



## NATURE TALK AFRICA: FORMAL POSITION STATEMENT TO COP30

Belém, Brazil | November 2025.

Title: **Protecting Civic Space, Community Rights and Climate Justice in Uganda's Oil-Affected Albertine Region**

Nature Talk Africa, a youth-led and community-rooted environmental and human rights organization based in Hoima District, Uganda, submits this position statement to the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

We represent displaced families, frontline environmental defenders and young organizers living at the epicenter of Uganda's ongoing oil and gas developments—including the Tilenga Project, Kingfisher Project and the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP)—financed by TotalEnergies, CNOOC and the Government of Uganda. Our submission reflects the voices of rural communities who continue to face environmental degradation, loss of land and livelihoods, intimidation and reduced civic space when raising concerns about these developments in our communities.

### CONTEXT AND CORE CONCERNS.

Shrinking Civic Space and Threats to Environmental Defenders. In oil host communities, residents and Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs) experience: intimidation, harassment, and threats of arrest when speaking up; restrictions on peaceful assembly and community organizing; surveillance and interference in public participation processes. A climate agenda that tolerates repression undermines the very principles of justice, transparency and rights-based development.

Human Rights Impacts of Extractive Projects. The current oil and gas activities have resulted in: displacement and inadequate compensation; loss of farming land and cultural resources; biodiversity threats in critical ecosystems; inadequate access to information and meaningful consultation; deepening poverty and inequality for Project Affected Persons (PAPs). These impacts violate international standards on human rights, FPIC (Free, Prior and Informed Consent), and environmental protection.

Contradiction with Global Climate Commitments. Large-scale fossil fuel expansion in Uganda contradicts global pathways to 1.5°C and increases climate vulnerability for already at-risk rural communities. Investments in oil lock Uganda into decades of fossil dependence, undermining adaptation, resilience and sustainable development goals.



*"Community action intercepted by police officers in my village" Said community organizer in Hoima*



*Community organizing for social & climate justice.*

### OUR POSITION

Nature Talk Africa asserts that climate justice cannot be achieved without civic freedom, community participation and corporate accountability. We affirm: Development must respect human rights and community dignity. Projects that silence communities or criminalize dissent cannot be called sustainable or inclusive.

Corporations must conduct robust human rights and environmental due diligence. TotalEnergies, CNOOC, and partners must adhere to UNGPs on Business and Human Rights and address documented human rights harms.

Communities must have meaningful participation at every stage of investment and policy implementation. No decisions about us should be made without us.

Climate finance should prioritize frontline communities, not fossil fuel infrastructure. Funding must support adaptive capacity, livelihoods restoration and community-led conservation.

Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs) must be protected. Defenders are essential partners in safeguarding ecosystems and accountability.



**KEY DEMANDS TO COP30 AND GLOBAL STAKEHOLDERS:**

Nature Talk Africa calls on world leaders, investors, corporations and UN bodies to:

- Protect and Expand Civic Space. Condemn and prevent intimidation and criminalization of EHRDs and ensure Uganda complies with its obligations under the Aarhus Convention spirit, African Charter and UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.
- Hold Corporations Accountable. Require TotalEnergies, CNOOC, security agents and all financiers to comply with human rights and environmental safeguards and mandate transparent, independent monitoring of impacts on communities and ecosystems.
- Center Community Rights in Climate Action: Integrate Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) into all extractive and energy-related decisions and ensure resettlement processes are fair, transparent and rights-compliant.
- Redirect Climate and Development Finance. Stop financing fossil fuel expansion in Uganda and across Africa and invest in community-led renewable energy, nature-based solutions, and livelihoods recovery.
- Strengthen Protection Mechanisms for EHRDs. Establish early-warning and rapid-response systems for frontline defenders and support legal aid, protection networks and cross-border solidarity.
- Promote Just Transition Pathways. Support Uganda and East Africa to shift from fossil fuels toward renewable, community-owned energy systems and ensure that benefits of the energy transition reach displaced and vulnerable communities.

**OUR COMMITMENTS:**

Nature Talk Africa remains committed to:

- *Community-centered research and participatory documentation of social, climate and environmental concerns.*
- *Amplifying grassroots voices in national, regional and global climate forums for demanding transparency and accountability.*
- *Promoting community-led peaceful and nonviolent organizing for justice.*
- *Defending the rights, dignity and safety of communities facing the impacts of climate change and natural resources extraction.*
- *We stand in solidarity with all frontline communities—from the Amazon to the Albertine—fighting for ecological justice, land rights, and a livable future.*



**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, climate justice requires protecting those who defend the environment. Sustainable development requires respecting the dignity of communities. Energy transition requires leaving no one behind. Nature Talk Africa calls upon the global climate community to act with courage, integrity, and justice. We urge COP30 to ensure that human rights, community safety and civic space are non-negotiable pillars of global climate action.



*A group photo of grassroots Environmental Human Rights Defenders, community organizers and rights activists in our oil host communities of Hoima, Buliisa and Kikuube districts after a training in MDR by Nature Talk Africa (NaTA)*

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