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## THE EVICTIONS THAT THREATEN THE MAASAI IN LOLIONDO, TANZANIA, NEED TO BE CANCELLED

The representatives of the Maasai community of Loliondo in Ngorongoro District are waiting for the third day in a row to meet with the Prime Minister of Tanzania, Honorable Mizengo Pinda. The Maasai are worried about the looming evictions that would turn their homeland into hunting grounds for foreign safari tourists.

Over 40 000 Maasais are threatened by eviction from the area that consists of around 20 villages and has got several schools and other infrastructure. The plan for the eviction was already cancelled last year due to international pressure and now the Government of Tanzania has promised a one billion shilling (around 460 000€) compensation to the community.

There are no longer alternative pastures for herding because the Maasai have lost their ancestral land bit by bit since colonial times. Herding is an integral part of Maasai cultural identity and the loss of indigenous traditions cannot be compensated monetarily.

The area is crucial for the survival of their pastoralist livelihood and culture. For centuries the Maasai have herded their cows and co-existed the area with the wildlife. The Government's argument that the area needs to be used as a Wildlife corridor for nature conservation is doubtful because of the operation of a luxury safari hunting company, Ortello Business Corporation (OBC), in the same area. OBC is closely connected to the Royal family of Dubai of United Arab Emirates.

The opponents of the plan have been threatened in various ways and activists have received even death threats. According to the information that we have received, public gatherings have been prohibited in Loliondo District.

The Maasai community has appealed to the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Rights to investigate the case and to impose a moratorium of action. The Maasais plead the donor countries to support a peaceful solution with the Government of Tanzania.

UN Association of Finland and Sámi Council appeal to the Finnish decision-makers that Finland together with other Nordic countries would be active in supporting the land rights of the Maasai.

Sincerely,

UN Association of Finland

Sámi Council

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**Articles on the subject:**

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/16/tanzania-government-accused-serengeti-sale-maasai-lands>

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/17/rich-gulf-arabs-tanzania-hunters-masai-rights>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/30/maasai-game-hunting-tanzania>