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Uganda: Arbitrary detention of human rights defenders Barigye Bob

On 24 January 2023, human rights defender **Barigye Bob** was arrested and detained at Wandegeya Police Station. The human rights defender was organizing a debate on the environmental, human rights and economic impact of the East African Oil Crude Pipeline (EACOP) when the police blocked the venue of the public debate and arrested him

[Barigye Bob](#) is a human rights defender and member of the African Initiative on Food Security and Environment. He is an educationist, climate change and environmental human rights defender involved in the campaign against the East African Crude Oil Pipeline. The global campaign is led by an alliance of local groups, communities, and African and international organizations who protest against the construction of the East African Crude Oil pipeline (EACOP). This project entails a proposed 1,445-kilometre heated pipeline that will transport oil from Hoima, Uganda, to the port of Tanga in Tanzania. EACOP faces significant resistance from local communities and civil society organizations as the government has seized land and displaced thousands of people to construct the pipeline

On 24 January 2023, human rights defender Barigye Bob was organizing a public debate with the African Initiative on Food Security and Environment (AIFE) on the environmental, human rights and economic impact of the East African Oil Crude Pipeline (EACOP). The event, set to happen in a local hotel, was disrupted by the police before it even started. They blocked the venue entrance to stop participants from entering and arrested Barigye Bob. He is currently being detained at the Wandegeya Police Station where he has been held since 9 am of 24 January 2023. The human rights defender's lawyers were first denied access to him but were later allowed to see him. His legal representative reported that the human rights defender was injured during his arrest and transport to the police station. He has a bruised leg and a swollen arm and is in need of immediate medical attention.

On 14 December 2022, human rights defender Barigye Bob and three members of the global campaign StopEACOP were arrested during a peaceful protest. They were detained and released after two days at the Kampala Central police station. The human rights defenders were detained a second time after reporting to Kampala Central police station as instructed by authorities. They were brought to court and were officially charged with "common nuisance" before being released on bail. Bob Barigye and the three human rights defenders are expected to appear in Court on 23 February 2023 for their trial on these charges.

Front Line Defenders is seriously concerned by the arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights defender Bob Barigye as his arrest and detention appear to be based on the legitimate and peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of assembly as per the 1995 Constitution of Uganda, and rights under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Uganda is a signatory. It is of particular concern that Barigye Bob was denied legal representation for several hours and is in need of immediate medical attention.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Uganda to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Barigye Bob, as Front Line Defenders believes that he is being held solely as a result of his legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights;

2. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the allegations made against Barigye Bob with a view to publishing the results and bringing him to justice in accordance with international standards;

3. Ensure that the treatment of Barigye Bob, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the *'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment'*, adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;

4. Cease the targeting and judicial harassment of all human rights defenders in Uganda and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisal and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment;