



YCED



QUARTERLY Report

Human Rights, Climate Change
and Energy Transition

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ABSTRACT

HUMAN RIGHTS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY TRANSITION

While this transition is essential for climate mitigation, it introduces new and intensified human rights risks across mineral extraction, renewable infrastructure development, and labor practices. At the same time, renewable energy projects often proceed without meaningful community participation or benefit-sharing, undermining the “just” component of a just transition. This report contends that a rights-based approach is not a barrier but a prerequisite for a legitimate, durable, and truly sustainable energy transition.

WELCOME TO OUR QUARTERLY DISPATCH



We are excited to release our newsletter which sheds light on the major events that transpired between 1st February–30th April 2026, these includes our advocacy efforts at the national level, the continued crackdown on environmental defenders in Uganda, the importance of protecting these defenders and promoting a safe and enabling environment through.

We hope that this newsletter contributes to a better understanding of the issues faced by environmental human rights defenders and informs efforts to protect and support them. The repression that environmental activists who use peaceful civil disobedience are currently facing in Uganda is a major threat to democracy and human rights. We need to understand the triple planetary crisis (Climate change, pollution and bio-diversity loss) we are collectively facing that cannot be addressed if those raising the alarm and demanding action are criminalized for it.

This report provides the situation of all land and Environmental Human Rights Defenders in challenging corporate impunity arising from land acquisition and compensation for the Tilenga and EACOP projects in respect for free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) for land rights and the project's impact on nature. In the same spirit it provides the plight of our continued media engagement on the issues inhibiting our development agenda as a country

It further sheds light on our grassroots engagements with oil host districts (Hoima and Buliisa districts) on mechanisms for responsible business conduct by corporate entities for seeking remedy to vulnerable communities whose land rights have been violated by Tilenga and EACOP projects in Uganda, these alternative avenues for seeking remedy include targeting the financiers of these projects but also continuous Monitoring, Documentation and Reporting of these issues.

Yours Sincerely:


Imam Mugisha

Executive Director **YCED**



1).YOUTH CONVENE TO FORGE A GLOBAL FRAMEWORK TO END FOSSIL FUEL ERA IN UGANDA.

For three decades, global climate negotiations have focused on managing the symptoms of the climate crisis, greenhouse gas emissions while ignoring the root cause, the unchecked proliferation of coal, oil, and gas. While the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement are essential forums for global climate action, their consensus-based structures allow blockers backed by polluting industries to stall necessary action on fossil fuel production. Now, we have a vital opportunity to break this deadlock.

In April 2026, Uganda youth climate activists convened in Kampala-Uganda to generate a position paper to present during the First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in Santa Marta Columbia. The conference was the first of a “series of conferences” agreed to by the 18 nation states participating in the development of a Fossil Fuel Treaty and will be a solutions-focused forum operating outside the auspices of traditional international climate architecture.

Participants agreed that the current wars in Ukraine and the Middle East are fueled by a thirst for fossil fuel revenues,

do not sideline the transition debate they radically reinforce its necessity. Because fossil fuel production is so structurally embedded in global markets, financial systems, and geopolitics, no single country can manage this transition alone. Coordinated international cooperation, grounded in equity and justice, is essential to prevent disorderly phase-outs, economic downturns, and new forms of energy inequality.

That the demand to transition away from fossil fuels is no longer only a whisper that many don't have the courage to say out loud; it's a universal cry for survival a hence a need to equitably move away from the extraction plotting our destruction. We need a global transition away from fossil fuels that is fast, fair, and financed one that strengthens energy sovereignty, stabilizes economies, and supports workers and communities, leaving no one behind. All countries now face a stark choice: either unite to forge equitable new forms of international cooperation to deliver a fast and funded transition away from fossil fuels or remain dangerously vulnerable to volatile supply shocks and the global conflicts they fuel.



Figure 1: Participants evaluating different messages drafted by members during the consultative meeting.

