Ethiopia

Stop Land Grabbing and Restore Indigenous Peoples’ Lands

Ethiopia receives more foreign aid than any other African nation—upwards of $3 billion a year. Western governments see Ethiopia as a strategic bulwark in the “global fight against terrorism” and point to its progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals, an international program to end poverty and hunger.

But Ethiopia’s policies are deliberately making some of its citizens poorer and hungrier. The government is forcing the Indigenous Peoples of the southwest off their ancestral lands and leasing these lands to foreign companies. Bulldozers are destroying the forests, farms, and grazing lands that have sustained Anuak, Mezenger, Nuer, Opo, and Komo peoples for centuries. While the foreign companies are planting food crops and agrofuels like oil palm, mainly for export, soldiers are forcing thousands of Indigenous people into state-created villages, simultaneously robbing them of their livelihoods and their cultural identity. Their protests are being met with intimidation, extra-judicial killings, rape, incarceration, and torture. Journalists and human rights advocates in Ethiopia who speak out against these abuses are silenced or exiled.

Ethiopia’s deliberate policies of forced relocation, discrimination, repression, and environmental devastation are enabled, at least indirectly, by foreign aid.

“[The] government brought the Anuak people here to die. They brought us no food, they gave away our land to the foreigners so we can’t even move back.”
— Anuak elder forcibly moved to a state village (from the Human Rights Watch report, Waiting Here for Death.)

The Ethiopian government leased the homelands of these Anuak women to an Indian company, Karuturi Global Ltd, and moved them to a village where there is no land for farming.

Photo courtesy of Anuak Justice Council

It’s time for donor nations—especially the United States and the United Kingdom—to use their influence to halt these abuses. Let’s urge them to do this now!
You Can Help!

The Anuak Justice Council asks world citizens to send polite letters to the governments of the United Kingdom and the United States. In your letters, please:

• Express concern that the Ethiopian government is violating the rights of Indigenous Peoples and causing them extreme suffering through its forced “villagization” program and agricultural land leases.

• Urge them to ensure that no donor funds and other forms of assistance facilitate land-leasing and villagization schemes that violate Indigenous Peoples’ rights and cause them harm.

• Ask them to use their influence as donor nations to demand that Ethiopia enforce its own constitution and international laws that recognize Indigenous Peoples’ rights to ancestral lands, consultation, and compensation. Ask them to publicly call on Ethiopia to revoke repressive laws that stifle civic participation, press freedom, and dissent.

Please send polite letters, faxes, or emails to:

Mr. Johnnie Carson, Assistant Secretary
US Department of State
Bureau of African Affairs, Room 6234
2201 C Street, NW
Washington DC, 20520, USA
Fax: +202 647 0810 Attn. Laura Hruby, Ethiopia Desk
Email: CarsonJ@state.gov

Rt. Hon. Andrew Mitchell, MP
Secretary of State for International Development
1 Palace Street
London SW1E 5HE
United Kingdom
Fax: +44 20 7023 0634
Email: andrew.mitchell.mp@parliament.uk

Tips:
Address your letters to:
Dear Ambassador Carson,
Dear Minister Mitchell,

Postage within the U.S. is 45 cents.
Postage from the U.S. to the U.K. is $1.05.
A model letter is available at www.cs.org
Personal, mailed letters have the most impact!

For more information, please see:
www.cs.org
“Waiting Here for Death” – Human Rights Watch, 2012

Thank you for joining this campaign.
The Anuak people say, Uuna pwoc døc ki met ec! (“Thank you very much!”)