



THE CONSERVATIONIST

EGI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
APRIL - JUNE 2025

Theme

**Survival isn't a choice: communities trapped by oil, fighting for a
Just energy future**



*Community meeting with residents of Kyakaboga to identify
livelihoods amidst impacts of Oil activities*

WELCOME TO EGI'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

The second quarter of 2025 (April–June) marked a period of deep reflection on the impacts of oil development in Uganda’s Albertine region particularly reflecting on the troubling journey that started over a decade ago when Uganda announced the discovery of oil, the situation has continued to worsen marked with suffering, agony and cries that one day this will end. As communities stand at a crossroads of promise and peril, the relentless pursuit continues: to amplify their voices against risky oil financing and forge adaptive and sustainable livelihoods.

This edition spotlights stories of Kingfisher's oil operations, where progress is shadowed by profound struggle: fishing families extorted for Lake Albert access; grazing lands vanishing; children’s education disrupted; and fragile lake ecosystems threatened. These are not isolated challenges, but symptoms of a system that sidelines human rights and environmental justice.

Yet amid these trials, hope takes root. Witness the efforts of the Environment Governance Institute (EGI) to amplify grassroots resilience through:

- Training community observers to document harms and demand accountability;
- Restoring degraded lands with fruit trees in Kijumba and Katooke, offering displaced farmers sustainable alternatives;
- Empowering Kyakaboga’s families to build climate-resilient sustainable livelihoods beyond fossil fuels.

Concurrently, EGI also advances campaigns urging Parliament to amend the Ratification of Treaties Act and reject the Energy Charter Treaty, a critical move to bolster climate-safe policies that safeguard future generations.

This quarter, EGI continues to empower communities on livelihood options in the face of oil and gas developments and advocating for their rights and positioning them in a new frontier to hold the government accountable on the persistent oil and gas issues affecting them. We remain steadfast in this cause, drawing strength from community resilience and growing momentum for change. Together, let us foster solidarity, inspire action, and nurture hope.

EDITORIAL TEAM

1. Joy Nabulo
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Human rights concerns amidst oil developments in Kingfisher project area



Field view of kingfisher operations and the barricade that affect shorelines and breeding grounds for fish



A youth packing silver fish in Nzunzu B, locals grapple with trade extortions at check points

In June 2025, the Environment Governance Institute (EGI) conducted a follow-up field assessment in the Kingfisher oil project area to evaluate implementation of earlier recommendations and monitor the evolving human rights situation. The assessment found a troubling environment where development progress is overshadowed by restricted civic freedoms, informal taxation, and environmental degradation.

Despite claims of improved community engagement, access to villages like Nsonga and Nsuzu B remains heavily restricted, requiring justification and facing intense military scrutiny. While the current security commander is more approachable, the underlying system of control persists, with limited access to traditional land and water resources, undermining community autonomy and livelihoods.

Fishing communities reported partial restoration of

access to Lake Albert, but only upon making unofficial payments of UGX 200,000 (approx. USD 52) every two weeks to uniformed security operatives an informal taxation system enforced through threats of arrest and boat confiscation.

EGI also observed the construction of a metal barricade along the lakeshore by CNOOC Uganda Ltd, approved by NEMA to protect oil infrastructure from rising water levels. However, this wall has blocked access to critical fish breeding areas and disrupted women's livelihoods dependent on shallow water fishing and fish drying. Community members also reported worsening water quality and pollution since oil activities escalated.

The field findings underscore the urgent need for government and corporate actors to uphold human rights, ensure environmental safeguards, and respect traditional community access to land and water resources.

Freedom denied: How curfews in oil development zones undermine livelihoods and rights



Communities of Kijumba and Katooke sharing their lived experience with impacts of oil and gas development