The Santa Marta Conference served a decisive opportunity to strengthen international cooperation by finally confronting these interconnected crises at their shared source. It was a historic turning point in climate diplomacy, and a fundamental act for global stability. Tired of waiting for an elusive consensus, committed, high-ambition nations are coming together, ready to move from incremental pledges to concrete action.

The conference championed coordinated solutions, including strengthening multilateralism to address the threat of fossil fuel extraction. A global coalition of nation-states, subnational governments, Indigenous peoples, scientists and civil society called on countries to participate in the development of a Fossil Fuel Treaty as a key outcome of the summit.

The First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels served as a strategic space for dialogue among a broad range of stakeholders including government representatives, experts, rural and Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant communities, civil society, climate advocates, industry leaders, and academia to explore viable, fair, and equitable pathways for transitioning to sustainable, diversified, and accessible energy. Designed to foster robust and structural transformations, the summit aimed to facilitate a planned, just, and sustainable phase-out of fossil fuels and address the need for a structural shift in our socioeconomic model.



Figure 2: Different representatives attending the meeting



Figure 3: Mr Imam Mugisha holding a placard during the consultative meeting to generate a position paper on fossil fuels



Figure 4: Mugisha imam (YCED) submitting during the consultative

A screenshot of a LinkedIn post. It features the LinkedIn logo and the text: "Posted on LinkedIn", "Securing a Global Framework to End the Fossil Fuel Era. | Youth Concern on Environment and Development YCED", and "The Road to Santa Marta: Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in Santa Marta." Below the text is a small LinkedIn logo and the word "LinkedIn".

1.1: KEY OUTCOMES OF THE SANTA MARTA CONFERENCE 2026

The first outcome was confirmation of the news that Tuvalu and Ireland will co-host a second transitioning away from fossil fuels conference in the Pacific island nation in 2027.

The co-hosts also announced the establishment of three “workstreams” on issues to bring forward to the second summit.

The first of these workstreams will focus on developing national and regional roadmaps away from fossil fuels. Speaking in plenary, Vélez Torres said that the roadmaps should be “connected” to countries’ UN climate plans, known as nationally determined contributions (NDCs). And that it would be important for the roadmaps to be “very clear and honest” about “emissions exported from producing countries”.



Figure 5: Country representatives, including Panama’s special representative on climate change, Juan Carlos Monterrey Gómez; the climate envoy for the Marshall Islands, Tina Stege; COP30 CEO, Ana Toni; UK special representative on climate, Rachel Kyte; and Tuvalu.

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The second workstream will be focused on changing the financial system to better facilitate the transition away from fossil fuels. This will include work to identify fossil-fuel subsidies and find solutions to “debt traps”. It will be supported by the International Institute for Sustainable Development thinktank.

Separately, Dutch climate minister van Veldhoven said that all countries would be invited via “email” to begin a process for identifying and reporting their fossil-fuel subsidies. (The Netherlands is the co-chair of COFFIS, a group of 17 nations that have pledged to remove fossil-fuel subsidies.)

The final workstream will address fossil-fuel-intensive trade, with the aim of “advancing progress towards a fossil fuel-free trade system”, Vélez Torres said. This workstream will be supported by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) group of wealthy nations.

A document summing up the co-chair’s takeaways from the summit says that other key outcomes include the establishment of a “coordination group [to] ensure continuity towards the second and subsequent conferences”, adding: “It will consist of countries leading different alliances and initiatives that are implementing elements of the transition away from fossil fuels, and of the co-hosts of the first and second conferences, Colombia, the Netherlands, Tuvalu and Ireland.”

1.2: INDIGENOUS AND CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION.

In addition to holding a dedicated meeting for scientists, the Colombian government also organized a “People’s Assembly”. This brought together hundreds of Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendent peoples, peasant farmers, trade representatives, women and children and other civil society members.

The goal was to gather the thoughts from these groups on the summit’s main “pillars” of addressing fossil-fuel production, economic constraints and global governance and multilateralism.

2.0: LAND AND ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS DEFENDERS PAYING THE PRICE.

