



**FEMINIST ACTIVIST COALITION
(FemAct)**

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PRESS RELEASE

**Feminist Activist Coalition (Fem Act) and Pastoralists Forum press release about
Gross violations of human rights and citizenship rights in NGORONGORO district
carried out on behalf of the private investor,
ORTELLO BUSINESS CORPORATION (OBC)**

We member organizations of Feminist Activist Coalition, FemAct, who advocate for gender equality, human rights and development and women's liberation together with the Pastoralists Forum (Arusha) are highly disturbed by the gross violations of human rights and citizenship rights and breaking of laws carried out by the government operation to forcibly move Maasai pastoralists from their homes in eight villages within Loliondo Division, Ngorongoro district. The forced removals of Maasai communities by state machinery and a private company began in early July this year and continue up to the present moment, on behalf of the business interests of a private investor from the United Arab Emirates, namely Ortello Business Corporation (OBC).

After information about these violations of human rights and citizenship rights had been publicized in local and international mass media, FemAct and Pastoralists Forum decided to jointly investigate the facts about the issue for ourselves. Between August 19 and 23, 2009, leaders from FemAct and the Pastoralist Forum travelled together to four of the eight pastoralist villages concerned, namely Ololosokwan, Soitsambu, Olorien-Magaiduru and Arash, to talk to local villagers and their leaders; the team also met with Ngorongoro District leaders, and management of Ortello Business Corporation (OBC). The aim of the visit was to investigate the situation and confirm whether or not government officers have collaborated with the investor (OBC) to violate the human rights and citizenship rights of the women, men and children in the villages mentioned above.

Fem Act and Pastoralists Forum understand that OBC was allowed to rent an enormous hunting block in the Loliondo area in 1992 by government through the Ministry of Natural Resources. This aroused a major protest and led to a major public debate nationally and world wide, that was referred to as the 'Loliondogate scandal'. The hunting block is within an area which was already settled and legally owned by eight pastoralist villages; hence their presence in the area is perfectly legal. At question is the

issue of the hunting block to Oterllo Business Corporation, and whether or not it will be reissued to OBC next year, when it comes up for renewal!

We found out that beginning in early July this year, the government used armed force, namely that of the police and the Field Force Unit(FFU), and with OBC's own armed guards forcibly expelled Tanzanian citizens, who are residents of this area, from their homes and villages. The explanation given for this violent act was that it was necessary to protect the area against environmental degradation, without any consideration of legal rights to live in the area. This forced removal of Maasai women, men and children from their homes is a gross violation of human rights and citizenship rights, and breaks our government's laws and our nation's Constitution.

When FemAct and Pastoralist Forum visited the area we discovered and confirmed the following:

1. The operation by the Government and OBC is being carried out against villagers who legally reside on and own this land and other resources in the area, according to the Village Land Act of 1999; therefore the Maasai are not invaders as claimed by OBC;
2. Gross violations of human rights and citizenship rights have taken place, and the laws and Constitution of our nation have been broken, which include the burning down of people's homes (*boma*); destroying food supplies; specific violence against women and children, including rape; undue use of force which led to miscarriages; arresting and torturing villagers – the whole operation did not follow the law and appropriate rules and regulations;
3. Government and investor claims that the pastoralist communities are degrading the environment is false. In reality, the opposite is true: environmental degradation has been caused by OBC Company, for example by establishing an airport right in the middle of wildlife corridors and birthing areas; causing noise and disturbance by air pollution from air craft, which include huge jets; building permanent houses illegally in animal conservation areas; and water piracy from water sources of the animal reserve;
4. There are major shortcomings in the legal framework, which include:
 - (a) Intervention from outside in the signing of contracts between OBC Company and the eight village governments to allow hunting to take place in the area; the contracts were signed by the government with the eight village governments on behalf of the OBC company; and OBC signed as a witness;
 - (b) Hijacking Tanzanian communication networking systems in the area surrounding OBC Company. For example, as soon as you enter the area you receive a short message(sms) on your mobile phone from ETISALAT which

welcomes you and says “WELCOME TO THE UNITED ARABS EMIRATES”