The ongoing installation and laying of pipelines along the feeder lines is already restricting people's movement, serving as an early indicator of the potential disruptions that could arise from the EACOP project. In Kijumba and Katooke, an illegal curfew has been imposed, severely affecting people's freedom of movement. This situation highlights the increasing challenges faced by communities, as their ability to freely access their homes, farms, and businesses is being compromised. If the EACOP project proceeds as planned, it is likely that these restrictions will worsen, further infringing upon the rights and livelihoods of those living in the project's path. The implications on local communities could be far-reaching, impacting not only movement but also access to essential resources and services. Limiting people's freedom of movement, especially during certain hours, for instance 6:00pm as reported in most areas affected

by pipeline works, can have far-reaching consequences on their daily lives, livelihoods and their overall well-being. It has had economic consequences since people are blocked from accessing their work places, markets, or customers, leading to potential losses in income and economic instability. It has further led to social isolation since people now struggle to visit families, friends or access social services like healthcare, education, or emergency services which have severe consequences on these vulnerable populations due to its negative impacts on mental health and overall well-being. It has also led to limited access to grazing areas that affects the livelihoods of farmers and herders, potentially leading to loss of livestock and agricultural production. It has also led to human rights concerns in the area, particularly the right to freedom of movement, which is enshrined in the international human rights law.

Community observers trained to strengthen incident reporting across oil-affected areas



Feeder Pipelines erected and passing through farm lands in Buseruka, Hoima

On June 10, 2025, the Environment Governance Institute (EGI) convened a capacity-building training aimed at strengthening the skills of selected community observers across the Albertine region. The goal was to enhance their ability to effectively report and investigate incidents arising from the negative impacts of oil and gas developments.

The training brought together approximately 15 participants, including local observers affected by the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) from Kyakaboga Resettlement Camp in Buseruka Sub-county, and from Kijumba and Katooke villages in Kabaale Sub-county, Hoima District. Also in attendance were community observers from the Kingfisher upstream area in Buhuka, Kyangwali Sub-county, Kikuube District. Representatives from civil society organizations based in Hoima, notably NAVODA and AFIEGO, also participated, contributing significantly through partnership building and experience sharing further strengthening EGI's local community observatory network.

EGI facilitators guided participants through interactive, practical sessions. Attendees were grouped according to their respective locations to identify and describe real incidents using the 5Ws and H framework (What, Where, When, Who, Why, and How). They also explored how to assess both immediate and long-term impacts, gather credible evidence, and apply safety protocols to protect themselves and the data they collect.

The training aimed to empower community observers to identify and document oil-related incidents more accurately, improve community-level monitoring, and enhance the quality of feedback shared with decision-makers and advocacy networks.

Importantly, the meeting surfaced key emerging issues from each observatory area, identified concrete follow-up actions, and reinforced collaborations with like-minded civil society actors. These partnerships are essential to sustaining a strong, community-led feedback mechanism for tracking and addressing the ongoing impacts of oil development in the Albertine region.

Strategy meeting with Support Resilient Initiative on issues impacting Refugees in Kwangwali refugee camp



EGI during a round table engagement with Support Resilient Initiative staff in Kyangwali refugee camp

The Environment Governance Institute (EGI) recently held a collaborative engagement with Support Refugee Initiative to address the pressing challenges faced by refugees in Kyangwali Refugee resettlement Camp, Uganda. The meeting centered on the crisis of mental trauma experienced by displaced individuals and the environmental degradation caused by the increasing refugee population. Due to limited resources and livelihood opportunities, refugees have resorted to deforestation to create space for shelter and agriculture, leading to severe ecological strain, including soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, and heightened tensions with host communities over dwindling natural resources.

Recognizing the urgent need for sustainable solutions, EGI and Resilient Initiative explored ways to support both refugees and host communities.

Discussions emphasized promoting alternative livelihoods, such as agroforestry and eco-friendly income-generating activities, to reduce dependence on forest resources. Additionally, plans were made to introduce reforestation programs, fuel-efficient stoves, and mental health support services to alleviate environmental pressure and improve psychosocial well-being. The engagement underscored the importance of community-based resource management and conflict resolution to foster long-term harmony between refugees and local populations. By integrating environmental conservation with humanitarian aid, EGI and its partners aim to create a more resilient and sustainable future for Kyangwali's displaced and host communities alike

EGI empowers Kijumba and Katooke communities with livelihood solutions amidst oil impacts



Group photo of communities of Kijumba with tree and fruit seedlings donated by EGI

As part of its commitment to climate justice and long-term community resilience, EGI on June 12th, 2025, the Environment Governance Institute (EGI) convened a community meeting in Kijumba Subcounty, Hoima District, with the objective of empowering oil-affected communities to collectively resist the unchecked expansion of oil developments and amplify their lived experiences of harm and injustice. The meeting brought together over 50 project-affected persons from the oil-impacted villages of Katooke and Kijumba, offering a vital platform for community members to voice their concerns, share testimonies, and engage in collective reflection on the social, economic, and environmental impacts they continue to endure due to ongoing oil activities. As part of the initiative, EGI donated tree and fruit seedlings to the participants.

