

## **81st ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights**

### **Statement on the activity report of the Chairperson of the Working Group on Extractive Industries, Environment and Human Rights Violations in Africa.**

Honourable Chairperson,  
Honourable Commissioners,  
Distinguished State delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

DefendDefenders welcomes the opportunity to bring to the Commission's attention the current business climate in Africa and its impact on the realization of human rights for all.

Over the past six months, Africa has faced significant challenges and notable violations in the area of business and human rights. Despite ongoing efforts to improve corporate accountability and safeguard human rights, numerous incidents across the continent highlight persistent gaps in implementing and enforcing international human rights standards.

Hon Chairperson, in recent years, Africa has emerged as a focal point for discussions on sustainable development, largely driven by its vast natural resources and youthful population. However, this potential for economic growth comes with a crucial responsibility of ensuring that business practices not only promote profit but also uphold human rights and environmental integrity. It is imperative to recognise that the extraction of resources must not come at the expense of local communities. The realities faced by those in mining regions range from forced labor, forced eveiction and environmental degradation.

In Uganda, the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project has raised significant concerns regarding its environmental and social impacts. Over 81 households along the pipeline route have reported forced evictions, inadequate compensation, and a lack of consultation, leading to severe disruptions in their livelihoods. Similarly, in Tanzania, the situation in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area remains tense, with continued forced evictions of Maasai communities driven by tourism and conservation projects. These actions have occurred without adequate consultation or compensation, infringing on the rights of indigenous people and escalating tensions in the region.

In the mineral-rich eastern region of Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the competition for resources continues to attract various militia groups, who exploit the area with impunity. The ongoing lawlessness has led to severe human rights violations, including rape and sexual violence against women human rights defenders who challenge their actions and seek accountability. As a result, the region remains engulfed in

insecurity, with grave consequences for local communities, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children, who are forced into labor under difficult conditions

We condemn the ongoing human rights violations and environmental destruction perpetuated by businesses and state actors across the continent. We urge African governments to take immediate action, offer due compensation in case of consensual relocation to rectify these injustices and ensure that the pursuit of economic growth does not infringe on the rights and livelihoods of Africa's people.

Thank you.