

APRIL, 2025 NEWSLETTER

THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE: STOPEACOP YOUTH ACTIVISTS DEMAND JUSTICE.



Youth activists at Nakawa Chief Magistrate Court

Dear reader, welcome to our April Newsletter.

In April 2025, YECA engaged youth activists against East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) who have been arrested, intimidated, and detained in police cells due to their opposition to the EACOP project. Since the kick-off of the EACOP project, environmental defenders against the fossil fuel industry have been criminalized with continuous arrests, detentions, and Human rights violations. On April 25, 2025, YECA participated in a court hearing for youth climate activists who were arrested at KCB bank Uganda when they had gone to deliver a letter calling on KCB bank to withdraw its funding for EACOP project.

The mentioned youth were arrested at the KCB bank premises while attempting to peacefully deliver a letter to KCB bank demanding the bank to withdraw its finance support to the EACOP project. The 11 arrested youth appeared in Nakawa Court on April 25, 2025, but unfortunately, the activists were remanded to Luzira Maximum prison until May 8, 2025.

Seeking justice in Uganda has become complex and frustrating experience for the youth activists against the construction of EACOP. The Judiciary continues not paying attention to these activists and some are students who need time to concentrate on their studies. The judiciary keeps postponing their cases a situation that has affected the lives of the affected activists, which has made them doubt the judicial systems in place.

It should be noted that since January 2025, 35 youth climate activists have been arrested as they come out the peacefully protest against the ongoing construction of the EACOP project. The arrests of youth climate activists have become a song of the day, and it's disheartening to see the judiciary seemingly politicize cases involving youth activists who oppose the EACOP project. The case of 11 youth activists is one of the many cases of youth activists that are opposing the construction of the EACOP project.

The struggle for justice for youth opposing the EACOP continues to be denied and we discuss more in this newsletter. Youth activists continue to call for space and justice for their cases to be heard and completed.

Further, the newsletter discusses activities that YECA has been able to implement in

April, for example on April 7, 2025, YECA supported the legal representation of 20 Youth activists, including oil-affected community representatives, who had been violently arrested in August 2024 and charged with common nuisance. Fortunately, the case was dismissed and activists were set free, we thank all partners that supported these activists.

Furthermore, on April 17, 2025, we supported the nine stopEACOP youth activist with legal representation at Nakawa Magistrate Court. The activists were arrested while delivering a letter to Stanbic Bank Uganda demanding the bank to withdraw its financing for the EACOP project. The case was also dismissed.

In addition, we organized a meeting with Environmental clubs at Makerere University to discuss areas for collaboration and increasing partnerships.

Furthermore, we organized a climate justice clean-up exercise with students from Makerere University and other institutions. The Exercise brought up over 100 participants to spread awareness about climate justice activists to conserve and keep Our Environment clean. We discuss others in our activity section.

We also share details of the activities implemented for April and our publications in the media.

Enjoy the newsletter

Ugandan Authorities Should Drop Charges against Youth Activists opposing the construction of East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP).

On April 25, 2025, the 11 youth activists who were arrested while attempting go deliver a letter at KCB bank offices in Kampala appeared in Nakawa magistrate court for case hearing. Unfortunately, the arrested activist did not get justice and the activists were remanded back to Luzira maximum prison until May 8, 2025.

Some of the arrested activists are students who need time to concentrate on their studies, unfortunately, the judiciary has not handled their case with urgency and this has disrupted the students' performances.

It should be noted that from January to April 2024, 35 youth climate activists have been

directly harassed and arrested whenever they come out to peacefully express themselves and show dissatisfaction over the ongoing EACOP project. Unfortunately, to date, these victims have not received justice. The government of Uganda continues to harass, intimidate, and detain youth activists against EACOP. The youth continue to be remanded to maximum security prisons and charged with the colonial era "common nuisance" offense, which Ugandan authorities have used to suppress legitimate protests.

Therefore, in April 2025, YECA engaged youth activists who have been victims

of police brutality to discuss the challenges they have faced as they oppose the EACOP project and the recommendations to end police brutality against youth activists against EACOP project in Uganda.

We discuss some below.

