

October 2025; Issue 10

END THE PERSECUTION: STOP ARRESTING AND CRIMINILISING FEMALE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS



Female environmental activists after the experience sharing in Kampala ,Uganda. They condemned the police and the government for violation of the environmental and human rights activists' constitutional rights provided under the 1995 constitution of Uganda.

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- Women climate activist under siege: the plight of female Anti EACOP activist.
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Dear reader,

Welcome to Liberty Pro Bono Initiative's (LPI) October 2025 Newsletter.

This month, LPI organized a critical meeting with female climate and environmental activists opposing the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP).

The meeting created a safe space for women to share their experiences of intimidation, arrests, and violence for standing up against environmental destruction and human rights violations.

The objective was to document gender-based violations committed against women defenders and to strengthen legal and advocacy support for them. Many of these women have been unjustly detained, denied bail, and subjected to degrading treatment simply for exercising their right to peaceful assembly and free expression as provided under Uganda's 1995 Constitution.

Instead of protecting them, authorities have turned the justice system into a tool of intimidation. Yet, these women remain determined and courageous. Their commitment to justice and environmental protection shows the power of women who refuse to be silenced.

As lawyers, civil society actors, and citizens, we must stand in solidarity with these women. We must demand accountability, protection, and justice for all human rights defenders.

In this issue, you will find stories of courage from women who have faced arrests, humiliation, and loss, yet continue to fight for what is right. You will also find updates on LPI's advocacy, legal representation, and media work throughout October.

Let us all join hands to ensure that defending the environment is never treated as a crime.

Editorial team:

Doreen Namara

Eva Kakuuma

Ivan Elivis Sanya

Women climate activist under siege: The struggles of those who speak up

Across Uganda, women who stand up for the environment and human rights continue to face violence, intimidation, and discrimination. They are not criminals but mothers, daughters, students, and community leaders who love their country and want a safe and healthy future for all. Yet, because they speak up against the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) and other destructive projects, they have been arrested, beaten, and imprisoned.

Between January and June 2025, a statement issued by Women Human Rights Defenders Network Uganda recorded 33 attacks on women human rights defenders. Many of these women are part of the growing movement against harmful oil projects such as East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), which threaten Uganda's wetlands, forests, and livelihoods.

One of many incidents involved three female activists who were arrested on August 1, 2025, while peacefully delivering a petition to Stanbic Bank, asking it to stop financing the EACOP project. Instead of listening to their concerns, police violently arrested them and charged them with "public nuisance." They were remanded to Luzira women's prison, where they have now spent over three months in harsh and degrading conditions.

These women's experiences remind us that activism in Uganda has become increasingly dangerous, especially for women. Furthermore, in October 2025, two more young female activists were violently arrested while trying to deliver a petition to the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), urging it to stop the destruction of Lwera wetland for sand mining and commercial rice farming. They too were charged and remanded to Luzira maximum prison.

Inside detention, these women face inhumane treatment. They are denied basic needs like sanitary pads, clean undergarments, and proper medical care.

. They sleep in overcrowded cells with poor hygiene, putting their health and dignity at serious risk. Many have developed infections and long-term injuries.

Yet even in the face of this cruelty, these women remain strong. Their courage to continue speaking up for justice and for the protection of our planet is inspiring. They show us that love for the environment is love for life itself.

Take Phiona Nalusiba, a 40-year-old single mother of six. Before her arrest, she ran a small restaurant that supported her children's education. She joined a peaceful march to deliver a petition to KCB Bank, only to be beaten, humiliated, and imprisoned for 90 days. When she came out, her business was gone and her children had been chased from school. Still, Phiona says she will not stop defending the environment because it is her children's future.

Or Rahuma Namuddu, a 21-year-old single mother from Entebbe, who was brutally beaten and humiliated for joining a peaceful protest. Even after losing her job and family support, she says, "They wanted to silence me with pain, but instead, they made my voice louder."

