

November 15, 2023

His Highness
Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
President of the United Arab Emirates.
and Ruler of Abu Dhabi

His Highness
Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum
Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates
and Ruler of Dubai

Dr. Sultan Al Jaber
Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology
President-Designate COP28
United Arab Emirates

Otterlo Business Corporation

Re: Maasai Eviction from their Ancestral Lands in Tanzania to Establish a Wildlife Conservation Sanctuary for Your Game Hunting

Their Royal Highnesses and Sultan Al Jaber,

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has been selected to host the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai on November 30 through December 12, 2023, and Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, the CEO of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co., is the president-designate of COP28. We, the undersigned Maasai leaders and elders in Tanzania, are writing to request that prior to hosting the UN Climate Change Conference, the relevant UAE rulers or the Federal Supreme Council agree to immediately terminate the royal families' game hunting in Tanzania which over many years has caused the mass evictions of indigenous Maasai from their ancestral pastoral homelands, including by the use of indiscriminate force and violence.

We, the undersigned eighty-one (81) Maasai village leaders and representatives, have read that in the 1980s, when he was a young military officer, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed (M.B.Z.), now President of the UAE, went on a holiday to the grasslands of Tanzania. On his return to Abu Dhabi, his father, His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, asked his son for details about his visit to Tanzania and the Masai people and their customs. After hearing it all, he asked M.B.Z. what he had done to help the Maasai people he had encountered. It is reported that in response, M.B.Z. said he had done nothing to help the Maasai because they were not Muslims. His father's reaction was clear and unmistakable. "He clutched my arm, and looked into my eyes very harshly," M.B.Z. told a New York Times reporter in 2020. "He said, 'We are all God's children.'"

Yet, as recently reported in a [Bloomberg Businessweek Feature](#) story (headlined "*Maasai Are Getting Pushed Off Their Land So Dubai Royalty Can Shoot Lions*"), thousands of Maasai people, "God's children," have been evicted from their ancestral lands so Dubai royalty and their guests can engage in the sport of trophy hunting. Numerous United Nations reports have described the forced eviction of tens of thousands of Maasai people to accommodate the royal family's hunting activities.

It has been widely reported that Lieutenant-General Mohammed Abdul Rahim Al Ali, Assistant Under Secretary at the Ministry of Defence, procured hunting rights to our ancestral land for the exclusive use of the Dubai royal family. For about 30 years, the AUE Royal Family has had exclusive hunting rights in our ancestral lands, during which time there have been several violent evictions of the Maasai, in 2009 and 2017 many of our homes have been burnt to the ground, and thousands of our livestock have been killed. The Royal families' hunting activities continue while local villagers live in fear and uncertainty. Given the numerous reports about our forced evictions by non-governmental organizations, the media, and the United Nations, we thought that by now the Royal Families would have expressed their deep regret to the Maasai people and withdrew from our land. It seems that would have been the steps taken by His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

[In a communication addressed to the United Republic of Tanzania, dated 11 October 2019](#), four U.N. special procedure mandate holders expressed concern about violence, forced evictions and harassment affecting Maasai communities and the failure to protect the rights of the Maasai to their traditional lands, territories and resources, as well as their rights to health, food and water, among others. They were concerned that decades of successive forced evictions and displacements, and the shrinking of Maasai peoples' vital space, is having a highly detrimental impact on the preservation of Maasai pastoralist culture.

These evictions and persecution of our communities are currently threatening our very existence as Maasai people. , As a result of a lack of access to grasslands and water points and the prohibition on resorting to subsistence Agriculture to make room for your game hunting and luxury tourism by others, we are struggling with poverty, malnutrition, and the preventable deaths of children and pregnant women.

In June 2022, UN human rights experts again expressed [“grave concerns”](#) about continuous encroachment on traditional Maasai lands and the eviction of Maasai people, accompanied by a lack of transparency in, and consultation with the indigenous Maasai villagers. In June 2022, this trend culminated in security forces' violence against the Maasai indigenous people in our ancestral land in the Loliondo Division of Ngorongoro District, in northern Tanzania, a place you know well. The U.N. Experts expressed deep concern at Tanzania's plans “to displace close to 150,000 Maasai from the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and Loliondo without their free, prior and informed consent, as required under international human rights law and standards.” The experts have previously raised their concerns on this issue with the Government of Tanzania, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, and the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

The [United Nations Declaration On The Rights Of Indigenous Peoples](#) was adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007. This historic adoption followed more than 20 years of deliberation and debate in which Indigenous Peoples worked directly with states to elaborate upon and advance their human rights. Article 10 states that “Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return.”

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Dr. Sultan Al Jaber
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As the first country in the region to ratify the Paris Agreement, the first to commit to an economy-wide reduction in emissions, and the first to announce a Net Zero by 2050 strategic initiative, the UAE has committed to taking positive steps in this critical decade for climate action. As the UAE assumes the leadership of the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference, it cannot ignore the rights of indigenous peoples and the protection, respect, and fulfillment of indigenous peoples' rights. Indigenous peoples have been leading on the protection and restoration of carbon-rich, biodiverse ecosystems essential to fighting climate change and species collapse.

The United Arab Emirates is aware that indigenous peoples' land ownership rights are recognized under international law including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and freedom from eviction and violence is guaranteed by the The Treaty on Civil and Political Rights and treaties to combat racial discrimination.

