



April 12, 2023

Embassies must react to the planned closure of the Office of the United Nations observers for Human Rights in Uganda

Today, **more than 45 organizations unite to ask the Embassies present in Kampala to engage with the Ugandan Government to ask it to renew the mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the country.**

A letter has been sent to the Ambassadors of France, the U.S., China, the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom., Germany, Austria, Sweden, and Denmark in Uganda to ask them to engage with the Ugandan Government on this matter.

Last February, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uganda notified the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) country office that its mandate would not be renewed.

The signatory organizations express their deep concerns about this announcement, as the OHCHR had achieved tremendous milestones in promoting and protecting Ugandans from human rights violations.

While the Government of Uganda justifies its decision on the basis of the country's own sufficient capacity to monitor rights compliance, the signatories are concerned that the closure of the UN Office will worsen human rights violations in the country.

The Ugandan Human Rights Commission noted in its 2021 annual report to Parliament that arbitrary arrests, detention and torture constitute the most recurrent types of human rights violations in the country.

The situation of human rights defenders working on the negative impacts of oil extraction projects in Uganda has been repeatedly denounced by the OHCHR itself and by the United Nations Special Procedures.

"The shutdown of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Uganda has hindered the efforts to enhance coordination mechanisms for grassroots environmental and human rights organizations and defenders. The threats against human rights defenders have grown but, despite these concerns, there has been a limited response to the issues at hand," recounts Kayinga Muddu Yisito, the Coordinator of the Community Transformation Foundation Network (COTFONE).

"The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Uganda has since its creation laid down baby steps for the respect of human rights in all spheres of political, economic, social, and cultural life. Unless the mandate is renewed and extended, it will be a setback in ensuring all Ugandans, especially those in oil and other local communities, enjoy equal protection of the law", said Brighton Aryampa, Chief Executive Officer, Youth for Green Communities (YGC).

The signatory organizations therefore request the Embassies in question to engage with the Ugandan government so that it halts the planned closure of the OHCHR. International reactions could also help resist any attempt to dilute the State obligations or the OHCHR mandate during the negotiations on its renewal.

The signatories of this letter include Youth for Green Communities (YFC), Community Transformation Foundation Network (COTFONE) in Uganda, with international partners such as the International Federation for Human Rights (IFHR), the Child Rights International Network (CRIN), Laudato Si Movement Africa.

[Uganda ends mandate of UN Human Rights Office](#)

[Ugandan Human Rights Commission 2021 Annual Report to Parliament](#)

[United Nations Special Procedures](#)

[World Report 2022: Uganda | Human Rights Watch](#)

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Full list of signatories

1. Youth for Green Communities, Kampala, Uganda
2. Community Transformation Foundation Network (COTFONE), Greater Masaka, Uganda
3. Women for Green Economy Movement Uganda, Uganda
4. Civic Response on Environment and Development, Uganda
5. Kawempe Health & Education Initiative, Uganda
6. Green Africa Youth Organization, Uganda
7. Ubuntu Gender Equality Network Uganda Ltd, Uganda
8. Support on aids and life through telephone Helpline, Uganda
9. Namugongo Fund For Special Children, Uganda
10. Laudato Si Movement Africa
11. Freedom House
12. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), France
13. Both ENDS, The Netherlands
14. Collectif BreakFree Suisse, Switzerland
15. Fierté Afrique Francophone (FAF), Ivory Coast
16. Community Action Against Plastic Waste (CAPws), Nigeria
17. ACCE, Madagascar
18. Tarun Chetna , India
19. Society for Earth (TNZ), Poland
20. Youth Transforming Africa Narrative (YOTAN), Liberia
21. Society for the Improvement of the Rural People, Nigeria
22. Counseling Line for Men and Boys, Albania
23. Men's Association for Gender Equality Sierra Leone (MAGESL), Republic of Sierra Leone
24. Netherlands Committee for IUCN, Netherlands
25. La Otra Banqueta, Guatemala

26. Kachere Progressive Women's Group, Malawi
27. Altar Relief Foundation, Ghana
28. Sustainable Environment Development Initiative, Nigeria
29. Marange Women's Alliance, Zimbabwe
30. Youth And Society (YAS), Malawi
31. Environmental Defender Law Center, United States
32. Forum for promotion of gender equity and moral values, Nigeria
33. Together Africa Gambia organisation, Gambia
34. Just Share, South Africa
35. Stop Ecocide International, United Kingdom
36. Child Rights International Network (CRIN), United Kingdom
37. Coal Action Network, United Kingdom
38. Earth Guardians Bay Area Crew, United States
39. Indigenous Earth Protectors, United States
40. Social Development and Advocacy Centre (SODAC), Malawi
41. Sonke Gender Justice, South Africa
42. MenEngage Swaziland, Eswatini
43. MenEngage Africa, Madagascar
44. MenEngage Global Alliance, United States
45. Natural Justice, South Africa
46. Center for International Environmental Law, United States
47. Just Finance International, The Netherlands
48. Tournons La Page/Let's Turn The Page-Uganda (TLP Uganda)