



*Promoting Participatory and Sustainable  
Development*

9 May 2017

Dear friends,

As the Save Lamu Coalition, we write with concern regarding our security, given intimidation and interference that our communities are facing in accessing and sharing information about major development projects in our community.

Lamu residents have a right to make informed decisions about issues that will so seriously affect us— to be aware of what is happening and make informed decisions around risks posed by large extractive industry projects such as the LAPSSET port project and proposed Lamu coal plant. As advocates for sustainable development, Save Lamu has a right to hold meetings to engage, inform, and discuss with our community. Our mission is to foster better discourse, across Lamu's many communities, about sustainable development and external threats to our livelihoods, ecosystem, health, and wellbeing.

However, we are experiencing a pattern of intimidation by government officials who have been vocal supporters of these large-scale development projects (see Annex). Due to these threats to basic security faced by Save Lamu and members of the public, we have been forced to postpone many of our community information sessions.

- In March, Lamu County Commissioner Joseph Kanyiri [publicly accused coal plant opponents](#) of seeking bribes, despite no evidence for such allegations.
- On several occasions, government officials have denied us permission to hold community meetings. In some cases, rather than allow a meeting to proceed, local officials would defer the decision by informing higher levels of officials, up to the county commissioner — the same official accusing us of corruption. In another case, in Mkepetoni, the County Commissioner agreed, only to demand we cancel the meeting at the last minute.
- Police have been sent to directly interfere in and stop even small meetings when we are able to hold them, intimidating participants and hosts. We have included an account of what happened most recently in Hindi on 2 May.

We need to find a way forward quickly, to get our community better access to information. This very month, critical court hearings will determine the projects' approval, environmental and social impact, mitigation measures, public participation, and compensation. Yet public awareness of these projects is extremely low, as confirmed by an ongoing CJGEA study. Lamu residents deserve the right to make informed decisions about their land and livelihoods, but there are barriers to their accessing information.

We hope you can support us in these efforts by standing with us in the face of intimidation. We also call upon:

1. KNCHR, through its legal mandate, to engage with the County Commissioner (Lamu) and other relevant state bodies including the Cabinet Secretary for Internal Security and Coordination of National Government to raise our concerns with regard to ongoing intimidation and disruption of our lawful operations

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2. National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders-Kenya, through its networks, to follow up on this issue and to highlight the critical role of human rights defenders in the protection and promotion of human rights in our societies free of intimidations as required by our constitution and other human rights instruments
3. Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights to raise our concerns with relevant state authorities
4. Independent Police Oversight Authority to investigate the conduct of National Police Service at Lamu County to hinder the right of citizens to peacefully assemble

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Kamau', written in a cursive style.

Chair, Save Lamu, and the #deCOALonize campaign

cc. Commissioner George Morara Monyonchor, KNCHR, email: [gmorara@knchr.org](mailto:gmorara@knchr.org)

Kamau Ngugi, National Coalition on Human Rights Defenders Kenya, email: [info@hrdcoalition.org](mailto:info@hrdcoalition.org)

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