



Kaweri Coffee Plantation in Uganda

Mubende District

LOCATION: Kaweri Coffee Plantation (KCP) is situated in Mubende District which is in the Central Region of Uganda.

ISSUE: Following an agreement between the Government of Uganda and Neumann Kaffee Gruppe (NKG) to carry-out a coffee plantation, local communities have been forcefully evicted from their land of 2524 ha. The forced eviction has had negative impacts on their living conditions and caused human rights violations.

COMMUNITIES: Approximately 4,000 inhabitants of four (4) villages namely Kitemba, Luwunga, Kijunga and Kiryamakobe in Mubende District.

ACTORS: Affected communities, Ugandan authorities, Kaweri Coffee Plantation Ltd., a 100% subsidiary of the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe based in Hamburg/Germany.

MAJOR VIOLATIONS: Right to food and nutrition, Right to water, Right to adequate housing, Right to health, Right to education, Right to work, Women's rights and Right to enjoy cultural life.

CONTEXT

In August 2001, the inhabitants of the villages of Kitemba, Luwunga, Kijunga and Kiryamakobe (approximately 4,000 peasants) in Madudu Sub-county in Mubende District were violently expelled from the land of 2,524 hectares that they had been living on for years. The Ugandan army forced them to leave their premises because the parastatal Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) wanted to lease it to the KCP, a 100% subsidiary of the NKG based in Hamburg, Germany. The eviction was described by the evictees as particularly cruel. The inhabitants were threatened and forced to leave at gunpoint and several of those being evicted were beaten in the process. The soldiers set houses on fire and demolished them,

including the fully equipped private clinic of the community and six churches. Movable properties were looted and crops were cut down and uprooted. The Kitemba Primary School (a formal school of the villages) has since then been used as the headquarters of NKG/KCP and this has had negative consequences on the education of the children in this community, both at primary and secondary level. Following the eviction there was an increase of illnesses and deaths as most of the evictees were cut off from their land, which was the major means of accessing food, shelter, clean water and health

care.¹ No alternative housing was offered to the evictees since they were staying and sleeping in the forest.



Today many of the evictees live in extreme poverty near the NKG/KCP coffee plantation since the eviction has destroyed their means of livelihood. Some of them have found temporary access to land near the plantation, where they have built the new settlement Kyengeza. This enables them to do small-scale farming, undertake some work at KCP or work as informal laborers in surrounding gardens. However, the small plots of land are insufficient to provide adequate food to satisfy their needs.²

Women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons suffer most hunger and malnutrition since many husbands and young people have been forced into migration and left the community to search for jobs elsewhere. In addition, women have reported increased domestic violence since the forced eviction, because they can hardly fulfil their husband's expectations such as preparing demanded meals

due to lack of necessary resources like their traditional types of food, water or firewood. During FIAN's interaction with the women, they have further noted that when they go to work in the Kaweri Coffee Plantation, their husbands fear that they will engage with other men and this situation has led as well into domestic violence against women. Furthermore, women have reported the increase in teenage pregnancies as their daughters offer sex to men in exchange of food or money. Women have reported cases of rape in the plantation and unfortunately, victims did not get justice as for instance, one woman reported her rape case to the police but no investigations were done. During FIAN's visits women reported undesirable working conditions in the plantation including; working long hours and being paid very little on a daily basis. In other instances, some of the evictees have been second time evicted from their new land as forced evictions have become endemic in Uganda.³ In 2002, the evictees brought their case to the Kampala High Court and sued KCP and the Government of Uganda. On 10 February 2022 through a partial consent judgement the Attorney General accepted to compensate 258 plaintiffs while other 143 plaintiffs refused his offer and continued a court battle. In January 2025, only 54 plaintiffs have been compensated.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACTS

The eviction has resulted into human rights violations, namely:

- **Right to food and nutrition:** The evictees have lost their land, and this situation has resulted into hunger, malnutrition and poverty until today⁴.
- **Right to water:** Due to the eviction 69%⁵ of the evictees lost access to clean water,

¹ FIAN International, https://www.fian.org/files/files/HR_violations_in_the_context_of_Kaweri_Coffee_Plantation_in_Mubende.pdf

² ActionAid Uganda 2008: Effects of MNCS on Food Security.

Interview with Elina and Jovann Sebahinzi, 29.3.2014.

Michael Enger 2012: Documentary "Coffee to Go – with the taste of eviction",

<http://www.fian.org/en/library/multimedia/coffee-to-go-with-a-taste-of-eviction/>.

³ FIAN International, <https://www.fian.org/en/news/article/uganda-turns-a-blind-eye-to-kaweri-evictees-2255>

⁴ FIAN visit to the evictees Mubende in 2-3 July 2019

⁵ Nuwagaba, Augustus/Banga, Margaret 2002: The impact of foreign direct investment on the local economy: The case of Kaweri Coffee and

because the only clean water source they used before is located at Kaweri Coffee Plantation. Even if some new boreholes have been drilled, women still have to walk long distances to collect potable water.

