



July 27,2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KAMPALA \$ BULIISA

**PRESS RELESAE CONDEMING OIL DRILLING IN MURCHISON FALLS NATIONAL PARK.**

Centre for Environmental Research and agricultural Innovations (CERAI) is a non-Profit organisation aimed at environmental and natural resource Governance. The organization is committed to conserve and protect Uganda’s environment in its density through public policy research and advocacy to influence environmental, Energy and agricultural policies in favour of the local person.

CERAI and partners are concerned about Totalenrgyies shocking development of drilling oil in Uganda’s cherished Murchison falls National Park posing a severe threat to parks biodiversity, its status and the foundation of Uganda’s tourism sector .The national park is one of Uganda’s oldest, largest and most visited national park. The park is a sanctuary of global significance, recognized for its irreplaceable biodiversity and unparalleled natural beauty. Further ,the park is home to 76 species of mammals -including elephants, lions, and giraffes-, and over 450 bird species, making it a remarkable and unique, irreplaceable ecosystem.

However, the above tourism opportunities in the park, the shocking news of Total drilling oil activities in the park is alarming. The impacts of oil activities on wildlife are already very real with elephants increasingly going out of the national park, destroying the crops of neighbouring communities and endangering people especially women and children. The devastating impacts of oil activities on wildlife are already evident, as fleeing elephants venture into neighbouring communities, destroying crops, and posing threats to human lives. Tragically, women and children in Buliisa district, where MFNP is partly located, have lost their lives due to Total's Tilenga oil project activities.

The TotalEnergyies continues its greenwashing, noting that the drilling rig in MFNP “is painted with beige color to resemble the surrounding Savannah grasslands” to supposedly reduce the impact on wildlife. Total energies regularly alleges that its oil activities will only affect 0.003% of MFNP, ignoring that the impacts go way beyond the surface of the well pads. Roads have been built inside the park, with approximately 600 truck trips registered through the park per month during the construction phase. Over 2,000 trips a day (between wells) during the exploitation phase, translating into 61,600 a month are expected. The

impacts of oil activities on wildlife are already very real. In particular, fleeing the noise and dust, elephants are increasingly going out of the national park, destroying the crops of neighboring communities and endangering men, women and children.

Further, Women and children have been killed by elephants in Buliisa district, where MFNP is partly located, and Total's Tilenga oil project activities are concentrated. The decision by Total Energies and its partners to drill for oil within MFNP, while ignoring the biodiversity conservation, climate change and socio-economic risks of their ill-conceived Tilenga and EACOP projects, is a direct contradiction to the global urgency to protect the remaining wild spaces and reduce fossil fuel reliance.

It is clear that despite the global outcry and robust resistance from frontline communities and environmental groups, the interests of these oil companies are primarily focused on profit, with scant regard for the devastating environmental and socio-economic consequences their actions may unleash. While the ravages of climate change are being felt more than ever, Total is breaking every conceivable boundary by starting oil extraction in one of the world's most important biodiversity hotspots. The company is blinded by its quest for profits and develops its Tilenga and EACOP projects at all costs, despite the tourism opportunities of these ecosystems.

Therefore,

We condemn the actions of Total Energies and their partners in the strongest terms. The drilling that has begun to exploit this natural treasure for short-term gain starkly contrasts the global momentum towards sustainability, biodiversity conservation, and climate justice. Allowing the fossil fuel industry to operate with such impunity will lead us down a perilous path of destruction that jeopardises the wellbeing of wildlife, human beings and our planet

Further, Preserving Murchison Falls National Park and maintaining its biodiversity is a matter of national interest to Uganda and a global responsibility. We implore the international community, environmental activists, tourists, and all concerned individuals to join us in resisting this alarming venture.

Further we call on the government of Uganda and Total Energies to stop oil activities in Murchison Falls National Park and stop both human and wildlife violation that are increasing due to oil activities in the park.

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