



MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

Over 80 Maasai Elders and Leaders Unite to Call for an End to Human Rights Violations by UAE Government on Indigenous Land in Tanzania

Los Angeles, CA - November 15

In a powerful display of solidarity, more than 80 Maasai elders and leaders have come together to demand an immediate end to the atrocities committed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) government against their people. The indigenous Maasai community has been subjected to forced evictions and violence orchestrated by the UAE royal family for trophy hunting, leading to a significant threat to their way of life and well-being.

Maasai Elders and Leaders, deeply rooted in their ancestral lands and traditions, express their profound distress at the actions of the UAE rulers. Their passionate call for justice resonates strongly with the international community, highlighting the urgency of the situation. By uniting their voices, the Maasai elders and leaders bring attention to the plight of their people, shedding light on the grave injustices faced by indigenous communities globally. Their unwavering determination underscores the urgent need for the UAE government to cease its harmful activities, ensuring the safety, dignity, and future of the Maasai people.

"Our land is not just where we live; it is our identity, our heritage. The UAE royal family's actions have uprooted us, causing immeasurable suffering. We urge them to recognize our rights and respect our way of life," stated the Hon. Mathew Siloma, Councilor in Ngorongoro District

"We, the Maasai people, have lived harmoniously with nature for generations. The UAE government's hunting activities have disrupted this balance, leaving our communities in poverty and despair. We demand an end to this injustice," stated Noorkishili Naingisa, Women's and Human Rights Defender from Loliondo

The Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law, under the legal counsel of President Peter Schey, underscores the critical role of international law in protecting the rights of indigenous communities. According to Schey, *"The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples clearly articulates the rights of these communities, including the fundamental right to reside on their ancestral lands without facing coercion or violence. The actions of the UAE government flagrantly violate these essential principles. It is imperative that the world protects the right of Maasai communities to live on and care for their ancestral lands."*

This joint plea comes ahead of the UAE hosting the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai. The Maasai leaders urge the UAE rulers and the President-Designate of COP28, Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, to align their actions with their climate commitments and uphold the rights of indigenous peoples generally and for the Maasai people specifically.

Schey believes that the UAE must change its treatment of the Maasai people before it claim to be invested in environmental justice. *"International law unequivocally supports the rights of indigenous peoples. The UAE must recognize these rights and cease its harmful activities on Maasai land. Hosting a global environmental conference while contributing to the displacement of indigenous communities is a grave contradiction. It is time for the UAE to respect the dignity and heritage of the Maasai people."*

The full text of the letter is included below.

For further inquiries, please contact: response@maasaiunited.org

Alex Valdivia, Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law alex@centerforhumanrights.org

For more information, visit <https://www.maasaiunited.org/>

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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.”

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



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



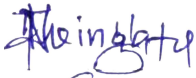
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Arash Village Chairman



Mshao Naingisa
Maasai Traditional Leader



Koi Sinyeu
Community Member



Joseph Mingatu
Olalaa Village Chairman



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



Noorkiropil Moko
Women Traditional Leader



Noorkishili Naing'isa
Women Traditional Leader



Noorkishili Mingini
Women Traditional Leader



Taleng'o Soyiet
Women Traditional Leader



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



Maiko Pelay
Losoito Village Chairman



Nambayo Lemayan
Oloirobi women Representative



Nengai Kilusu
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Ololosokwan Village Chairman



Moloimet Y Saing'eu

Ololosokwan Ward Counselor



Shengena Killel
Olorien Ward Counselor



Ndirango Olesenge
Maasai Elder



Makko Sinandei
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Daniel Ngoitiko
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Sein Leken
Counselor - Women Representative



Taleng'o Leshoko
Counselor- Women Representative



Nayai Sungare
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Steya Maijei
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Luka Kursas
Oloipiri Ward Counselor



Lerubi Mbukoti
Community Representative

Pemba Maroroi
Orkuine Village Chairman



Thomas Oltwati
Endulen Village Chairman



Godfrey Kotika
Osinoni Village Chairman



Moinga Tobiko
Misigiyo Village Chairman



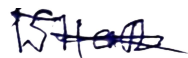
Kitipa Kotoi
Village Chairman



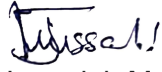
Kumaai Nakuta
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Sunguyo Olenguiny
Ngoile Ward Counselor



Isaya Shura
Chairman



Jeremiah Mussa
Sukanya Village Chairman



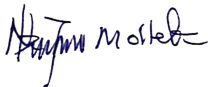
Simon Elikana
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Rokoine Moti Laizer
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Lashaiki Mboi
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Kisika Kilorit
Maasai Traditional Leader



Leng'ajuni
Traditional Leader



John K Olemokoto
Community Representative



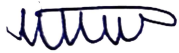
Sabore Ngarus
Community member



Kilumbei Sabore
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