish Kumar	10146	10	Pass
47	Ashish Kumar	10147	10	Pass
48	Ashish Kumar	10148	10	Pass
49	Ashish Kumar	10149	10	Pass
50	Ashish Kumar	10150	10	Pass

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Sl. No.	Name	Registration No.	Grade	Remarks
1	Abhishek Kumar	12345	10	Pass
2	Amit Singh	12346	10	Pass
3	Anjali Sharma	12347	10	Pass
4	Arjun Reddy	12348	10	Pass
5	Ashika Devi	12349	10	Pass
6	Ashish Kumar	12350	10	Pass
7	Ashish Kumar	12351	10	Pass
8	Ashish Kumar	12352	10	Pass
9	Ashish Kumar	12353	10	Pass
10	Ashish Kumar	12354	10	Pass
11	Ashish Kumar	12355	10	Pass
12	Ashish Kumar	12356	10	Pass
13	Ashish Kumar	12357	10	Pass
14	Ashish Kumar	12358	10	Pass
15	Ashish Kumar	12359	10	Pass
16	Ashish Kumar	12360	10	Pass
17	Ashish Kumar	12361	10	Pass
18	Ashish Kumar	12362	10	Pass
19	Ashish Kumar	12363	10	Pass
20	Ashish Kumar	12364	10	Pass
21	Ashish Kumar	12365	10	Pass
22	Ashish Kumar	12366	10	Pass
23	Ashish Kumar	12367	10	Pass
24	Ashish Kumar	12368	10	Pass
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28	Ashish Kumar	12372	10	Pass
29	Ashish Kumar	12373	10	Pass
30	Ashish Kumar	12374	10	Pass
31	Ashish Kumar	12375	10	Pass
32	Ashish Kumar	12376	10	Pass
33	Ashish Kumar	12377	10	Pass
34	Ashish Kumar	12378	10	Pass
35	Ashish Kumar	12379	10	Pass
36	Ashish Kumar	12380	10	Pass
37	Ashish Kumar	12381	10	Pass
38	Ashish Kumar	12382	10	Pass
39	Ashish Kumar	12383	10	Pass
40	Ashish Kumar	12384	10	Pass
41	Ashish Kumar	12385	10	Pass
42	Ashish Kumar	12386	10	Pass
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52	Ashish Kumar	12396	10	Pass
53	Ashish Kumar	12397	10	Pass
54	Ashish Kumar	12398	10	Pass
55	Ashish Kumar	12399	10	Pass
56	Ashish Kumar	12400	10	Pass

No.	Name	Registration	Status	Remarks
1	Subbarao, J.	M/1980	Active	
2	Subbarao, M.	M/1980	Active	
3	Subbarao, S.	M/1980	Active	
4	Subbarao, V.	M/1980	Active	
5	Subbarao, Y.	M/1980	Active	
6	Subbarao, Z.	M/1980	Active	
7	Subbarao, A.	M/1980	Active	
8	Subbarao, B.	M/1980	Active	
9	Subbarao, C.	M/1980	Active	
10	Subbarao, D.	M/1980	Active	
11	Subbarao, E.	M/1980	Active	
12	Subbarao, F.	M/1980	Active	
13	Subbarao, G.	M/1980	Active	
14	Subbarao, H.	M/1980	Active	
15	Subbarao, I.	M/1980	Active	
16	Subbarao, J.	M/1980	Active	
17	Subbarao, K.	M/1980	Active	
18	Subbarao, L.	M/1980	Active	
19	Subbarao, M.	M/1980	Active	
20	Subbarao, N.	M/1980	Active	
21	Subbarao, O.	M/1980	Active	
22	Subbarao, P.	M/1980	Active	
23	Subbarao, Q.	M/1980	Active	
24	Subbarao, R.	M/1980	Active	
25	Subbarao, S.	M/1980	Active	
26	Subbarao, T.	M/1980	Active	
27	Subbarao, U.	M/1980	Active	
28	Subbarao, V.	M/1980	Active	
29	Subbarao, W.	M/1980	Active	
30	Subbarao, X.	M/1980	Active	
31	Subbarao, Y.	M/1980	Active	
32	Subbarao, Z.	M/1980	Active	
33	Subbarao, A.	M/1980	Active	
34	Subbarao, B.	M/1980	Active	
35	Subbarao, C.	M/1980	Active	
36	Subbarao, D.	M/1980	Active	
37	Subbarao, E.	M/1980	Active	
38	Subbarao, F.	M/1980	Active	
39	Subbarao, G.	M/1980	Active	
40	Subbarao, H.	M/1980	Active	
41	Subbarao, I.	M/1980	Active	
42	Subbarao, J.	M/1980	Active	
43	Subbarao, K.	M/1980	Active	
44	Subbarao, L.	M/1980	Active	
45	Subbarao, M.	M/1980	Active	
46	Subbarao, N.	M/1980	Active	
47	Subbarao, O.	M/1980	Active	
48	Subbarao, P.	M/1980	Active	
49	Subbarao, Q.	M/1980	Active	
50	Subbarao, R.	M/1980	Active	

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Date	Description	Debit	Credit	Balance
1900	Jan 1	100.00		100.00
1900	Jan 2	50.00		50.00
1900	Jan 3	25.00	100.00	75.00
1900	Jan 4		50.00	125.00
1900	Jan 5	75.00		150.00
1900	Jan 6	100.00	150.00	50.00
1900	Jan 7		75.00	125.00
1900	Jan 8	50.00		75.00
1900	Jan 9	25.00	75.00	50.00
1900	Jan 10		50.00	100.00
1900	Jan 11	75.00		25.00
1900	Jan 12	100.00	25.00	25.00
1900	Jan 13		75.00	100.00
1900	Jan 14	50.00		50.00
1900	Jan 15	25.00	50.00	25.00
1900	Jan 16		75.00	100.00
1900	Jan 17	100.00		0.00
1900	Jan 18	75.00	100.00	25.00
1900	Jan 19	50.00		-25.00
1900	Jan 20	25.00	25.00	-50.00

CC:

- Uganda Inspector general of police
- Speaker Parliament of Uganda
- Ministry of Justice and constitutional affairs.
- OHCHR Uganda
- The UN special rapporteurs
- Total Energies Uganda b
- Total Energies S.E
- District chairperson Buliisa