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## LIBERTY PROBONO INITIATIVE (LPI)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 11, 2025**

Kampala, Uganda

### **STATEMENT ON THE CONTINUED DETENTION OF A FEMALE ANTI- EACOP ACTIVIST**

Yesterday July 11, 2025, the 11 anti-EACOP activists who were arrested and detained on April 23, 2025, while they attempted to present a petition against the EACOP project to KCB bank in Kampala were once again presented before the Nakawa Chief Magistrate's Court for a bail hearing. The hearing failed to take off and the activists were once again remanded and their case adjourned to July 17, 2025.

Among those detained is **Ms. Nalusiba Phionah**, a 40-year-old single mother of six from Sumbwe, Bulenga in Wakiso district. Her story underscores the unique and gendered impact of detention on women environmental defenders. Prior to her arrest, Ms. Nalusiba was the sole caregiver and provider for her children, running a small restaurant to support her family after separating from her spouse.

Ms. Nalusiba's children aged 24 (girl), 21 (girl), 20 (boy), 16 (girl), 14 (boy), and 6 (girl) are now under the care of their eldest sister aged just 24, who is herself married and already burdened with raising her own family. The children have not been able to see their mother since April 2025 when she was arrested due to financial constraints, and the youngest children severely affected by this separation from their mother.

While in detention, Ms. Nalusiba has endured harsh conditions that highlight the neglect of women's health and hygiene in Uganda's prison system and the cost of environmental activism for women in a hostile civic space. She has not been able to have a proper bath and has suffered skin diseases and other infections. She remains not only physically but emotionally and psychologically isolated, her own extended family does not understand her stance against the controversial EACOP project, and they have been indifferent to her plight since the arrest. In

addition, Ms. Nalusiba's business has been disrupted by her arrest and continued detention, living her children in a state of despair.

We remain deeply committed to defending the rights of female anti- EACOP activists. These courageous women are not just activists, but they are parents, caregivers, bread winners and business owners and yet their courage is often met with the double hit of state repression and family breakdown. The arrest and continued detention of women like Ms. Nalusiba do not only violate their constitutional rights, but they also destabilize entire families, lead to loss of employment, loss of livelihood and silence critical voices for environmental and social justice.

*" If the court, which are the custodian of the law cannot be moved to grant mandatory bail to activists who have already spent 83 days on remand, we appeal to their humanity and implore to act justly towards Ms. Nalusiba who has been long separated from her children and has lost her source of income due to her arrest and detention"- Eva Kakuuma, Head of Litigation at Liberty Pro Bono Initiative*

We therefore:

- Demand the immediate release of Ms. Nalusiba and her co- accused.
- Call upon the judiciary to prioritize their bail hearing and ensure fair and speedy proceedings.
- Urge authorities to end the targeting and criminalization of peaceful protesters and environmental activists.
- Insist that the Uganda Prisons Service ensures humane detention conditions, with attention to the gender-specific needs of women.
- Call upon civil society organizations and other stakeholders to recognize the unique challenges faced by female anti- EACOP activists/human rights defenders in general and take decisive actions to address them.

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