



- Check against delivery -
ORAL STATEMENT

**Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
Agenda Item 6(x): Activity Report of the Chairperson of the Working Group on Indigenous
Populations/Communities in Africa**

77th ordinary session
20 Oct - 9 Nov 2023

Honourable Chairperson,

Amnesty International has worked for decades to document cases of widespread forced evictions and lack of effective remedies for victims. In Africa, recent reports from Amnesty International include a June 2023 publication, *"We have lost everything": Forced evictions of the Maasai in Loliondo*. The report documents actions of the Tanzanian authorities that resulted in multiple forced evictions of the Maasai Indigenous People of Loliondo. Loliondo is within Arusha region where the African Commission is holding this ordinary session.

On 10 June 2022, Tanzanian authorities began using force to disperse Maasai community members protesting a government-sanctioned land demarcation exercise to pave way for conservation. The Maasai removed beacons erected by security forces to mark the boundaries of 1,500km² of land in Loliondo in Tanzania's northern Ngorongoro district in Arusha region, which the Maasai Indigenous people lay claim to and are no longer allowed to access.

The June 2022 forced evictions resulted in about 70,000 people losing access to grazing land critical to the health of their livestock and their livelihoods. Eyewitnesses told Amnesty International that Tanzanian security forces beat up people, destroyed their homes, vehicles, and food stocks, and led to a situation that many had to either escape to Narok in Kenya or hide in the forest. The events of 10 June 2022 were not unprecedented, historically brutal force has been used against the Maasai people coupled with grievous defects in the decision-making process that was used to justify forced evictions of the Maasai. Wildlife authorities impound livestock found grazing inside the demarcated area and demand, extremely high fines which a court later ordered to be significantly reduced, to release the animals back to community members.

Considering the seriousness and scale of forced evictions in the context of conservation in Africa, Amnesty International encourages the African Commission to consider developing principles on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of wildlife conservation in Africa. Amnesty International also suggests that the African Commission develops principles on prevention of and protection against forced evictions in Africa, based on the African Charter, the Commission's jurisprudence, international human rights law, and the standards elaborated by the UN human rights bodies and experts.

About the Maasai Indigenous people of Loliondo, Amnesty International recommends that the African Commission:

1. Follow up on your 13 June 2022 urgent call made through the Chairperson of this Working Group on the Rights of Indigenous Populations/Communities and Minorities in Africa for the cessation of the eviction of the Maasai community in the Ngorongoro district.
2. Expedite the preparation and release of the report of its January 2023 promotion mission to Tanzania during which the Africa Commission's delegation visited the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Loliondo and Msomera.

Amnesty International also recommends that the African Commission, in accordance with its mandate, call on the United Republic of Tanzania to:

1. Conduct prompt, thorough, impartial, independent, transparent, and effective investigations into all allegations of human rights violations. Also call on the Tanzanian government to bring to justice those suspected as being responsible and to provide victims with access to justice and effective remedies and reparations to address the harm suffered by victims, including any loss of property;
2. Ensure that all victims of forced eviction have access to effective remedy and reparations, which includes restitution, rehabilitation, compensation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition.
3. Reinstate and provide the necessary support for rehabilitation of communities that were forcibly evicted; reopen the plan for the establishment of the conservation area for full consultation, participation, and free, prior, and informed consent of the affected communities; and
4. Ensure that any measures for implementation of the conservation area are carried out in full collaboration with the affected communities, including with guarantees for secure access to and use of resources on the affected territory by the members of the community.

Thank you.