- (c) Construction of airport strip and operation of direct air travel between the area of the hunting block and foreign countries, with no immigration, customs and tax regulation. Large airplanes land and take off from this air strip, with the capacity of carrying more than four hundred passengers and a large number of motor vehicles.
 - (d) Lack of transparency in tax and customs collection—there is no information or documentation showing that TRA is collecting customs from the cars imported from foreign countries, with registration plates from United Arab Emirates, and used locally; or taxing numerous other resources which are taken directly from Loliondo, reportedly including wild animals dead and alive; and
 - (e) OBC Company is given and enjoying *diplomatic* status by the government, contrary to the situation for all other private companies. The OBC camp is guarded by the Field Force Unit (FFU), police and other state machinery organs. Different government units have been organized from the district to the national level to coordinate OBC Company activities. For example, FemAct and Pastoralist Forum leaders were denied entrance into the OBC company camp; instead they were removed from the place under FFU escort and later stopped and questioned by FFU allegedly under instructions from the Arusha Regional Commissioner and the Ngorongoro District Commissioner.
5. Following these events and observations, FemAct reconfirms the position it took in its press release of May 22nd, this year, that the Tanzanian state has been hijacked by and serves the interests of wealthy private investors, with the connivance of corrupt national and international individuals (*wafisadi*), plundering the resources of the majority of the people, and in the process, causing them bodily and emotional harm.

Given the information which we have documented and confirmed, FemAct and Pastoralist Forum demand the following:

- 1) Government to immediately stop the operation to forcibly remove pastoralist communities from the Loliondo area and elsewhere, which are gross violations of human and citizenship rights and against government rules and regulations and the Constitution ;
- 2) Government to hold accountable and discipline all those government officers who will be found to have participated in these unjust and illegal acts carried out against the pastoralist communities of Ngorongoro District;

- 3) Emergency relief and humanitarian assistance to be sent immediately to the victims of the operation in Ngorongoro District, especially water, food, tents and care and treatment for women and children;
- 4) Compensation be paid to all victims of the operation for their loss of property and the physical and emotional harm caused to them;
- 5) Government be held accountable to explain why the OBC company has received official diplomatic status;
- 6) Government to provide detailed information on tax and customs collection practices of TRA, tele-communications regulations (TCRA); use of national air space of Tanzania (TCAA); and the immigration status of all visitors (Immigration) associated with the Oterloo Business Corporation operations in Loliondo and Arusha Region in general;
- 7) Government to communicate an official statement on the future of pastoralists in Tanzania;
- 8) Government to provide a detailed explanation and plan for resolution of the conflict between laws pertaining to land and to wildlife, in particular the Village Land Act of 1999 and the Ngorongoro Crater Authority Act of 1959;
- 9) Activists and all the people of Tanzania to immediately take action to protest against the unjust and illegal violations of human and citizenship rights of pastoralist communities and other villagers living in Ngorongoro District; and
- 10) Mass media to continue to investigate and publicise all unjust actions and violations committed by the government in cooperation with the OBC company against the citizenship rights and human rights of pastoralist people in Ngorongoro District.

Issued by FemAct and signed by:

1. Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP)
2. Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC)
3. Concern for Development Initiatives in Africa (ForDIA)
4. Youth Action Volunteers (YAV)
5. The Leadership Forum (TLF)
6. Coast Youth Vision Association (CYVA)
7. Walio Katika Mapambano na AIDS Tanzania (WAMATA)
8. Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA)
9. Youth Partnership Countrywide (YPC)
10. Tanzania Human Rights Fountain (TAHURIFO).
11. HakiArdhi
12. Women Legal Aid Centre (WLAC)
13. Lawyers' Environmental Action Team (LEAT)
14. Tanzania Ecumenical Dialogue Group (TEDG)
15. HAKIELIMU
16. Women Fighting Against Aids in Tanzania Trust Fund (WOFATA)
17. Taaluma Women Group (TWG)
18. Marcus Garvey Foundation (MGF)
19. Tanzania Coalition on Debt and Development (TCDD)
20. ENVIROCARE
21. Pastoralists Forum
22. Women's Dignity (WD)
23. Pastoralists Indigenous NGO's Forum (PINGO'S FORUM)
24. Ngorongoro NGOs Network (NGONET)

25. Ujamaa Community Resource Trust (UCRP)

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