This initiative aimed to help restore degraded ecosystems, mitigate climate-related impacts, and offer alternative livelihoods through sustainable farming particularly for those who have lost access to agricultural land and have not received compensation. By integrating environmental restoration with community empowerment, EGI continues to support grassroots-led responses to the oil industry's disruptive presence in the Albertine region.

EGI empowers Kyakaboga communities with livelihood solutions amidst oil impacts



A PAP in Kyakaboga participating in Q&A session

On June 13th, 2025, the Environment Governance Institute (EGI) conducted a community training in Kyakaboga, Hoima District, aimed at empowering residents to adapt to the growing impacts of oil and gas activities. The session brought together participants from the Kyakaboga Resettlement Camp, including local leaders, youth, and the wider community, to explore sustainable livelihood alternatives amidst the region's changing socio-economic landscape.

While the ongoing oil developments have introduced new opportunities, they also pose serious environmental, social, and economic risks including air and water pollution, land degradation, biodiversity loss, and rising social issues such as displacement, crime, and prostitution.

Recognizing these challenges, the training was designed to equip the community with practical

knowledge and skills to strengthen their economic resilience, diversify income sources, and reduce reliance on vulnerable natural resources. EGI

emphasized the importance of locally driven adaptation strategies to ensure that communities can not only survive but thrive in the face of oil-induced disruptions.

The session provided a platform for open dialogue, where community members discussed their current livelihood activities, shared personal challenges, and outlined specific needs and requests. These contributions informed a collective mapping of available opportunities and potential solutions to enhance community well-being in the context of oil and gas extraction.

The findings and outcomes from the training will serve as a basis for continued engagement and advocacy to ensure inclusive, community centered approaches to oil governance in Uganda'

MAJOR STORIES PUBLISHED BY EGI

Blick future for local communities as CNOOC expands oil and gas operations



Pupils in the classrooms

Kingfisher being one of Uganda's multibillion-dollar oil and gas operations, operated by CNOOC Uganda Limited, impacts the local population especially children who are paying a heavy price. The most critical sector bearing the burden of these oil activities is education.

More than 500 children living in and around Buhuka Flats face an uncertain future after oil operations by CNOOC disrupted their education amidst the rapid expansion of oil activities.

[Read More details](#)

“Pay or Your boat is gone”: Extortion threatens fishermen around Kingfisher oil operations in Buhuuka



Sky view of Kingfisher operations in Buhuuka

Deep down an undulating escapement, you see scattered settlements surrounding kingfisher oil operations. At the far most peripheral view, down the escapement, a view of the silvery glitters of the lake ecosystem confirms fishing as the main livelihood support system in the area, however this is under threat by extortion.

“Our school turnout is low,” shared a headteacher from a community school in Buhuuka village. “Most parents are fishermen.

They’re charged weekly fees just to fish, and their boats are confiscated when they can’t pay.”

This stark reality sparked a June 2025 investigation by the Environment Governance Institute. Researchers journeyed into Buhuuka fishing communities to uncover the hidden costs of coexisting with major oil development.

[Read More details](#)

“Vanishing pastures: The plight of stray animals in Kingfisher as grazing grounds disappear”



Bare grazing ground in Kingfisher

Located along the coast, has been a haven for both its human residents and animals that once roamed its lush grazing lands. But today, the community faces a heartbreaking crisis: herds of cattle, goats, and wildlife wander the streets,

displaced by the rapid destruction of their natural habitats. As oil and gas developments encroach on the region, the once vibrant grazing grounds that sustained these animals are vanishing-leaving them vulnerable, hungry, and increasing conflict with humans.

