

March 20, 2017

Dear Ambassador (Dr.) Amina Mohamed, Prof Githu Muigai, and Prof. Judi Wakhungu,

We, the undersigned organizations and members of the Access Initiative, are writing to urge the Government of Kenya to investigate and prosecute those responsible for threatening the safety and security of members of the Center for Justice Governance and Environmental Action (CJGEA), including plaintiffs Phyllis Omido, (Goldman Prize Winner), Wilfred Kamencu, Anastacia Nambo, and Alfred Ogola, as well as their families. In doing so, we join a growing chorus of international friends and allies who are outraged and alarmed, including UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights and the Environment, John Knox ([read statement here](#)). These threats, and the kidnapping of a child of one of the members, have occurred after CJGEA initiated a lawsuit to address alleged damages caused by lead smelter Metal Refineries EPZ Ltd to the local community and surrounding soil. We call for the Government of Kenya to issue a response on the steps they are taking to apprehend the culprits and protect the plaintiffs and their families.

In addressing these specific threats, the Government of Kenya has an opportunity to extend protections to other environmental defenders. These should include measures for the prevention of actions that affect the life, integrity and security of these environmental defenders. We call on the Government to consult with these defenders to deal with this emergency situation and provide where appropriate legal support, emergency funds or help in safety prevention measures from the relevant police and other judicial authorities based on the high level of risk in this case.

The Access Initiative, a global network that works on transparency, public participation and access to justice believes this case illustrative of the growing risks of ordinary citizens standing up and seeking justice for harm that is happening in their community. The Kenyan Government has been a champion of issues around the environment, including housing the United Nations Environment Programme and being an active member of the Open Government Partnership. We urge the Government of Kenya to continue to show leadership and act in accordance with its principles and values by taking immediate steps to urgently address the threat faced by its citizens. We stand united to lend our aid and support for such efforts.

Respectfully,

Asociacion Ambiente y Sociedad (Colombia)
Association of Environmental Justice in Israel
Benin Environment and Education Society
Bioresources Development and Conservation Programme Cameroon
Community Legal Education Center (Cambodia)
Corporación Fiscalía del Medio Ambiente--FIMA (Chile)
Cultura Ecologica (Mexico)
The Environmental Pillar (Ireland)
Denge Ecology Organization (Turkey)
FIAN Nepal
Friends of the Irish Environment (Ireland)
Friends of Kota Damansara (Malaysia)

Green Alternative (Georgia)
Greenwatch (Uganda)
Indian Environment Lawyers Association
Instituto de Derecho y Economia Ambiental (Paraguay)
Justice Institute Guyana
Persona Natural (Chile)
Public Interest Law Foundation (Sri Lanka)
Saint Lucia National Trust
Samata (India)
Thailand Environment Institute
Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association