



OIL REFINERY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Kabaale-Buseruka Hoima district

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A PROCEEDING REPORT ON TRAINING OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS HELD IN KABAAL SUB-COUNTY, HOIMA DISTRICT

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Introduction:

On 9th February, 2022 Oil Refinery Residents Association (ORRA) organized a training for HRDs surrounding at Nyakasini village, Kabaale sub-county in Hoima District. The participants were from the oil project areas of Tilenga, refinery and Kingfisher.

This meeting/training was organized based on the need to enhance the capacity of human and environmental rights defenders to be to promote and protect human and environment rights. This meeting/training is part of a series of interactions ORRA has planned with different HRDs and

communities in Hoima, Kikuube and Buliisa district. This initiative is being supported by our partner Lifeline for Embattled Civil Society Organizations.

Proceedings:

Opening remarks from ORRA:

Mr. Innocent Tumwebaze the field coordinator ORRA welcomed the participants for having given their time to attend the training and encouraged them to listen carefully to the issues that would be discussed during the meeting.

He briefly updated the participants on the current activities being undertaken by which among others included experience sharing with oil project affected communities especially women, mobilizing and instituting community based climate justice movements, mobilizing and training of HRDs, legal support for refinery court case, promoting renewable energy campaigns among others.

He also said women are the primary users of land and their land rights must be respected by their husbands. “Any issue concerning selling off of land must be done when all the two partners for those who are married have agreed up on it”, he stated.

He concluded by encouraging women to actively participate in the affairs of their communities through attending meetings, taking leadership positions among others.

Communication from the local council one chairperson:

Mr. Oweki Gerafel the area local council one chairperson applauded ORRA for their continued efforts to empower communities to ensure inclusive development. He encouraged the participants to pay attention to the training.

Introduction to the program:

Mr. Christopher Opiyo, program and communication officer ORRA said that this project is implemented in three district and with support from Lifeline. He said the idea is to try to find solutions to the increased pressure on the HRDs in the region amidst oil and gas development. He went ahead to say that they also want to engage more women to be at the forefront to champion and lead promotion of human and environmental rights in their communities

Christopher said that recently, there has been increased intimidation, threats, blackmail and arrests of human and environmental rights defenders especially the ones that have been critical on human and environmental rights in the oil region of Hoima, Buliisa and Kikuube.

He said that Worldwide, human rights have always been targeted and therefore, it’s important to enhance their digital and physical security to be able to continue to work but in a safe way.

He said that it’s high time HRDs start to work together by identifying their allies and build a strong network with their communities.

He further advised the participants that it's okay to stay behind and let communities front the issue of concern to the authority especially where the HRD sees that he is being targeted for advancing such a concern.

He also briefly talked about the Final Investment Decision (FID) and its implication on the HRDs working in the Albertine region on the issues of human and environmental rights. He said that with the signing of the FID many activities are going to commence and some of which is going to affect communities and the environment.

Christopher said that HRDs and any other member of the community should ensure their advocacy premised on evidence, that this will limit the current threats and intimidation from government and the oil companies as it will be difficult to deny something that has evidence.

He concluded by saying that it's high time HRDs desist from use of bitter language while advocating for rights of communities. He said that HRDs should invest much in the use of positive communication to avoid government responding harshly on them.

Ms. Millius Nyamahunge

Ms. Nyamahunge one of the facilitators said that Women human rights defenders are even more vulnerable and therefore, it's important for them to work together and encourage more women to join them to change perspective about women.

She added that women are affected most by any negative change in their community. For instance, she said climate change impact affect women most and any other thing like the effect of compulsory land acquisition among other projects, and therefore, she encouraged women to get more involved in fighting for their rights to be able challenge the historical injustices that has seen many women don't own property, take leadership position among others.

She said that women HRDs can form groups where they can work as a team to avoid being victimized and that this will help them act good example even to young girl children in their respective communities.

She concluded by encouraging the women who attended this training to go back and mobilize more women in a group and that if they need any help, ORRA will always be available to help where possible.



Response from the participants:

Birungi a resident of Nyakaziba village said that she has been advocating for clean water in her area and she has received many threats from the local leaders who say that she over talks, that women should be humble.

She requested ORRA to pay much attention on rural women and provide more trainings for them to be able to bring them onboard communities. She added that with the knowledge she has gotten from the training, she is going

to try and mobilize more women in her village to join her in advancing their rights.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Mr. Christopher Opio thanked the participants for having spared their time to attend the meeting and also promised to organize more meetings and provide trainings for especially WHRDs.

He added that they plan to continuously organize for such empowerment meetings for different communities so that they can gain courage to fight for their own rights as a community.

Photo highlights:



