



## **OCE and OPDP place hope on court case to stop Government's titling scheme in Eastern Mau**

Tomorrow, 15 December 2020, the Environment and Land Court at Nakuru will consider a case recently filed by the Ogiek Council of Elders (OCE) and the Ogiek Peoples' Development Program (OPDP). The lawsuit seeks to stop current Government attempts to issue titles on Ogiek ancestral land in Eastern Mau Forest, in contravention of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights 2017 [judgment](#), which recognized the Ogiek peoples' land rights. It also challenges the Ministry of Environment and Forestry's failure to share with the Ogiek community the Taskforce Report on the implementation of the same judgment.

The case (ELC Petition No.16 of 2020) follows His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta's directive of 21 September 2020 that the Government would be issuing 5-acre titles to persons living in Eastern Mau Forest within the Mau Complex and a block title to the Mau Ogiek community. A Multi-Agency Team was appointed to oversee the process.

'We oppose the manner in which the Multi-Agency Team is spearheading this process,' says John Sironga, Chairman of the OCE'. 'Their failure to consult the community on matters concerning our ancestral lands violates our right to free, prior and informed consent. Issuing title deeds to non-Ogiek settlers will formalise illegal settlement in Eastern Mau, our home.'

Titles were due to be delivered on 11 December 2020, however, that morning, members of the Ogiek community in Nessuit were informed that this process has now been delayed, although the authorities have not indicated when the titles will be issued.

In view of this, OCE and OPDP urge the Government of Kenya to put an immediate stop to the work of the Multi-Agency Team until it undertakes a full and proper consultation of the entire Ogiek community across the Mau Forest Complex regarding implementation of the African Court judgment, in line with their right to free, prior and informed consent.

'We have already indicated that as far as implementation of the African Court judgment is concerned, we want community titles to our ancestral lands,' says Sironga. 'We are entitled to this outcome under the judgment, as the ancestral owners of the Mau Forest.'

A way forward on implementation of the African Court judgment that respects the Ogiek peoples' rights is possible; it is only a matter of finding the political will to do so.

### **For more information contact:**

Lilian Maina, Communications Officer at OPDP: [lilianmaina@ogiekpeoples.org](mailto:lilianmaina@ogiekpeoples.org)