- Delays in hearing cases against youth activists: Seeking justice for youth against EACOP has become so expensive and tiresome. The youth keep coming to court and no justice is delivered to them. The Ugandan courts are slow in handling cases of the youth activists who are vulnerable and poor. This has negatively affected the youth's livelihoods and disrupted their education career. The cases of youth activists should be handled and finished.
- Discrimination by the Judiciary in hearing court cases: Youth indicated that their cases take longer to be heard, while other cases filed by the rich are resolved within the shortest time. It should be noted that not only cases of youth activists against EACOP take long, but many cases filed by oil-affected communities are never handled and resolved in a short time.
- High costs involved due to court delays. Youth indicated that a lot of costs have been incurred due to movements to courts. For example, some of the youth battling court cases are coming from Hoima to Kampala and they are always bounced back that the state prosecutor is absent. The high costs issues have greatly affected the oil-affected communities who must travel from Hoima to Kampala.
- Limited Judicial independence: Youth indicated that the Judiciary in Uganda lacks independence and this has greatly affected all cases that are filed by the oil-affected communities. Youth say that their cases continue to be adjourned but when the rich file their cases they are heard on time. This makes youth lose trust in the judicial system and think that maybe the judiciary is working to please the government.

- Continuous Arrests: The youth said that they continue to be intimidated and arrested due to opposing EACOP. The arrest of environmental and human rights defenders (EHRDs) who protest against EACOP continues on the rise with the 15 students currently in Luzira Prison. The students and EHRDs continue to grapple with the court cases that were instituted against them by the Ugandan state because of participating in peaceful protests. Youth want this stopped.
- Restrictions on Freedom of Expression. The shrinking civic space for youth activists against EACOP continues on the rise, and the Ugandan government through security agencies continues to suppress peaceful protests for youth activists against EACOP. This has limited the ability of young people to express their concerns and opinions about the EACOP project.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Uganda government should put in place environmental courts to specifically handle environmental cases on time.
- The police should stop harassment and intimidation of youth activists against the EACOP project and stop holding suspects in police cells beyond 48 hours.
- The government should compete with those who suffer human rights violations and arrest the police officers who unlawfully arrest the activists.
- The Uganda government must provide free space for freedom of expression, to assemble, associate, and other rights
- The judiciary should fast track all cases against youth activists opposing EACOP and drop all charges against them.

OUR IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES

On April 5, 2025, YECA supported grassroots youth activists from Kisambo village in Kikuube district for legal empowerment to understand their land rights. The meeting was held at Kisambo village and brought together 20 grassroots youth climate activists who got the opportunity to understand their land rights to defend their communities against land grabbers, which are increasing due to oil developments.



On April 7, 2025, YECA supported legal representation of 20 youth climate activists at Buganda Road Court. The activists were arrested in 2024 as they protested against the EACOP project. The objective of the activity was to support youth activists to seek justice and call on the judiciary to fast-track cases for the youth against the EACOP project.



On April 12, 2025, YECA, in partnership with Makerere University Forestry students and Ntungamo University students Association, supported a climate justice debate at Makerere University. The objective of the debate was to create platform for students to understand laws that can be used whenever they are arrested during the climate activism work. The debate brought up over 70 students. Youth knowledge in climate activism increased.



On April 14, 2024, YECA supported youth to have climate justice move around Makerere University in Kikoni Zone to spread awareness about climate justice through a clean-up campaign. The activity brought up over 70 youth from Makerere and around areas. The objective of the activity was to spread awareness about climate justice in times of climate change to build a strong climate justice movement in Uganda.



On April 15, 2025, YECA participated in the launch of the safeguarding policy at Makerere University Jinja campus. The objective of the meeting was to launch the policy that university students can use to challenge any injustices as they pursue their studies at Makerere University. This engagement brought together seventy students, including lecturers, and policy experts, and civil society organizations.



On April 22, 2025, YECA supported 11 StopEACOP activists who were arrested in Kampala while attempting to peacefully deliver a letter to KCB Bank, demanding the bank withdraw its financial support for the destructive East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP). The activists appeared at Nakawa Magistrate Court and were remanded to Luzira Maximum prison until May 8, 2025. We continue to stand in solidarity and support the arrested activists to get justice.



On April 25, 2025, CERAI participated in a meeting with youth activists against EACOP to strategize on how to work together and strengthen the stopEACOP campaign. The meeting happened in Kampala. The joint work plan was drafted that will be implemented by members who participated in the meeting.



On April 27, 2025, YECA organised a meeting with Makerere University Environmental Club leaders to discuss areas of collaboration. The objective of the meeting was to strengthen YECA's working relationship with University students as we build a movement of young climate justice leaders in Uganda.



**We value
your
feedback**

**Thank
you.**

About YECA

Youth for Environmental Justice and Climate Action is a youth-led non-profit organization in Uganda. The organization was formed to build a climate justice movement in Uganda with a focus on youth especially in educational institutions.

We are currently working with oil-affected communities to build resistance against the expansion of oil and gas projects in Uganda. Our goal is to stop these oil projects and advocate for clean renewable energy sources. Through building a movement of youth climate justice leaders, these oil projects will be stopped in Uganda.

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