

31th, August, 2021

Uganda Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities.

2nd Floor, Rwenzori Towers at 6 Nakasero Road,

Kampala-Uganda.

Dear Hon Minister,

PETITION TO ADDRESS THE LONG STANDING BUGOMA FOREST QUESTION TO SAVE WILDLIFE.

YOUTH FOR GREEN COMMUNITIES (YGC), a youth-led public policy research and advocacy incorporated organization dedicated to influencing environment and natural resources governance to benefit the poor, vulnerable and mitigate climate change sends you greetings.

We also extend our appreciation of the work your ministry has been doing to provide for conservation and sustainable management of wildlife; to strengthen wildlife conservation and management, and to streamline the roles and responsibilities of institutions involved in wildlife conservation and management.

Honorable Minister, with the above being said, YGC has taken note of serious concerns from the ongoing destruction of Bugoma Central Forest Reserve (BCFR). In watch of the ongoing BCFR destruction, it is on record that there are currently [over 34](#) species of mammals including 4 globally threatened mammal species. There are 9 mammal species listed under IUCN's Red List that live within the Bugoma Forest Reserve. These include primates such as chimpanzees, the Grey cheeked mangabeys, the Black and white Colobus monkeys, the Blue monkeys, the Red tailed monkeys and the Vervet monkeys etc. It is estimated that [about 600](#) chimpanzees live within the forest.

Other mammals that call the forest reserve home include Buffaloes, [Bush Elephants](#), Uganda Kobs, Golden Cats and Side-stripped Jackals among others.

Unless your ministry urgently steps in to be part of solution finding of the BCFR problem with ministry of water and Environment and all underlying agencies like NEMA, UWA, NFA and others, the aforementioned species are bound to danger and extinction.

This letter comes in the aftermath of the sad news of the demise of a [forest Elephant killed in Bugoma Forest](#) in the area of Kaseeta. For nearly a long time, BCFR has been degraded for sugarcane growing by Hoima Sugar limited despite the court cases contesting the legality of private ownership of a protected forest, the grant of Environment Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) to the company and different advocacies from YGC and its partners. Worse still, part of the forest is being degraded amidst oil activities in the region, this no doubt is worsening the existence of wildlife which find death on the way to new sites.

Therefore, the objective of this letter is to therefore, request your good office to work with and advise the government, other responsible ministries and agencies to address the BCFR as soon as possible before extinction of the aforementioned wildlife in your watch. [Section 4 of the Uganda Wildlife Act, 2019](#) empowers your good office with overall coordination, policy development, and monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the wildlife conservation policies and this act. The Uganda Wildlife Authority under supervision and watch is mandated to ensure the sustainable of wild conservation areas, implement government policies on wildlife management, identify and recommend areas for declaration as wildlife conservation areas and others. This mandate keeps on being neglected every time these animals die. Henceforth, your good office should take action and perform its supervisory duties over the authority to perform its functions clearly established under [section 6](#) on the Uganda wildfire Act, 2019.

Recommendations

In pursuance of your duties of the overall supervision to ensure the sustainable management of wildlife conservation areas and others under [section 6](#), Hon minister, watching the conversion of Bugoma forest into a sugarcane plantation among other land uses that are not compatible with forest conservation is not only illegal but a danger to the wildlife, environment and humanity. It is a shame that will create the worst precedent. We ask you to guard our national image as pearl of Africa by urgently doing the following:

1. Stop the destruction of Bugoma forest: Advise the president to issue a presidential directive to stop the ongoing activities of Hoima Sugar Ltd in Bugoma forest.
2. Open boundaries of Bugoma forest: Work with other ministries to direct Ministry of UWA, NEMA and NFA to urgently commission independent surveyors to open the boundaries of Bugoma forest. The surveyors should be independent to avoid corrupt

government officials conniving with land grabbers and declaring the leased land to Hoima Sugar Ltd as land outside Bugoma forest. The survey should establish the physical location of the over 41,000 hectares of Bugoma forest.

3. Work with relevant bodies to prosecute all suspected corrupt government officials in the giveaway of Bugoma forest. All suspected government officials in the give-away of part of Bugoma forest land should be prosecuted and punished in accordance with the law. There are government officials who issued illegal land titles to BKK and Hoima Sugar. There are others who testified in court that the land given to BKK and Hoima Sugar Ltd was outside Bugoma forest and yet to date, there is no independent boundary survey. There are also others who failed or ignored to implement and ensure compliance with the physical planning laws. All these should be investigated and prosecuted.
4. Advise government to use its powers of compulsory land acquisition under Article 26 of the Constitution to save Bugoma forest and its catchment areas from land grabbers. The government should use its constitutional powers of compulsory land acquisition to save Bugoma forest from Hoima Sugar Ltd's destruction. This should be done as a last resort after all other options including efforts for cancellation of land titles for BKK and Hoima Sugar Ltd and others in Bugoma forest have been exploited. Further, the practice of compensating people who illegally issued and acquired titles over Bugoma forest and other protected areas should be discouraged by punitive punishments against the corrupt.
5. Last and most important, recommend BCFR for declaration as wildlife conservation area to protect the aforementioned wildlife and for tourism purposes.

To ensure the sustainable conservation of wildlife throughout Uganda so that the abundance and diversity of their species are maintained at optimum levels commensurate with other forms of land use, in order to support sustainable utilization of wildlife for benefit of the people of Uganda, YGC demands that you address the above concerns and implement the recommendations in a period of one month from receipt of this petition.

We wait for your positive response.

Thank you,

Aryampa Brighton

CEO, YGC.

Contact details: info@ygcug.org / aryampa.brighton@gmail.com / 0784679759.

Signatories

1. Youth for Green Communities
2. Oil Refinery Residents Association (ORRA)
3. Strategic Response on Environment (SRE)
4. Environment Governance Institute (EGI)
5. South Western Institute for Policy and Advocacy (SOWIPA)
6. Guild Presidents' Forum on Governance

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1. The Speaker of Parliament,
2. The Chairperson, Natural Resources Committee of Parliament,
3. The Executive Director, National Environment Management Authority
4. Director, Environmental Affairs, MWE
5. The ED, Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA)
6. The ED, National Forestry Authority (NFA)
7. The Country Representative, IUCN Uganda Country Office