



JUNE 11, 2026

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
KAMPALA-UGANDA**

**ARRESTED, DISPLACED AND UNDER THREAT AGAIN: KAPAAPI
COMMUNITY FACES RENEWED WAVE OF ARRESTS AND INTIMIDATION**

Liberty Pro-Bono Initiative (LPI) and the Health Equity and Policy Initiative (HEAPI) are deeply concerned by the recent arrests, detentions, and continued harassment of members of the Kapaapi community in Hoima district.

These arrests are taking place as community members continue to seek justice and accountability for the violations they suffered during the 2023 evictions. Instead of finding solutions to their long-standing grievances, many residents are once again living in fear.

On June 8 2026, ten (10) members of the Kapaapi community including a community leader were arrested at approximately 9:00 p.m. and taken to Biso police station where he has spent over 48 hours in detention without being presented before Court. Those arrested include: David Kayongo, George Kamulinde, Okecha, Franco Ongeyowun, Bedijo Owonda, Federico Kerfa, Godfrey Dhogu, the LC 3 Chairperson Biso town council, Gilbert Oringa and Steven Rangira

These arrests happened shortly after three other community leaders were arrested. The community leaders namely Mr. Gilbert Oringa and Mr. Joram Oketch were arrested from Hoima on May 29, 2026 whereas Mr. Deus Mugume was arrested from Kampala and transferred to Hoima on the same day. Mr. Mugume was subsequently charged with assault, malicious damage to property and alleged robbery. He was remanded to prison and is expected to return to

Court on June 23, 2026. Efforts are currently underway to secure his release on bail.

In less than two weeks, at least 11 members of the Kapaapi community have been arrested.

Reports received by community representatives and the legal team indicate that security agencies continue to pursue additional community members. This has created widespread fear and uncertainty among families who are already living with the consequences of displacement, loss of livelihoods and unresolved land disputes.

A TROUBLING PATTERN OF INTIMIDATION

The recent arrests are not isolated incidents. They appear to be a wider pattern of intimidation, harassment and criminalisation affecting members of the Kapaapi community and their leaders.

Many of those being targeted are individuals who have spoken out about the destruction of homes, loss of property, displacement, and other abuses that occurred during the evictions.

For families that are still trying to rebuild their lives, the continued arrests and threats have deepened anxiety and insecurity. Many residents fear that seeking justice could expose them to further harassment.

These actions raise serious concerns regarding respect for constitutional guarantees and fundamental human rights, including:

- The right to liberty and security of the person;
- Freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention;
- The right to a fair hearing and due process of law;
- Access to justice and effective remedies; and
- The protection of individuals and communities seeking to defend their rights through lawful means.

The continued targeting of community representatives also threatens ongoing efforts to secure justice, accountability, meaningful resettlement, and the peaceful resolution of outstanding land-related grievances.

OUR CALLS TO ACTION

The affected Kapaapi community members urgently call upon the Government of Uganda, law enforcement agencies, and all relevant authorities to:

- Immediately release or grant bail to all detained community members and ensure that any legal proceedings are conducted in full compliance with constitutional safeguards, due process guarantees, and fair trial standards;
- Investigate all recent arrests and detentions, including allegations of detention beyond the constitutionally mandated 48-hour period, and hold accountable any officers found responsible for violations of the law;
- End all forms of arbitrary arrest, intimidation, harassment, and threats directed at Kapaapi community members and leaders;
- Guarantee the safety and security of affected families and ensure that no individual is targeted for peacefully seeking justice or defending their rights;
- Expedite the resolution of outstanding land disputes and compensation claims affecting Kapaapi residents; and
- Fully implement commitments relating to the resettlement and restoration of livelihoods of displaced community members.

BACKGROUND

Between 10 and 25 February 2023, more than 1,000 residents of Kapaapi Parish were reportedly evicted from land they occupied despite the existence of a court-sanctioned status quo order preserving their occupation rights pending resolution of the dispute.

According to community accounts, homes were destroyed, property was lost, and hundreds of families were displaced. Community members have also reported serious human rights violations, including sexual violence against women and girls, assaults on pregnant women that allegedly resulted in miscarriages, and physical injuries that continue to affect survivors to this day.

The consequences of these events have been profound. Many families particularly women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities have spent the past two years living in conditions of insecurity, economic hardship, and social disruption.

Community members subsequently initiated legal proceedings against TotalEnergies, alleging that the company failed to undertake adequate human rights due diligence in relation to the Tilenga project and proceeded with project implementation despite unresolved land ownership disputes, compensation concerns and ongoing legal challenges.

According to the legal team representing the affected residents, the company was aware of outstanding disputes concerning the affected land and unresolved compensation issues but proceeded with project activities. Residents further allege that after the evictions, sections of feeder pipeline infrastructure had already been constructed on land from which they had been removed.

Although a government directive issued in October 2025 called for the resettlement of affected residents, reports of intimidation and renewed threats have continued. In January 2026, approximately fifteen-armed Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) personnel reportedly returned to the area and demolished shelters belonging to resettled residents.

The recent arrests therefore occur against a broader backdrop of unresolved grievances, continuing insecurity, and ongoing efforts by affected residents to secure justice, accountability, and restoration of their rights.

CONCLUSION

The Kapaapi community has endured displacement, loss of property, disruption of livelihoods, and prolonged uncertainty for more than three years. Rather than facing renewed arrests and intimidation, affected families deserve protection, justice, and meaningful solutions to the challenges they continue to face.

LPI and HEAPI remain committed to supporting affected community members through legal representation, advocacy, and the pursuit of accountability through lawful and peaceful means.

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