Martha Amviko, Kyosimere Joweria, and Dorothy Asio share similar stories of courage amid suffering. From being beaten, threatened, and imprisoned, they refuse to give up on justice. Their bravery reminds us that defending the environment is not just about protecting nature it's about protecting people, families, and futures.

As Liberty Pro Bono Initiative (LPI), we continue to stand with these women. We have represented many of them in court, documented their experiences, and provided legal and psychosocial support.

But we know this is not enough. What these women need most is a country that values justice over power, compassion over intimidation, and truth over silence

Recommendations

In light of the above, we recommend the following:

I. The police and the government must cease arresting and detaining activists for exercising their constitutional right to free speech and assembly.

II. Further the European Union and other development partners should actively engage with the government and police to ensure the protection of activist's constitutional right, urging them to halt any violations and uphold the rule of law.

III. Furthermore, the judiciary should dismiss frivolous and vexatious cases filed by the police that are aimed at silencing activists, thereby preventing unnecessary waste of activist's time and resources on legal representation and upholding their constitutional rights to freedom of speech and assembly

IV. In addition, parliament should utilise its oversight powers to investigate the violations of the activist's constitutional right and the repeated brutal arrests they face.

V. Finally, insurance companies should desist from providing financial support for oil projects in Uganda that have severe impacts on the environment and livelihoods.

To the women defenders, we say: You are not alone

Your courage is changing Uganda. Your voices are building a future where no one is punished for protecting life. You remind us that justice is not a gift, it is something we must all fight for, together.

Pictorial



On October 1, LPI organised a meeting with the female environmental and human rights activists.

During the meeting, LPI documented their experiences including challenges faced including the physical, emotional, and financial challenges they faced during arrest, detention, and after release.



On October 23, LPI's legal team appeared for the first hearing to represent the two female climate activists and others arrested by National Environment and Management Authority (NEMA)'s offices for delivering a petition to stop Lwera wetland destruction.



On October 20, 2025, LPI appeared before court representing three female climate defenders who were arrested on August 01, 2025 during a peaceful protest in front of Stanbic bank offices in Kampala city. despite delays, LPI continues to demand for justice and a fair trial.



October 1, 2025, LPI's legal team appeared before the Buganda Road magistrates court on behalf of the 12 environmental youth activists including 3 female who were arrested on August 01, 2025



On October 30, LPI participated in a meeting with officials from UHRC-UGANDA. The purpose of the meeting is to follow up on the petition concerning the violation of the constitutional rights of 12 youth environmental activists. They include three females, who were arrested and detained when they marched to deliver a peti-



On October 16, LPI's legal team represented three female activists at Buganda chief Magistrates court.

Unfortunately, after the hearing, the activists were denied their right to apply for bail and the case adjourned to October 20



On October 28, LPI represented female environmental activist and 11 others at Buganda Road Magistrates Court due to the prosecution's failure to produce witnesses.

Unfortunately, the case was once again postponed and the next hearing is set for January 13, 2026.



On October, 7 2025, LPI successfully represented three female activists charged with public nuisance at City Hall Magistrates Court. The case was dismissed due to lack of evidence.

Below are some articles written by LPI staff.

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Author: Doreen Namara

The arrest took place as the activists approached the NEMA offices despite the peaceful nature of their demonstrations.

The female activists together with others were taken to Central Police Station(CPS) where they spent a night. They were subsequently presented before chief magistrate's court at Buganda road where they charged with public nuisance. the court remanded them to Luzira prison and the hearing is scheduled for

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Lwera Wetland: Female Climate Activists Arrested for Exercising Their Constitutional Rights

by UG STANDARD EDITOR | UG STANDARD EDITORIAL

23/10/2025 Reading Time: 3 mins read

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By Doreen Namara,

On October 21, 2025 two female climate activists and others were arrested during a peaceful march to the National Environmental Management Authority(NEMA) headquarters in Kampala. The group sought to deliver a petition urging NEMA to revoke permits issued to Chinese companies engaged in sand mining and commercial agriculture in Lwera wetland.

