

To His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni T  
The President of the Republic of Uganda  
Office of the President – Kampala

MIN. OF LANDS HOUSING & URB. DEV.  
DEPARTMENT OF VALUATION



14 AUG 2024

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P. O. BOX 7063, KAMPALA

Received

Amphib

14/08/2024



C/o William Ogilvie  
Ayuda Village – Karuma  
14<sup>th</sup> August 2024

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Dear Sir Your Excellency,

**RE: COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS OF THE KARUMA DAM AFFECTED COMMUNITIES**

Mr. President Sir, we are the Karuma Hydropower Project Affected community members of Karuma, Kiryandongo District. Your Excellency, we as Project Affected members, have issues resulting from the Karuma dam project impacts that we would humbly like to bring to your attention as we seek your assistance in the matters thereof.

Mr. President, we know your resolve to fight poverty, develop industries, provide employment and bring about development in our beloved country Uganda, for which we thank you. Your Excellency, listening to you on many occasions, energy development is one of the tools to help you achieve that, and Karuma Hydropower dam is seen to play a key role in that.

However, we are sad to bring to your most valued attention sir Mr. President, that; in the process of developing Karuma Hydropower Dam, the objective of fighting poverty and bringing development has gone to the contrary for the Project Host and project Affected Communities of Karuma for the following reasons;

**1. Inadequate and very poor compensations for our project affected properties.**

Inadequate and Very poor compensations of our project affected properties including land and the properties thereon like housing infrastructures, agricultural crops, and others. Under this, your excellency, it is sad to let you know we recognized with pain that our land properties were mishandled to the extent of finding the map that did not match what was on ground, with some different plots appearing with the same plot numbers. Yet some people were paid, while others including the true rightful owners of the plots have not been paid to date. The ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources is in full knowledge of this, after we brought it to their attention, but has done nothing to rectify the situation. Examples of our efforts that were not responded to are shown in No 1. of "our efforts to have issues ..." section below.

**2. The Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) Gone Bad / the poor and vulnerable – supposed to be resettled are not yet resettled.**

Those identified as vulnerable – (the sick, elderly, widows, child headed families, disabled and people living with HIV) during the project Environmental And Social Impact Assessment, numbering up to 119 households who were supposed to have been resettled 6 months before the onset of the dam construction, have up to this date, 11 years later, not been resettled. Yet, they were forcefully evicted, thrown out to nowhere, and ever since no one care to know where they are, what they eat and how they survive. They are far worse than refugees in their own country. Sadly your excellency, some have since died due to the harsh and tormenting situation they were forced in, although a number still live in very difficult





circumstances of untold suffering. No one among us knows what happened to the land that was said to have been identified in Nwoya for RAP purpose. Unfortunately, our efforts to seek information on this have been ignored.



*A picture of some of those who should have been resettled after failure to be resettled; lived under very hazardous conditions right under the Karuma High voltage Transmission lines in Awoo village.*

### **3. Abuse of Women and Girl child by Project workers with impunity.**

Mr. President, despite the above mentioned challenges which still persist, there was such a time in the life of the project when it felt like, at least those who were lucky to be employed or where their youthful children were employed, they would benefit from the project. However, we are sad to let you know that; some of the girl children from our communities, while on their work in the project, they were raped by their Chinese male bosses, and some of them impregnated. To date as we talk, some of them have been left with their Afro-Asian children of the Chinese origin without help. Sadly, it even breaks our hearts more to have seen these cases reported to the police and the police taking no expected action. We felt and still feel not only sexually exploited by those who reigned and abused our daughters, but also betrayed and let down by our own police and the authority systems. This was and is still very dehumanizing.



*Innocent and her child that she was impregnated with when she was raped by a Chinese worker in Karuma dam area where she had been employed.*

#### **Our efforts to have the issue resolved.**

First, we noted the absence of a complaint redress mechanism in the project, there was no desk in the project where we could bring our complaints to be addressed. If this was there and inside secured areas,

then we could not access it as there has been high militarization that scared us. Nevertheless, we did all in our means to seek audience and solution to our problems.

