

## SENGWER FOREST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF CHERANGANY HILLS

P.O. Box 3894-30200, Kitale – Kenya. Email: sengweremip@gmail.com

22 January 2018

**Mr Timo Soini,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs  
Merikasarmi, Laivastokatu 22, Helsinki  
P.O. Box 413,  
FI-00023 Government, Finland**

**Mr. Kai Mykkänen  
Minister for Foreign Trade and Development  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs  
Merikasarmi, Laivastokatu 22, Helsinki  
P.O. Box 413,  
FI-00023 Government, Finland**

Dear Sirs,

**Re: Suspend €9.5 million for Private Forestry and Forest Enterprise Support in Kenya and Forestry related Projects in Kenya to STOP continued violation of Sengwer Human Rights**

We the undersigned below, on behalf of Sengwer forest indigenous peoples of Embobut forest in Cherangany Hills, hereby call upon the Finnish Government to immediately suspend **€9.5 million for Private Forestry and Forest Enterprise Support in Kenya and other Forestry related Projects in Kenya to STOP continued violation of fundamental freedoms and human rights of Sengwer indigenous peoples living in Embobut Forest**. Don't use the Finnish to kill us! Don't use the Finnish to evict us from our ancestral homes in Embobut forest and entire Cherangany Hills and Forests! Don't use Finnish to burn our homes! Use Finnish funds to help Kenya Government to review Forest Conservation and Management Act 2016 recognize and protect the rights of Sengwer forest indigenous peoples and other forest indigenous communities to live in and own their ancestral lands in protected area/forest areas sustainably on conservation conditions working closely with state agencies.

We wish to bring to your attention that Kenya government has continued to carry out forceful evictions (*burning homes, destroying property, shooting with live bullets, arrests, etc*) of members of Sengwer indigenous peoples from our ancestral lands (*our community land as stipulated on article 63 (2) (d) (ii) of the Constitution of Kenya*) in Embobut forest. The situation is getting worse. On 16 January 2018, Robert Kiroitch a member of Sengwer was shot dead with a live bullet by Kenya Forest Services guard – David Kipkosgei survived from a gunshot is now in hospital undergoing constructive surgery – the violation of Sengwer human rights that led to killing of a Sengwer and injuring another in the name of conservation forced EU to suspend Kshs 3.6 billion for WaTER Towers Protection and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Programme on 17 January 2018.

On Saturday, 20 January 2018, County Commissioner of Elgeiyo Marakwet Mr. Fred Ndambuki on a local radio station announced that the government will as from today Monday 22 January 2018 deploy more special forces to Embobut forest and that the government is not ready to negotiate with 'criminals'...members of *Sengwer indigenous community living in their ancestral land in Embobut forest have been labelled 'criminals, bandits', just because of fighting for our land rights as enshrined in article 63 (2) (d) (ii) of the constitution of Kenya*. Further, the county commissioner, said that as from tomorrow 23 January 2018 Tuesday the special forces we be looking for criminals on the ground as they (county commissioner and others) will be using aeroplanes to supervise the operation ...and that there'll be now where to hide. Further, the commissioner said that police are investigating two NGOs for inciting the community to remain in the forest and at the same time he alleges that the

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organizations buy guns for the criminals from neighbouring county. *All these are false allegations aimed at justifying government narrative that Sengwer are bandits/criminals.*

We therefore call upon Finnish Government to immediately -

Suspend all of its funding to the Kenyan Government that relates to forestry, especially the €9.5 million '[Private Forestry and Forest Enterprise Support in Kenya](#)' project, and make clear that key human rights and social conditions must be met before any lifting of such a suspension of Finnish Government funding. These include:-

**(1) Insisting the Government of Kenya and KFS immediately stop these human rights violations in Embobut and elsewhere.** For the Sengwer at Embobut, these violations include the torching of their homes, and the harassing and killing of community members.

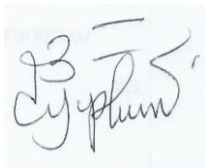
**(2) Initiating an independent human rights assessment of KFS's activities on communities' lands.** Specifically, ensuring that the Sengwer and Ogiek participate from the start in an independent human rights assessment of the WaTER project and are involved in validating the final study.

**(3) Restructuring forest conservation agencies and projects** so that they respect human rights and the Kenyan constitution, are based on modern conservation science, and secure the collective land rights of those people who have the knowledge and commitment to care for their lands and secure their forests.

**(4) Reviewing of Forest Conservation and Management Act 2016** to recognize and protect the rights of Sengwer forest indigenous peoples and other forest indigenous communities to live in and own their ancestral lands in protected area/forest areas sustainably on conservation conditions working closely with state agencies.

I look forward for your acknowledgement and action

Yours Faithfully



Yator Kiptum



Milka C Kuto

**22 January 2018**