

## **MAASAI DELEGATION TO MEET EUROPEAN LEADERS IN A BID TO END THE FORCED EVICTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES THEY ARE FACING IN TANZANIA**

**22.05.2023, A high-profile delegation of Maasai representatives starts a tour in several European countries this May, seeking international support to halt the ongoing forced evictions and human rights abuses against the Maasai people in Tanzania.**

The Maasai have lived for generations in the Serengeti ecosystem in Tanzania and have shaped and protected these lands, preserving wildlife and biodiversity in areas such as Loliondo, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and the now Serengeti National Park. However, they have been systematically marginalised and violently evicted from their ancestral lands to make way for conservation projects, tourism, and trophy-hunting schemes, severely violating their human and constitutional rights. This has also happened with the support of conservation NGOs like the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) and European funding.

In recent years, the Tanzanian government has been running a brutal campaign against the Maasai, characterised by forced evictions which have already affected tens of thousands of Maasai people across various regions. In 2022, the evictions of the Maasai in Loliondo to make way for a tourism and conservation operation were marked by extreme violence. The Tanzanian government has also paralysed the availability and access to vital social services, such as health services in Ngorongoro, as a weapon to force the Maasai out of their ancestral land. The government is running a brutal campaign against Maasai in Tanzania.

European governments, EU institutions and NGOs like FZS are involved directly or indirectly in tourism and conservation projects in Tanzania, including in the Ngorongoro district. Therefore, the delegation will visit Germany, Austria, and the EU headquarters in Brussels to raise their concerns. Its goal is to ensure these government entities take measures to respect and promote the human rights of the Maasai and prevent their financial support to the Tanzanian government from enabling further forced evictions and violence.

The Maasai delegation insists on the need to change the current tourism and conservation model, which promotes the vision that nature protection must be separated from human settlement. Indigenous peoples in many countries are being evicted in the name of conservation, and their livelihoods are destroyed, such as the lives of the Maasai. The delegation demands that: i) EU Member states and European institutions halt funding for tourism and conservation projects that violate human rights and ii) they ensure that international partnerships fully respect and promote land rights and human rights.

The Maasai delegation hopes that by raising awareness of these issues and garnering international support, they can help end the ongoing forced evictions and human rights abuses against their people in Tanzania. They also wish to show the dark side of tourism and correct the false assumptions about conservation, which have devastating consequences on

their lives and lands. The Maasai's traditional way of life is not incompatible with the protection of the environment. On the contrary, the Maasai shape and protect nature and biodiversity – if only they are free to access and move in their lands.

#### **Background information on the conflict and demands of the Maasai:**

- [Tanzania: Maasai Forcibly Displaced for Game Reserve](#)
- [Community opinions on socio-economic, cultural & ecological status in Ngorongoro](#)
- [Open Letter from Survival International to the Executive Director of the Frankfurt Zoological Society](#)
- The Tanzanian government recently issued a publication denying the Maasai's status as an Indigenous People to justify the violation of their rights and the theft of their lands. [In a public statement, the Maasai of Tanzania refute these allegations and denounce this serious undermining of their rights.](#)

#### **For media inquiries, please contact:**

- Edward Porokwa, PINGO's Forum, +255 754 479 815, [eporokwa@pingosforum.or.tz](mailto:eporokwa@pingosforum.or.tz)
- Joseph Oleshangay Human Rights Lawyer, +255 769 637 623, [joseshangay@gmail.com](mailto:joseshangay@gmail.com)
- Martin Lena, Survival International, +33 142 41 47 62, [ml@survivalinternational.fr](mailto:ml@survivalinternational.fr)

The [Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organization's Forum \(PINGO's Forum\)](#) is an advocacy coalition of 53 indigenous peoples' organisations working in Tanzania for the rights of the marginalised indigenous pastoralist and hunter-gatherer communities. It was established in 1994 by six pastoralist and hunter-gatherer organisations in their struggle for land rights and development.

The Maasai delegation to Europe is supported by a group of NGOs and civil society organisations in solidarity with the Maasai people of Tanzania. They work to raise awareness, foster international solidarity, and give Maasai people a voice as they are being criminalised. They further advocate for policy changes that will help the Maasai communities live in harmony with their land and wildlife, free from forced evictions and human rights abuses.

