



CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND AGRICULTURE INNOVATIONS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BULIISA AND KAMPALA

CALL TO ACTION: STOP OIL DRILLING IN MURCHISON FALLS NATIONAL PARK.

Today youth activists and grassroots oil affected communities from Uganda have come together for the day of action calling on TotalEnergies to stop the ongoing oil activities in the Murchison Falls National Park which is one of the largest parks in Uganda.

The available information indicates that over 75% of the total population are youth, in collective effort to safeguard their future and that of flora and fauna, youth are calling on the French giant TotalEnergies to suspend the ongoing oil activities in Uganda's largest national park.

In 2023, the French energy giant TotalEnergies kicked off drilling operations at one of the wells in the Murchison Falls National Park. The ongoing oil activities threatens not only the biodiversity of the park but also its standing as a beloved tourist hub and a key contributor to Uganda's economy.

The Murchison Falls National Park plays a crucial role in Uganda's tourism industry and generates significant revenue to the number of livelihoods not only to the surrounding communities but also the whole country. For instance in the year 2022, tourism accounted for 59% of Uganda's exports, earning the country USD 1.047 billion. Drilling for oil in MFNP puts these benefits at grave risk, threatening the socioeconomic fabric of Uganda.

It should be noted that Murchison Falls National Park, is one of Uganda's oldest, largest and most visited national parks. The park is recognized for its irreplaceable biodiversity and unparalleled natural beauty. 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.

Gerald Barekye who is the Chief Executive officer at Center for Environment Research and Agricultural Innovations (CERAI) adds, '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. 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 ongoing activities in National park should be suspended'.

James Kashoborozi who is the Youth mobilizer and climate Activist Says, 'The decision by TotalEnergies and its partners to drill 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 our 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 companies are primarily focused on profit, with scant regard for the devastating environmental and socio-economic consequences their actions may unleash.

The ongoing oil activities in the National park has greatly affected youth and women, and increased Human wildlife conflict which is threatening our livelihoods,' Komugisha Mercy youth gender activists.

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