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NEWS

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# Tanzania: A private business complicit in forced evictions of Maasai communities by authorities

*Update: The title and text of this Press Release was updated on 22 October to reflect the fact that, as set out in the underlying report, Amnesty International did not identify evidence that the operations of more than one business were directly linked to the forced evictions in Loliondo.*

Since 2009, a private business has been complicit in forced evictions of Maasai Indigenous communities from their ancestral lands in Loliondo by Tanzanian authorities, Amnesty International said today in a new report.

The new **report**, *‘Business as usual in bloodied land? The role of businesses in forced evictions in Loliondo, Tanzania’*, details how Otterlo Business Corporation (OBC), a trophy hunting company linked to Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Prime Minister of the UAE and a member of the ruling royal family, has participated in forcibly evicting Maasai Indigenous communities by, among other things, accompanying Tanzanian security forces and allowing the authorities to set up camps on OBC property during all forced evictions. At the very least this indicates that OBC was aware that security forces were involved in these operations. At most, it means that the company was not only aware, but also facilitated the security forces’ involvement in the forced evictions.

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**It is particularly disturbing that they have carried out these evictions under the pretext of ‘conservation’, while in reality, they have allowed Otterlo Business Corporation to do improper or illegal trophy hunting activities, in clear violation of Tanzania’s Wildlife Conservation laws**

**Tigere Chagutah, Regional Director, Amnesty International, East and Southern Africa**

Other tourism companies, including the TAASA Lodge and &BEYOND, are also operating in the area where Maasai have been forcibly evicted.

“Since 2009, the Tanzanian authorities have resorted to ill-treatment, excessive use of force, arbitrary arrests and detentions to forcibly evict the Maasai while leasing their land to private companies. It is particularly disturbing that they have carried out these evictions under the pretext of ‘conservation’, while in reality, they have allowed OBC to do improper or illegal trophy hunting activities, in clear violation of Tanzania’s Wildlife Conservation laws,” said Tigere Chagutah, Amnesty International’s Regional Director for East and Southern Africa.

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**The Tanzanian authorities must conduct a prompt, impartial, independent, effective and transparent investigation into corporate complicity in the forced evictions of Maasai communities in Loliondo — and the suspected perpetrators of these human rights violations must be brought to justice in fair trials.**

**Tigere Chagutah**

“The Tanzanian authorities must conduct a prompt, impartial, independent, effective and transparent investigation into corporate complicity in the forced evictions of Maasai communities in Loliondo — and the suspected perpetrators of these human rights violations must be brought to justice in fair trials. The authorities should also investigate reported wildlife crimes committed by trophy hunting businesses in the region. Victims must be provided with access to justice and effective remedies.”

Amnesty International conducted research into forced evictions of the Maasai Indigenous People of Loliondo between June 2022 and May 2024, with a particular focus on the role of businesses operating in the traditional lands owned and used by the Maasai. In April 2024, the organisation visited Arusha region on a fact-finding mission and interviewed nine people, including one current employee and four former employees of the private companies in Loliondo, all residents of Loliondo, and one lawyer, who were all privy to internal operations of the companies and sometimes involved in conversations on and implementation of the companies’ plans.

The organization’s Evidence Lab examined 23 images and seven videos, conducted an open-source investigation and analysed recent changes in locations of businesses operating in Loliondo, which were visible on satellite imagery.

The organization also reviewed media reports, official documents, relevant legislation, company disclosures, and scientific studies. With the support of advocates in Tanzania, Amnesty International was also able to obtain company incorporation details for the companies under investigation.

### **Stifled protests and forced evictions**

On 10 June 2022, Tanzanian security forces resorted to the use of excessive force, including using live ammunition and tear gas, to stifle peaceful protests by Maasai residents of Ololosokwan village in Loliondo. The demonstrators had gathered to resist a demarcation exercise by the security forces, who were trying to displace them from their ancestral lands in the name of so-called “conservation”. More than 40 people were wounded, others were left homeless, and many were forced to flee the country. Those who sought shelter in Kenya with their relatives and friends were living without means of earning a livelihood. The eviction marked the fourth time the Maasai have been forcibly expelled from their land, following previous evictions in 2009, 2013, and 2017.

Community members from villages in Loliondo that were impacted by forced evictions, as well as current and former OBC staff, said that OBC had participated in all forced evictions in Loliondo. They told Amnesty International that OBC representatives known to them and OBC branded vehicles were present during the forced evictions. They also said that, during every eviction, Tanzania’s security forces set up camp in OBC properties and were accompanied by OBC staff and vehicles as they moved into Loliondo villages.

On 12 July 2024, Amnesty International wrote to &BEYOND, OBC and TAASA Lodge to inform them of the relevant allegations and findings contained in the report and to give them the opportunity to respond. Only &BEYOND and TAASA Lodge responded.



&BEYOND responded saying, “... that the land in question, albeit in dispute, is no longer under the control of the Ololosokwan Village Council, but the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (“the Lessors”).” &BEYOND further mentioned that they “cannot disclose the terms of [their] lease agreement with the Lessors.” The company also acknowledged that there is an ongoing litigation over the land in question and claimed that as a lessee, they have no influence over the Lessors, further adding that they can only await the outcome of the court’s ruling before they determine their position in the land question. TAASA Lodge said that they “... were never consulted on any of the planned actions around the time of the evictions, and remain committed to [their] staff and communities, as [they] are to following the rule of law.”

Four former and one current OBC staff members also told Amnesty International that they were working with the company when members of the UAE royal family that are associated with the OBC ownership visited the country for hunting and other tourism activities between 1996 and 2016. In June 2024, the Arusha Regional Commissioner served as a chaperone for Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Prime Minister of the UAE, as he inspected water projects in Loliondo.

“It is deeply troubling that Otterlo Business Corporation’s role in the evictions likely contributed to the harm caused by Tanzania’s security forces. This company appears to not only have been aware that state security forces were involved in the forced evictions, but to have actively facilitated the forced evictions,” said Tigere Chagutah.

“While they were not implicated in eyewitness testimonies, TAASA Lodge and &BEYOND’s Klein’s Camp should also carry out ongoing due diligence to identify whether their operations

are linked to any negative human rights impacts or environmental harms. Businesses operating in Loliondo must commit to respecting in their operations the rights of the Maasai Indigenous People, and to providing appropriate remedies if they cause or contribute to acts that harm the community.

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**The state must reverse its land acquisition decision in Loliondo and ensure that no land acquisition or evictions proceed unless the Maasai People give their free, prior, and informed consent through a process of genuine consultations.**

**Tigere Chagutah**

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#### Background

This research builds on Amnesty International’s [previous investigations](#) into how the Tanzanian authorities have forcibly evicted the Maasai Indigenous people of Loliondo.

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