



YECA NOVEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

UGANDA'S CLIMATE ACTIVISTS BEHIND BARS: THE ONGOING STRUGGLE AGAINST EACOP PROJECT IN UGANDA.



Picture showing EACOP pipes being aligned. Photo credit Deep Earth

INTRODUCTION.

Dear Reader, welcome to our November newsletter.

In November 2025, Youth for Environmental Justice and Climate Action (YECA) documented arrests that have been happening in Uganda targeting Environmental defenders, especially those opposing the construction of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project. Uganda discovered over 2 billion barrels of oil, which will be transported by the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), a 1,443km pipeline to the port of Tanga in Tanzania to be processed and sold to the world markets.

The EACOP starts in Kabaale, Hoima District and traverses 296km in Uganda through ten (10) districts, affecting twenty-five (25) sub-counties and one hundred seventy-one (171) villages in Uganda. The process of land acquisition

involved the displacement of people from their original land and has sparked debate in public, a situation that has resulted in youth rising to challenge the project due to its environmental and human rights violations.

In the beginning, the host communities envisioned a future of transformed livelihoods; they hoped oil revenues would fund better infrastructure, like hospitals, schools, roads, and create jobs, especially for the youth who make up the majority of the population, which now seems to be the contrary.

Since January 2025, over 50 youth climate activists against the construction of the East African crude oil pipeline have been arrested and detained, some released on bail, others are on police bond, and others are still in prison. It should be noted that whenever environmental defenders come out to express themselves about the EACOP

impacts through peaceful demonstrations, they are brutally arrested, detained, and their cases take a long time to be heard and determined.

An example is the case of the 11 youth Environmental activists who were arrested at the KCB bank premises in Kampala as they attempted to deliver a letter calling on the bank to withdraw its funding for the EACOP project. The said activists were denied bail and detained for three 3 months on charges of criminal trespass. After our pressure and partners, the activists were later released on bail after 3 months in prison.

Through these arrests and detentions, YECA has provided legal representation for the activists and demanded accountability for all Environmental defenders who have been brutally arrested whenever they come out to express themselves about injustices by the EACOP project. YECA continue to offer legal support for the Environmental activists and calls for the Judiciary to always hear the cases of these activists as they do for the rich people.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the continued detention and harassment of environmental defenders has raised many questions about the Ugandan judiciary's commitment to human rights and the rule of law. Additionally, parliament has expressed concerns to the judiciary regarding what the MPs perceived as an interest in upholding the rule of law and a bias against youth activists concerning the EACOP project.

Youth for Environmental Justice and Climate Action call for space for Environmental defenders to exercise their rights to freedom of expression and call on the public to join efforts to stop the ongoing injustices targeting Environmental defenders in Uganda, especially those opposing the construction of the EACOP project.

Below, we discuss different arrests that have happened for the Environmental defenders whenever they come out to express themselves about the impacts of EACOP project.

On February 26, 2025, Eleven (11) Environmental defenders, including university students, were arrested while marching to the European Union (EU) offices in Kampala, protesting against the construction of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline project (EACOP). The activists were holding placards with key messages calling on Total Energies to drop the EACOP project due to its human and environmental violations that have affected not only the host communities but also environmental defenders from local to Global levels.

Unfortunately, before reaching the EU offices and delivering the petition, the Ugandan police intercepted them, and Eleven (11) of them were arrested and charged with common nuisance on the road contrary to Section 65(e) of the Road Act Cap 346 and taken to Luzira Maximum prison for weeks.

After appearing in court several times, on March 6, 2025, the activists were finally granted cash bail.



On April 2, 2025, Nine Environmental defenders were arrested as they marched to Stanbic Bank Uganda offices in Kampala, calling on the bank to withdraw its funding for the EACOP project. After being detained for weeks, the activists appeared before the Buganda Road Court for a hearing on charges of common nuisance and on April 15, 2025, the Buganda road court dismissed the trumped charges of common

nuisance imposed on them as the state failed to provide present evidence. The activists are still strong to keep the advocacy to defend both human and Environmental rights.



On May 21, 2025, nine (9) Environmental defenders were also arrested as they marched to the KCB bank Kampala head offices to deliver a petition calling on the bank to withdraw funding for the EACOP project. Before reaching the bank, the activists were brutally arrested and detained on charges of Unlawful assembly for engaging in a peaceful protest.