### **1. Contacting the Ministry of energy to express our concerns.**

As early as 2011 and as soon as we realized the under valuation and inadequate values attached to our properties that would make us poorer than we originally were, since the money given could not afford us to acquire property equal to what we had lost to the project elsewhere, we engaged the Ministry of energy on several occasions. However, unfortunately all our efforts went to waste as our pleas went unanswered. For example on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2011, our leader William Ogik wrote to the permanent Secretary – the letter titled; ***“RE: Land and Property Valuation Process: Karuma HEP Project area Stakeholder / property No 150 of Mr William O. Ogik”***

Similarly, on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011, a letter titled; ***“Re Valuation of Land and Property in the Karuma HEP Project area: Flaws in the Process and Consequences to the affected Community members of Awoo Village”*** was delivered to and received by the Permanent secretary of the Ministry of Energy.

On 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2012 also the ministry received a copy of the letter entitled ***“RE: PUBLIC HEARING: FOLLOW UP ON COMPENSATION RATES”***.

Your excellency, seeing no response to our efforts above, we were compelled to make our concerns known to the Chief Government Valuer. Upon realizing the over delayed compensation rates of 20009/20010 to our properties, on 22 May 2014, the Chief government valuer wrote to the Ministry of Energy, a letter titled; ***“APPROVAL OF ADDENDUM COMPENSATION VALUATION REPORT 2 FOR LAND INTEREST ACQUISITION FOR THE APPROVED KARUMA HYDRO POWER PROJECT”*** advising the ministry against using the outdated rates to compensate us.

All the above and other efforts to try to have a discussion that would see our concerns attended to and ironed out, went futile without any response whatsoever.

### **2. Seeking justice through court process.**

Your excellency, after trying our best without response, as law-abiding citizens, the inadequately paid, and those not yet compensated, we resorted to court, where we thought we would be given a fair hearing and our issues and concerns lawfully sorted out. Unfortunately, this also seem to have gone on forever where adjournment after adjournment became the order of the day for years. Your excellence, to date, 8 years later, the court has not given the necessary attention to our plight, has not given us the much needed fair hearing in order to pronounce itself about our case. It is now 11 years since the project threw us out of our properties, we are yet to get justice.

### **3. Engaging in Mediation and dialogue to reach an amicable understanding out of court.**

Having gone to court and the judge of the court of jurisdiction listening and reading through our file, in 2017 he chose to send us and our tormentors to mediation where we would, if reached an understanding, the issues could be settled out of court. A very respectable, Retired Rt. Hon. Justice Tabaaro was appointed and agreed upon by both sides to mediate in our issues. However, to our utmost surprise and absurdity, this effort was deliberately frustrated as the ministry of energy and its other dam proponents absented themselves all the times we tried to meet. Eventually, the mediator had no option than to return



our case to court so that court can resume full court process. On top of wasting our little hard to find resources to come, feed and accommodate ourselves in Kampala where the mediation venue was, we lost our valuable time, energy and the risk on the road which has further sent us in a pit of abject poverty and suffering. Later, in 2018 after the failure of the mediation that was dishonored by the Ministry of energy and its other partners, the court process was restored. This has been going on for all these years, where it has seen adjournment after adjournment on every expected case hearing date, where most times the defendants are never ready or not available in court. This pains and hurts us so much, because in our poverty state, we have never missed any court appointment – still wasting our scarce resources, time, and energy besides taking the risk on roads.

Your excellency, until recently, on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024, in what was supposed to have been a hearing for two days on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of June, the judge decided to send us and the defendants back to more mediation. Your Excellency, this is yet to commence, though his instructions are to have had the results by the end of October. We are hoping that this time round, the Ministry of Energy will not frustrate this initiative again. We hope they will come with objective mindset to resolve this outstanding issue of years and bring the suffering of the Karuma project affected persons to its conclusion.