Related posts



Traders Drags KCCA, NEMA and City Businessman Ham to court over floods

In October 2025, LPI disseminated the lobbying and advocacy materials below



The Chairperson,
Uganda Human Rights Commission,
P.O. Box 4929,
Kampala, Uganda.

20th October, 2025.

RE: A CALL FOR INTERVENTION IN THE CONTINUED DENIAL OF THE RIGHT TO APPLY FOR BAIL FOR THREE FEMALE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS AND OTHERS VIDE UGANDA VERSUS WAMBOGA IVAN & 11 OTHERS CRIMINAL CASE NO.0642/2025 AT THE CHIEF MAGISTRATES COURT OF BUGANDA ROAD.

We are a Civil Society Organisation whose main objective is to promote the rights of marginalized groups, especially women through legal representation, empowerment and advocacy in Uganda.

Together with the undersigned female environmental activists, Civil Society Organisations, Human Rights Defenders and concerned citizens, we call upon your institution to intervene in the ongoing violation of the constitutional rights of three female environmental activists in the above captioned matter.

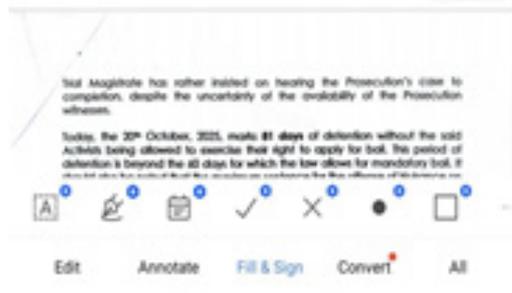
Background:

The said female Environmental Activists are Asia Dorothy (20 years), Nakiyambade Teopita (25 years) and Nalwadda Shanny (24 years) who were peacefully delivering petition to Stanbic Bank on August 1, 2025 in protest against the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project due to its documented human and environmental violations. Despite the non-violent nature of their action, they were arrested and have been denied the right to apply for bail highlighting the increasing criminalization of civic activism and suppression of dissent in Uganda.

We respectfully draw the attention of the Commission to the broader growing pattern of repression against the female environmental activists in Uganda. The case at hand is not isolated. There are multiple ongoing cases across different courts in Uganda involving environmental activists particularly those who oppose oil projects and other environmentally harmful developments.

It should be noted that the Government and oil companies are increasingly using the Judiciary as a tool to silence and suppress environmental activism. This is being done by pressing criminal charges against activism including Common Nuisance, Nuisance on Roads and Criminal Trespass.

These charges are often arbitrary, repetitive and appear intended not to pursue justice but rather to discourage civic engagement and peaceful protests. They have become a pattern of judicial



Upcoming events

- November 26, 2025- Hearing of the case against female activists & others calling on NEMA to stop the ongoing destruction of Lwera wetland at Buganda Road Chief Magistrate's Court
- November 25, 2025- Hearing of the case against the anti-EACOP female activists & others at Buganda Road Chief Magistrate's Court
- November 27, 2025- Twitter storm: Sharing the challenges faced by female activists during police arrests, detention and life after their release.

ABOUT LIBERTY PRO BONO INITIATIVE(LPI)

Liberty Pro Bono Initiative is a nonprofit company limited by guarantee dedicated to empowering marginalized groups especially women through legal support, environmental advocacy, and climate justice. Incorporated under the laws of Uganda, we work tirelessly to champion the rights of marginalized groups, promote environmental conservation, and advocate for sustainable development in Uganda. Our commitment is rooted in justice, equity, and inclusivity, ensuring that every Ugandan has the tools and knowledge to participate in the fight for a sustainable and equitable future.

Mission

To provide equitable access to justice, advocate for climate resilience, and empower communities to champion environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Vision

A just and sustainable Uganda where marginalized communities thrive, and citizens actively participate in safeguarding the environment and mitigating climate change.