- **Right to adequate housing:** During the eviction, the evictees lost their properties and houses that were destroyed by the soldiers.
- **Right to health:** Following the eviction, there have been an increasing number of illnesses and deaths amongst the evictees.
- **Right to education:** Since the eviction, the former Primary School of the community became the headquarters of Kaweri/NKG Coffee Plantation Ltd. A new school was constructed only one year after the eviction. Evictees have reported that the number of students in secondary school decreased after the eviction because parents could not cover school fees any longer. Even today, many families cannot cover the costs of Primary School for their children.
- **Right to work:** The evictees consider the working conditions in the Kaweri/NKG Coffee plantation Ltd as exploitative. This means working hard, in bad conditions and be paid so little.
- **Women's rights:** Women reported an increase of domestic violence after the eviction. In addition, women highlighted a concerning issue of sexual harassment and rape in the plantations.
- **Right to enjoy cultural life:** Due to shortage of shelters, parents had to share beds with their adult children, which is a taboo in the Baganda tradition. Furthermore, the evictees have lost the graveyards and worship places of their ancestors.

DEMANDS

The evictees are demanding compensation due to the damages (material/moral damages) caused by the forced eviction

SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES

Kalangala Palm Oil Investments, Action Aid
Uganda, November 2002, page 62.

⁶ CESCR, Concluding Observations on Uganda,
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybo

Since 2002, FIAN has been supporting the evictees with advocacy and monitoring work. In this regard for instance on 08 July 2015 in the concluding observations of the CESCR⁶ (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) to Uganda with regard to the forced evictions, it is stated that:

“§ 30: The Committee is concerned about repeated cases of forced evictions of communities as well as lack of compensation to those communities or provision of alternative housing. The Committee is particularly concerned about the case of Mubende District whose inhabitants were evicted from their homes in 2001 in the context of the Kaweri Coffee plantation and about the fact that so far the legal redress they could obtain did not include restitution of land rights.”

Therefore, the CESCR urges the State of Uganda to:

- (a) “Refrain from forcibly evicting individuals and expropriating land, including in the context of development projects. It recalls that in cases where eviction or relocation is considered to be justified, it should be carried out in strict compliance with the relevant provisions of international human rights law;
- (b) Take immediate measures to ensure that the rights of the Mubende community are restored as well as of all other forcibly evicted communities;
- (c) Consider developing a legal framework on forced evictions, which includes provisions

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on effective and meaningful consultation, adequate legal remedies, and compensation...”



Since the Kaweri case has the component of the extraterritorial obligations of Germany because NKG is based in Germany, the CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) has highlighted in the 2017 concluding observations to Germany as follows:

“§ 15: Extraterritorial State obligation

1. The Committee is concerned about:
 - (a) The negative impact of the conduct of transnational companies, in particular textile and large scale agricultural corporations, registered or domiciled in the State party and operating abroad on the enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the Convention by local women and girls in third States;
 - (b) The inadequate legal framework to hold companies and corporations registered or domiciled in the State party accountable for violations of women’s human rights abroad and the lack of a gender perspective in the 2016 National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights;
 - (c) The absence of an effective independent mechanism with powers to investigate complaints alleging violations by such corporations, for instance allegations of forced evictions by German companies based abroad;

⁷ CEDAW, Concluding observations on Germany, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybo

- and the limited access to judicial remedies by women victims of such violations;
- (d) The lack of impact assessments explicitly taking into account women’s human rights prior to the negotiation of international trade and investment agreements.

2. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Strengthen its legislation governing the conduct of corporations registered or domiciled in the State party in relation to their activities abroad, including by requiring those corporations to conduct human rights and gender impact assessments prior to making investment decisions;
- (b) Introduce effective mechanisms to investigate complaints filed against those corporations, with a mandate to, inter alia, receive complaints and conduct independent investigations and incorporate a gender perspective into the 2016 NAP;
- (c) Adopt concrete measures, including a redress mechanism to facilitate access to justice for women victims of human rights violations and ensure that judicial and administrative mechanisms are in place take into account a gender perspective;
- (d) Ensure that trade and investment agreements negotiated by the State party recognize the primacy of its international human rights obligations over investors’ interests, and that the introduction of investor-State dispute settlement procedures through the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement does not create obstacles to full compliance with the Convention.”⁷

On 1 March 2022, the CEDAW Committee highlighted in its concluding observations to Uganda that:

“§ 45: The Committee is further concerned about dispossessions of land owned by women and forced evictions of women, who constitute three quarters of the workforce in the agricultural sector, including the violent evictions of communities in the Mubende District to facilitate land transfers to a coffee plantation company in 2001 and the still outstanding settlement of the incident in court....,

[dyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FDEU%2FCO%2F7-8&Lang=en](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FDEU%2FCO%2F7-8&Lang=en)

Therefore, the CEDAW Committee recommends to the Government of Uganda to:

(a) “Establish a legal framework to ensure that agro-industrial projects and the activities of extractive industries do not undermine rural women’s rights to land ownership and their livelihoods and ensure that such ventures are permitted only after gender-impact assessments involving rural women have been undertaken;

(b) Ensure that evictions are court-ordered and subject to strict procedural safeguards in line with international standards, and expedite court proceedings for prompt and adequate compensation and rehabilitation in the Mubende land evictions case, while observing the principle of separation of powers.”⁸

FIAN is an international human rights organization working for the worldwide implementation of the human right to food and nutrition. FIAN has a consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).



⁸ CEDAW, Concluding observations on Uganda, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybo

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