#### **4. Engaging in stakeholders dialogues.**

Your Excellency, working with those who felt for us, on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023 in a letter titled ***“Re: Invitation to a half day stakeholders meeting on Karuma Dam RAP compliance”*** was delivered to the Permanent Secretary, inviting the Ministry of energy to a stakeholders meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023. Organized by Friends with environment in development (FED), the meeting was intended to engage the Karuma Dam stakeholders in a dialogue that would see any issues discussed, understood and freely responded to by the right information holders to clear the air of anything that could have been misunderstood by the Project Affected Persons. Mr. President, even this initiative was not honored by the ministry of energy, who were absent though having confirmed attendance. The documentary titled ***“The Agony of the Vulnerable Project Affected Persons – Karuma Hydropower dam”***, was shared. This documentary can be watched on this link. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgIC1vQN5SM>

#### **5. Petitioning the speaker of parliament**

Your Excellency, in September 2023, we petitioned the speaker of Parliament especially for the vulnerable people who have not been resettled 11 years after they were forcefully evicted. The speaker assigned the Parliamentary committee on natural resources to follow up the issue. On 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023, the Parliamentary committee on Natural resources invited us the PAPs to appear in the meeting at Parliament on 5<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2023 so they could hear from us, which we did and came in numbers. After listening and questioning us, they sent us back promising to come to Karuma before within 45 days to get more facts that would make their report and recommendations. To date it is close to a year, the parliamentary committee has not come, and we have no feedback on what was decided or any idea whatsoever if they will ever come or not. We feel humiliated, as if they just watched us in the committee room like a movie. It still looks like we wasted our hard-earned resources, time, energy and risks for nothing.





*The Karuma dam affected community members before the parliamentary committee at parliament in Kampala.*

Your Excellency, as patriotic Ugandans we acted responsibly, we did not go to court to ask for a court injunction to halt the Karuma dam project, which was an option. However, as country men and women and country loving Ugandans, we have been seeking justice which we are convinced beyond doubt that it has not been practiced in Karuma dam project implementation. The RAP has not been honored. If only what has been done to us is what the RAP recommended, then it was unprofessionally done and unfair for the project host communities of Karuma.

Whereas the project has gone on up to completion as of to date, we still strongly convinced and think that we are and will be entitled to our rights of adequate and fair compensation and resettlement of those who are vulnerable.

We would like also to let your Excellency know that, these very issues ours have been pointed out and highlighted in the *Dec. 2019 Value for money Audit Report of the Auditor General Chapter 4*, which uncovered many misnomers in the way the RAP was handled.

#### **Our prayers.**

**Mr. president sir**, it goes without question, we have suffered long enough and need nothing else but justice. We are very confident in you as Number one in the land that now that this issue has come to your attention, you will give it the attention it deserves to see our problems sorted out.

#### **The following are our humble prayers that we hope to see.**

1. Proper Re-evaluation of our properties to reflect the current market values that should be paid to us.
2. After suffering this long, compensation will not only be for properties but also, compensate us for the suffering – having been forcefully evicted and thrown out of our land for 11 years now.
3. That those who have stood in the way of our justice of rightful compensation, be brought to book
4. The vulnerable people (119 Households) be resettled immediately, and as soon as possible.
5. The vulnerable will not only be resettled but also compensated for their suffering for 11 year out of their properties and their suffering be brought to an end.

6. The families, whose children have been sexually abused and raped, be compensated, and those who covered up the criminals, be punished for their hand in aiding the abuse or failure to do what is duly expected of them as officers in charge.
7. That Sino hydro Corporation as the employer who brought the culprits who abused our children, or the Chinese Embassy, be compelled to compensate the families of the affected children.
8. Sino hydro or the Chinese embassy should take responsibility of supporting the children's mother(s) who have been left helpless, suffering with children without their fathers.

It is our most sincere hope that your excellence, you will do all in your powers to see that our problems as mentioned here above are brought to an end.

Yours truly



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William Ogik and the undersigned Project Affected Persons (PAPs) of Karuma.

CC. the permanent secretary Ministry of Energy

- The LC V Kiryndongo district
- The Chief government valuer – Ministry of lands
- The Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda → Reviewed by Onyong Tubu 14/08/2021
- The Sino Hydro Corporation
- The Chinese Embassy in Uganda.
- The Chief Justice of Uganda, Rt. Hon. Owiny Dolo.
- The permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. ✓