The Buganda Road Chief Magistrate's Court on 10th April 2026 convicted eight environmental activists linked to the anti-East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) campaign on charges of common nuisance arising from a protest held in Kampala last year.

The climate activists were found guilty on Friday over their participation in a demonstration staged at Stanbic Bank headquarters in August 2025, Such and more of such is a continued attack on our constitutional right to assembly, Expression and Association.

The peaceful demonstration is part of simultaneous protests organized in Uganda by civil society groups working with people affected by East African Crude Pipeline in Uganda. The EACOP is jointly owned and operated by French oil major TotalEnergies, Chinese state-owned enterprise CNOOC, and Tanzanian and Ugandan state-owned oil companies.

The development of large oil and gas infrastructure projects in Uganda is underway following the 2006

discovery of about 6.5 billion barrels in Lake Albert Basin, and about 1.4 billion barrels recoverable, at a peak production rate of about 230,000 barrels per day. This has necessitated huge chunks of land intake, and thus the involuntary resettlement of affected persons and the compulsory acquisition of land has been ongoing. Whereas compensation is inevitable for any Project Affected Person (PAP), an indispensable aspect of resettlement, it is important to account for the full compensation for losses as a right and an entitlement.

On April 10, 2026, YCED legally represented eight environmental defenders against the EACOP project after they were convicted of the offence of common nuisance. Since August 2025, YCED has been supporting youth representation to provide legal support, welfare and other services. The activists were arrested while delivering a petition to Stanbic Bank calling on the bank to withdraw financing for the EACOP project. The activists have been on remand for eight months and were sentenced to 11 months.

It should be noted that the Uganda Bankers' Association released its ESG framework in April 2024 where all banks operating in Uganda or conducting business in Uganda must adhere to . This is the latest framework amid several many frameworks including the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, IFC performance standards etc.



Figure 6: The eight activists who have been on remand for eight months being sentenced to more 11 months.

3.0: THE LAUNCH OF REPOWER UGANDA CAMPAIGN.

REPower Uganda is a multi-stakeholder campaign dedicated to unblocking the barriers to renewable energy adoption in Uganda. By fostering collaboration and co designing between the government, the private sector, and local communities, the initiative aims to create a sustainable, reliable, and equitable energy landscape for all Ugandans.

REPower Uganda is the national pilot campaign of the broader Pan-African movement. Our vision is to attain a state where Uganda is powered by Renewable Energy driving a just energy transition. We advocate for an energy model that prioritizes community access, safeguards vulnerable populations (including youth, women and the elderly) from climate instability, and ensures that national economic growth is underpinned by sustainable, local power.

Driven by the collective expertise of [350.org](#), the [AfrikaVuka Network](#), and the Global Clean Energy Network, REPower Uganda is designed to bridge the persistent clean energy access gap. As a multi-stakeholder platform, the campaign unites Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), media entities, the private sector, and Governments in the pursuit of energy justice. In alignment with Uganda's Vision 2040, the National Development Plan (NDP IV), and the National Energy Transition Plan, this campaign endeavors to achieve a transition that secures reliable, clean, and affordable energy for all Ugandans by 2040.



3.1: A DEFINING MOMENT FOR UGANDA

The [RePower](#) Uganda campaign is a bold response to the dual crises of energy poverty and climate collapse in Uganda. At its core, the campaign is about more than just switching fuel sources; it's a movement for energy Democracy. It advocates for a transition towards decentralized, community-owned renewable energy (DRE) systems with a broader aim of solving the grid stability and access. REPower Uganda arrives at a critical juncture as Uganda seeks to balance rapid economic growth with climate resilience. The Kampala convening demonstrated that Africa stands at an important junction.

The continent has an opportunity to redefine the governance of natural resources in ways that prioritize people, protect the environment, strengthen democratic participation, and advance sustainable development.

Achieving this vision, however, will require political will, stronger institutions, regional solidarity, and meaningful accountability.

Energy is indeed the most pressing problem for Uganda's economy. Without urgent, large-scale investment and policy reform in the energy sector, Uganda's ambitions for industrialization, economic growth, and improved living standards will remain out of reach. Addressing this challenge will unlock the country's vast human and natural potential, enabling a future of sustainable and inclusive prosperity.