[Read More details](#)

Water pollution and public health concerns



Water pollution and public health concerns

During the June 2025 field assessment of the Kingfisher project area, the Environment Governance Institute (EGI) team observed alarming levels of water pollution along the Lake Albert shoreline particularly in areas adjacent to oil installations operated by CNOOC Uganda Ltd. While EGI could not independently verify community claims attributing the contamination directly to oil-related activities, the visible degradation of water quality was evident. The water appeared significantly more turbid and discolored near project infrastructure compared to other, less industrialized parts of the lake. Community members insist that pollution has worsened since construction and drilling activities intensified, citing increased sediment runoff, potential chemical leaks, and destruction of vegetation along the shoreline. One

of the contributing factors mentioned by locals is the clearing of natural vegetation to facilitate project works. This has reduced the lake's natural filtration capacity and increased stormwater runoff, allowing construction debris and possible oil residues to flow into the water unimpeded during rainfall. These claims are consistent with broader patterns observed in extractive zones where environmental management is either inadequate or poorly enforced. Disturbingly, the same contaminated water is used for both human and animal consumption. Women were observed collecting water directly from the lake for cooking, washing, and drinking. In interviews, one woman noted: The public health implications are grave exposure to polluted water especially from extractives project areas increases the risk of diarrheal diseases, skin infections, and long-term health complications, especially among children and pregnant women.

EGI IN THE MEDIA

Gold beneath our feet :Avoid the resource curse



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Gold beneath our feet: Avoid the resource curse

Friday, June 06, 2025



The recent announcement, in the national and international media regarding the monumental gold discovery in Uganda estimated at 31 million metric tons of gold ore, from which over 320,000 metric tons of refined gold could potentially be extracted has captured global attention. Valued at over USD 12

trillion, this find could redefine Uganda's economic future, raising aspirations that the country may one day emerge as a regional, even global, economic powerhouse.

[Read more details](#)

2nd chance can be a catalyst for Uganda's clean energy transition



2nd chance can be a catalyst for Uganda's clean energy transition

Monday, May 26, 2025



Uganda's energy sector stands at crossroads .As the country seeks to meet its energy needs,it must also address the challenges posed by climate change and its imperatives for environmental sustainability .

The recently announced plans by the ministry of energy and mineral development to resume operations at the Kilembe mines in western Uganda presents a unique opportunity

[Read more details](#)