As the United Arab Emirates makes plans to host the COP28 international climate conference, we urge Your Highnesses and the COP28 President-Designate to demonstrate the UAE's commitment to enforcement of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and to build consensus to accelerate inclusive climate progress, by announcing, before you assume the COP28 presidency, the immediate and complete termination of the Royal family's use of our traditional Maasai lands in Tanzania for trophy hunting. We also appeal to you to exercise your good offices to strongly encourage President Samia Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania to end all Maasai evictions in all districts to make way for trophy hunting or luxury tourism.

It appears to us that there is a profound and fundamental inconsistency in hosting a global conference on major environmental issues while contributing to the displacement of thousands of indigenous Maasai people so that the Royal Family and its guests may occasionally engage in luxury trophy hunting. We are respectfully urging that any formal or informal agreements with the government of Tanzania regarding the use of traditional Maasai lands for trophy hunting, and all such hunting activities, be terminated before the COP28 proceedings commence on November 30, 2023.

So that we may all receive and review your response, please reply to response@maasaiunited.org and to our legal counsel, Peter A. Schey, Esquire, President, Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law, 256 S. Occidental Blvd., Los Angeles, California, 90057 pschey@centerforhumanrights.org

Sincerely,



Boniface Kajwel
Community Member

His Highness
Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Dr. Sultan Al Jaber
Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology

His Highness
Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum
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Sululu Olongoye
Community Member



Kijoolu Kakeya
Women Representative in Ngorongoro District Council



Rarakwo Karinya
Community member



Mopel Kilusu
Maasai Traditional Leader



Linyori Karinya
Piyaya Village Chairman



Kooya Timan
Community Member



Daniel Kuito
Arash Village Chairman



Mshao Naingisa
Maasai Traditional Leader



Koi Sinyeu
Community Member



Joseph Mingatu
Olalaa Village Chairman

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Simon Nairiam
Piyaya Ward Counselor



Damian Rago
Maaloni Ward Counselor



Nemburi Raphael
Women Traditional Leader



Laurence Ngorisa
Maasai Traditional Leader



Moitiko Risiando
Malambo Village Chairman



Noorkiopil Moko
Women Traditional Leader



Noorkishili Naing'isa
Women Traditional Leader



Noorkishili Mingini
Women Traditional Leader



Taleng'o Soyiet
Women Traditional Leader

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Lenganas Kash
Community Representative



Saning'o Terta
Women Traditional Leader



Manyara Olekaria
Women Traditional Leader



Sarah Daniel
Misigiyo Sub-Village Chairlady



Noolparakuo Makko
Women Traditional Leader



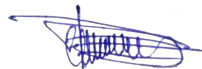
Joshua S Makko
Mondorosi village Chairman



Marko Lorry
Soitsambu Village Chairman



Metui Ole Shaduo
Maasai Traditional Leader



Parmaary N Merika
Olorien Village Chairman



Nadutari Tobiko
Olbalbal Women Representative

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Maiko Pelay
Losoito Village Chairman



Nambayo Lemayan
Oloirobi women Representative



Nengai Kilusu
Oloirobi Women Representative



John M Pyando
Ololosokwan Village Chairman



Moloimet Y Saing'eu
Ololosokwan Ward Counselor



Shengena Killel
Olorien Ward Counselor



Ndirango Olesenge
Maasai Elder



Makko Sinandei
Maasai Elder



Daniel Ngoitiko
Soitsambu Ward Counselor

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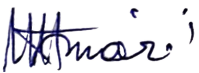
Thomas Kairung'
Community member



Edward Maura
Nainokanoka ward Counselor



Shinga Sepetaa
Alaitole Village Chairman



Godwin Olemoir
Esere village chairman



Joel Reson
Malambo Ward Counselor



Tajewo Pusindawa
Community Member



Meeli Sarun
Community member



Samwel Shinga
Community member



Sein Leken
Counselor - Women Representative

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Taleng'o Leshoko
Counselor- Women Representative



Nayai Sungare
Community representative



Steya Maijei
Community Representative



Samwel Saunyi
Ngorongoro Village Chairman



James Moringe
Alaitole Ward Counselor



Luka Kursas
Oloipiri Ward Counselor



Lerubi Mbukoti
Community Representative

Pemba Maroroi
Orkuine Village Chairman



Thomas Oltwati
Endulen Village Chairman

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Godfrey Kotika
Osinoni Village Chairman



Moinga Tobiko
Misigiyo Village Chairman



Kitipa Kotoi
Village Chairman



Kumaai Nakuta
NasipaOriong' Village Chairman



Sunguyo Olenguiny
Ngoile Ward Counselor



Isaya Shura
Chairman



Jeremiah Mussa
Sukenya Village Chairman



Simon Elikana
Oloipiri Village Chairman



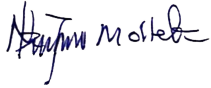
Yohana Toroge
Kirtalo Village Chairman

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Mbarnoti Tipilit
Village Chairman



Ngereza Reteti
Naiyobi Ward Counselor



Osoi Naitwati
Village Chairman



Thomas Marite
Village Chairman



Rokoine Moti Laizer
Misigiyo Ward Counselor



Lashaiki Mboi
Maasai Traditional Leader



Kisika Kilorit
Maasai Traditional Leader



Leng'ajuni
Traditional Leader



John K Olemokoto
Community Representative

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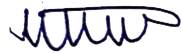
Sabore Ngarus
Community member



Kilumbei Sabore
Olchaniomelok Village Chairman



Lonyori Lemaya
Village Chairperson-Nainokanoka



Lerori Tung'ungwa
Ilkeekpusi Village Chairperson



Mathayo Tayai
Maasai Traditional Leader



Thomas Sekut
Community Member



Harrison Ndooto
Community Representative

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