

**14th Session of United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
held on 20th April-1st May 2015, UN Headquarters New York, USA.**

A joint statement made by IWGIA and PAICODEO

Agenda Item 7b: Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Madam chair, I thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of my people.

Madam chair, we appreciate the UN mechanisms on the rights of indigenous peoples. It is our hope that these mechanisms will be improved to support the arising needs of Indigenous peoples.

Madam chair, Maasai are facing extermination operations by the government, elite and their associates in various parts of Tanzania. These operations that target our lands, livestock and lives of people have been planned to forcefully eliminate us. Pastoralism our central means of life is prohibited in Tanzania. Today we cannot move freely with our livestock, we cannot graze and browse our livestock in our traditional lands, 99% of our lands is already in the hands of these individuals fighting against our existence. These operations are being implemented in the name of conservation, ending nomadic life; elimination of wars between pastoralists and farmers and that livestock contribute to environmental destruction.

Madam chair, most of our lands are rich in natural resources, air and life but there is no appreciation from the people who covet our lands and natural resources. We (humans) and wildlife, wild animals, trees, lands, soils, water, air, and livestock celebrate our co-existence. Some people eyeing our resources see that the only way to get these resources is by wiping us out. As people we respect nature, we respect humanity and dignity but we cannot entertain a policy of elimination. We need to live as peoples enjoying our self-determination.

Madam chair, In recent years we have experienced land grabbing by elites comprising of politicians, business men and women, civil servants from local and central governments, investors and protected areas authorities. As a result of forceful land grabs we have seen mobs attack us and government bias in enforcing the rule of law in the country. On 18th January 2015 we saw mobs attack against Maasai men and women working and travelling through Morogoro municipality. During the attacks 50 Maasai went missing, 100 attacked and there are unconfirmed deaths ranging from 2-10 people. Since the commencement of mobs attacks it is now difficult to access social services in the city and there are no such services in our homelands. Local authorities failed to intervene and by some accounts even gave tacit approval to the attackers, this being an environment in which the government has stated that traditional pastoralism as a way of life must end.

The Maasai communities severely affected are of Mabwegere and Kambala villages in Morogoro region. As I speak these villages are in the middle of fights because the elite have forcefully established farms in these villages. On 24th April 2015, 2 people have been killed and 10 seriously injured are in hospitals following invasion of Kambala village by 300 members of the sponsored

militia group. Between 2013 and 2015, 23 people have lost lives, 100 injured and 16 put in police custody and 6 women raped. The mobs attacking the Maasai have forcefully taken away more than 3,000 livestock in the presence of police. A total of 50 houses were burnt by the militia group leaving 300 family members without homes and food. The presence of police in the affected areas has continued to threaten the Maasai community instead of providing protection. This situation made many families homeless and left without food, health services and protection. These are legal pastoralists' villages but still suffer forceful land grab. Mabwegere village once took the farmers to court in 2006 and in 2012 won the case. Kilosa district in Morogoro region was supposed to implement the court ruling but it is reluctant because of protecting individual interests.

On 4th April 2015 Selous Game Reserve authorities confiscated 200 cattle belonging to Maasai families and under direction of the Game Reserve Director all of these cattle were shot dead. The pastoralists have tried to find them and report this to the authorities but they turned deaf ears and blind eyes. The Maasai men were refused entry into the game reserve where these livestock were killed. In 2011 and 2013, 2 Barbaig pastoralists have been killed and 150 cattle lost in the same Selous Game Reserve. In Mikumi National Park rangers shot dead 212 livestock and 1 pastoralist herder. In Kiteto and Ngorongoro districts pastoralists continued to experience untold suffering. The government has failed to resolve the problems because of individual interests. In the conflict areas women, elderly people and children have continued suffering without any humanitarian support. The humanitarians support required are a UN mission to stop the conflict and supply food, shelter, medications and clothing to the affected.

Madam chair,

1. We request the UN to call upon the government of Tanzania to halt the ongoing atrocities against the Maasai people and other pastoralists.
2. We request the international community to supply humanitarian assistance to the affected community.
3. We request the UN to send a team to investigate the ongoing violations of human rights in affected communities.

I thank you for your kind attention.