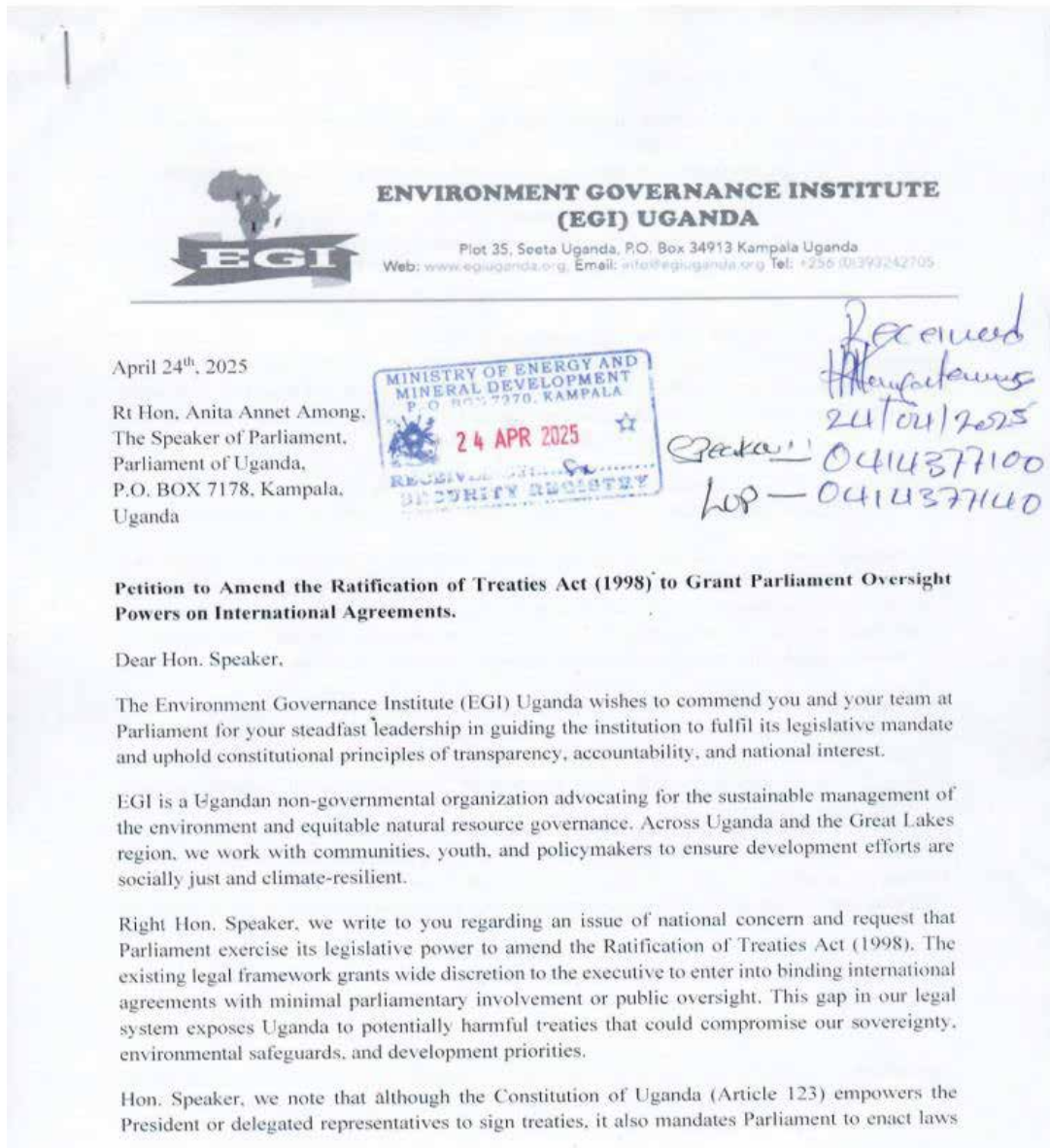
LOBBYING

Petition to address the emerging concerns of the Tilenga oil project affected communities in Buliisa



[Read the Petition](#)

Petition to amend the rectification of treaties act 1998 to grant parliament oversight powers on international agreements



[Read the petition](#)

Open letter calling on ministry of energy and mineral development to address emerging concerns of Kilembe mines before resumption of operations

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July 8th, 2025

Hon Ruth Nankabirwa
Minister of Energy and Mineral Development
Plot 29, AMBER House, Kampala Road,
Kampala, Uganda

OPEN LETTER CALLING ON MINISTRY OF ENERGY TO ADDRESS EMERGING CONCERNS OF KILEMBE MINES BEFORE RESUMPTION OF OPERATIONS

Dear Hon Minister,

On behalf of the Environment Governance Institute and on my own behalf, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation for your leadership at the Ministry of Energy. Your efforts to secure our energy future particularly through the development of the critical raw materials sector are commendable. If managed responsibly and inclusively, this sector holds great potential to support a just energy transition and enable Uganda to leapfrog towards a clean and sustainable future

EGI is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting environmental conservation and a just energy transition in Uganda and the great lakes region. We work with youth, local communities, local leaders, and government institutions to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources for socio-economic development. Our approach upholds the inherent rights of people and promotes a just and fair energy transition that leaves no one behind.

Hon, Minister, while exercising your constitutional mandate of establishing and promoting development by Strategically Managing and Safeguarding the Rational and Sustainable Exploitation and Utilization of Energy and Mineral Resources for Social and Economic Development in Uganda.

Today, we are reaching out to you in anticipation of the planned resumption of mining activity in the once abandoned Kilembe mines over four decades ago. We would like to address a matter

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Upcoming events

8th July 2025 - Public lecture on Climate change and environment ,can students tap into green jobs held at Uganda Christian university

27th August 2025 - webinar on Understanding the impact of the Export Credit Agencies Finance landscape on the energy sector and its implications for just energy transition in Africa

28th August 2025 - Dissemination of ECA report highlighting the socio-economic impacts of ECA finance on affected communities.

3rd September 2025 - Meeting with Community Champions to Discuss Emerging Issues Relating to Oil Impacts in the Area in Buliisa.

6th October 2025 - Field research on Impacts of oil on community livelihoods in the Albertine graben



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