Rukiya Khamis, Programme Manager 350 East Africa, "We aren't just launching a project; we're fundamentally rewriting the rulebook for energy advocacy in Uganda. For too long, energy policy has been a top-down affair. By bringing youth groups and local communities to the same table as the private sector, we're moving away from token gestures and towards genuine co-design. From ring-fencing national budgets for clean energy to decentralizing oversight to our districts, we're ensuring that Uganda's transition isn't just fast; it's fair, locally tailored, and built to last."



Figure 7: RePower Uganda chapter poses for a photo moment after a 5-Days training.

4.0: THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW AND THE QUEST FOR JUSTICE.

The Universal Periodic Review is a unique mechanism under the support of the United Nations Human Rights Council, designed to assess the human rights records of all UN member states. Uganda, like other participating countries, undergoes periodic reviews of its human rights situation, with recommendations made to improve on the general situation of human rights in the country.

During the two days conference facilitated by the office of High commission for Human Rights (OHCHR), participants engaged in rigorous discussions and evaluations of Uganda's progress in fulfilling its environmental human rights obligations since its last review cycle. Key issues such as access to justice for environmental defenders, role of CSO vis-a vis state role in the mid-term review, freedom of expression, the importance of mutual collaboration with civic society on the improvement of UPR recommendation, climate change and state obligations to protect its citizens from effects of climate change and good practices were among the focal points of the deliberations.

The UPR is designed to prompt, support, and expand the promotion and protection of human rights in every country.

The two day meeting provided a platform for environmental rights defenders, climate activists academicians to

- Generate a cluster draft shadow report to contribute to the consolidated civil society alternative report for Uganda;
- Identify ongoing challenges in monitoring the government's implementation of UPR recommendations accepted during the 2022 review;
- Deliberate on progress and emerging developments in promoting and protecting business and human rights in Uganda in
- Develop and build consensus on a cluster-specific roadmap leading up to the January-February 2027 review, to guide advocacy and engagement at both national and international levels.



Figure 8: Environmental defenders after two days' UPR stakeholder meeting.

5.0: LOOKING AHEAD.

The months ahead are about turning momentum into measurable impact. As we look to the future, Youth Concern on Environment and Development will focus on;

- June 4-5, July 13-17 2026; Enhancing responsible mineral sourcing with a spotlight on the Makuutu Rare Earth Project.
- June 5, 2026; Continue influencing responsible Business Conduct in Uganda's oil and Gas sector through Monitoring, Documentation and Reporting (MDR).
- June 10, 2026; Enhancing youth leadership, Governance, and advocacy capacity through university environmental chapters.
- June 12, 2026; Continue our efforts in defending environmental rights defenders through strategic litigation & representation.
- July 10, 2026; Engage the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development on existing electricity sector challenges.

6.0: REFERENCE.



Activists cry foul as government tightens grip on anti-EACOP protests

The activists were charged with criminal trespass and remanded to Luzira Prison on April 27, following two days in police custody

Monitor / Jul 1, 2025



Uproar as court denies bail to anti-EACOP activists for third time

EACOP protesters denied bail again amid rights outcry

Monitor / Jun 13, 2025



Uganda : Arbitrary detention of 12 Stop EACOP youth activists

UGA 006 / 1025 / OBS 065 Judicial harassment / Arbitrary detention Uganda 29 October 2025 The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights (...)

International Federation for Human Rights /



Anti-EACOP protesters denied bail

Failing to entertain the bail application prejudices the rights of the accused guaranteed by our Constitution, and the same is not only harsh but also illegal a...

Nilepost News / Oct 23, 2025



Uganda: Release Peaceful Climate Activists Unlawfully Held in Detention

(San Francisco, June 30, 2025) – The Ugandan High Court should dismiss charges against eleven climate activists detained for peaceful opposition to the controversial East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), Climate Rights International said today.

Climate Rights International / Jul 1, 2025