

PRESS RELEASE

An appeal for Enhanced Due Diligence on oil and gas development operations in Uganda

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The ruling by a Paris civil court in the case of **Friends of the Earth France, Survie and four Ugandan civil society organizations (AFIEGO, CRED, NAPE/Friends of the Earth Uganda and NAVODA) against TotalEnergies, regarding the respect for human and environmental rights impacts from the Tilenga and EACOP Projects in Uganda and Tanzania** is an unwelcome result in the face of a growing decline in avenues available for effective remedy for Project Affected Persons arising from extractives industries activities.

The cases decided primarily on **two (2) grounds of procedural relevance** which were:
a) that the CSOs legal action could not be admitted because their current claims were "substantially different from the claims" made in the initial formal notice sent to the defendant &
b) that CSOs' claims exceed the interim relief judge's competence and should be "be examined in depth" by a civil judge following a regular procedure on the merits.

The effect of this ruling is that PAPs have continued to be denied a chance to be heard on merit of their claims as it was decided on purely procedural grounds. The PAPs and LASPs supporting them had viewed this as an opportunity to test the applicability and enforce the standards in the French law on Due Diligence. The procedure highlighted the need to reduce the legal uncertainty still persisting surrounding the implementation of the French Due Diligence law, particularly with regards to ensuring effective access to justice for PAPs and LASPs.

We continue to reiterate the call for **Enhanced Due Diligence** by TOTAL, EACOP and all other sector actors for oil and gas development projects within the East African region towards limiting the negative impact on Human and environmental rights.

We also call upon the government to accelerate the passing of the legal aid bill and other supportive legislations to enhance access to legal representation and support for persons affected by EI activities.

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