



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL / 49th session / General Debate Item 4

Mister President,

I am Maxwell Atuhura, an Environmental and Human Rights Defender working with TASHA RESEARCH INSTITUTE AFRICA in the oil area in Uganda. I speak on behalf of CETIM and Friends of the Earth International.

For more than 3 years, the oil company TotalEnergies has limited 100 thousand people from working their land, even before getting a compensation. This undermines my community's rights to work, food, dignity and others. Moreover, this is against the Uganda Constitution and international standards.

130 out of 400 oil wells will be within the oldest and biggest National Park in Uganda. The pipeline will pass within the Lake Victoria basin. 40 million people are at risk if there is an oil spill.

Environmental and Human Rights Defenders who speak out against its impacts are harassed. Several organisations were closed. I myself was arrested. After that, several UN Special Rapporteurs have alerted the Ugandan and French governments. They asked to respect our rights, including our freedom of speech and of assembly to be respected. But The two governments never answered.

We ask the UN bodies and mechanisms, as well as its Member States, to use all means available to stop the harassment of Ugandan environmental and human rights defenders and civil society groups. Finally, the two governments have to respond and implement the Special Rapporteurs' recommendations.

Thank you for your attention,

Geneva, 21st March 2022