After several appearances in court, the magistrate at City Hall Court granted them bail at 100k each person on May 6, 2025, after spending two weeks in Luzira Upper prison. This came at the back of the other 11 youth activists who were arrested while at the KCB bank premises. The activists were condemning the bank for its partial funding of the EACOP project. Fortunately, the case was dismissed due to a lack of sufficient evidence, marking a sufficient victory for Environmental and climate justice and reaffirming the continued pattern of suppressing dissent, the right to peaceful and freedom of expression for climate defenders in Uganda.



On April 23, 2025, the Eleven (11) stop EACOP activists were arrested in Kampala while attempting to peacefully deliver a petition to KCB bank demanding that the bank withdraw its financial support for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP). The activists were arrested at KCB bank premises when they attempted to deliver a letter calling on the bank to withdraw funding for the EACOP project and were charged with criminal trespass.

After several court appearances and denial of bail, on July 17, 2025, the activists were later granted bail after spending three months in Luzira maximum prison. The petition urged the bank to immediately withdraw its support for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), a project that continues to endanger communities, ecosystems, and climate stability. The activists continue to report in court as of the current. The activist continues to report regardless of the continuous absence of the magistrate. This has become so expensive for activists who have to move long distances only to find that the magistrate is absent or on leave.



On August 1, 2025, the twelve (12) stopEACOP youth activists were arrested for peaceful protest at Stanbic Bank Uganda, Kampala, while peacefully protesting for the bank to withdraw its support for the EACOP project. The activist appeared before a magistrate at Buganda Road Court, and they were remanded to Luzira Maximum Security Prison until August 18, 2025, on trumped-up charges of common Nuisance for engaging in a peaceful protest. As we write this newsletter, the activists are still remanded

remanded on charges of common nuisance and have spent 117 days in prison since their



On August 18, 2025, during the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) at Nelson Mandela Stadium -Nambole, an activist named Magezi Nicholas was arrested. The activist was arrested when he pulled out a banner with information calling on Total Energies to drop the EACOP project and other greenwashing projects in Africa, and was detained at Kiira Police Station for 10 days. This happened during the match between Uganda Cranes and Niger at Nelson Mandela Stadium -Nambole. After the weeks of detention, he was later released on police bond.



Other Implemented Activities in November 2025.

On November 6, 2025, YECA supported legal representation of the 12 Environmental defenders who were arrested in August 2025 as they attempted to peacefully protest against Stanbic Bank’s involvement in supporting the EACOP project. The activists appeared before the court, and the court ruled that the activists have a case to answer, and the matter was adjourned to November 25, 2025.



On November 12, 2025, we supported legal representation for the 11 Environmental defenders who were on bail after they were charged with the case of criminal trespass at KCB Bank Uganda. The activists who were arrested in April 2025 had spent 3 months in prison before being granted bail. On November 12, 2025, they appeared in court, and no prosecution witness showed up; the matter was adjourned to December 9, 2025. We shall keep you posted about this case.



On November 12, 2025, we offered legal representation for the eight environmental defenders who were arrested while protesting against the ongoing destruction of Lwera wetland along Masaka Highway. The activists appeared before the court, and their case was adjourned to November 26 2025. We shall keep you updated about this case.



On November 25, 2025, YECA visited Ruhaama Secondary School to launch a climate justice campaign and support the formation of environmental clubs within the school. This is our ongoing campaign, which is still active in schools to build a movement of young climate justice leaders in educational institutions. During these engagements, students are introduced to movement building and trained on their roles in environmental conservation, protection, and restoration.



On November 28, 2025, Youth for Environmental Justice and Climate Action (YECA) organised Renewable energy training at Ndejje University in Luwero. The objective of the training was to engage the university students in their role in a just energy transition and how they can join the renewable energy debates at all levels. Students shared the kind of energy they are using in their homes and the energy they would want to use in their communities. From the training, a renewable energy club was formed.



Conclusion

Youth for Environmental Justice and Climate Action is still committed to defending people's lives against ongoing oil developments, and this is through movement building of grassroots communities to defend their land and human rights amidst oil developments.

About YECA

Youth for Environmental Justice and Climate Action (YECA) is a youth-led and youth-focused non-profit organisation in Uganda. The organisation aims at conserving and protecting the environment through movement building and grassroots mobilisation with a focus on youth and women. The organisation is committed to conserving and protecting Uganda's environment in its density through public policy research and advocacy to influence environmental policies in favour of the local person. Through research, advocacy, and community education, YECA works with young people and local-level leaders to promote sustainable management of natural resources for economic development.

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