



**GLOBAL  
RIGHTS  
ALERT**



**ANNUAL  
REPORT** | **2018**





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## Message from the Executive Director

I am pleased to share with you, our esteemed stakeholders, Global Rights Alert (GRA's) Annual Report 2018, that highlights the organisation's major gains in the year. Over the years, GRA has received overwhelming support from you, our stakeholders and that is the reason the organisation registered tremendous growth.

In 2018, a ten (10)-year Institutional Growth Strategy and Program of Work that sets out priorities and guides operations was adopted. The first year in the implementation of the strategy, has enabled us to tap into opportunities for learning as well as discover challenges we never envisaged. These challenges we hope, will enable us understand and appreciate our selves as individuals and the organisation. That way, we are able to grow stronger and serve each other better as we contribute to making natural resources benefit the people.

The report presents to you messages from members of the organisation's focal implementation units (Departments) as well as some testimonies from beneficiaries of our interventions. I thought they are better placed to tell their stories about GRA's work.

From the look of things, we are slowly but surely getting there. The communities are actively monitoring developments relating to natural resource governance. And they are asking questions. Sometimes community members are directing these questions at each other. Some other times, they are asking their leaders from Local Council I to national level. Investors too are being asked to explain a number of things. "What are you doing in our backyard, what does the discovery of oil, gas and minerals mean to me, to my ways of living, to my family and to the community at large. How can I be part of this exciting process of harnessing our natural resources to bring the much needed socio-economic development we yearn for as a country"? Seeing

young people, women and men ask these and many other questions and boldly discussing the same means so much to us. We acknowledge that private investors, local and central governments are increasingly getting better at responding to community concerns. More information is being provided through various channels. Feedback is being taken seriously. This is how inclusive participation should be from the first to the last step of our natural resources' value chains.

The coming year (2019) promises to be even better. We invite you to walk the journey of making natural resources benefit the people with us. Your kind support on one hand and the demand for accountability on the other will enable us get there.

Thank you for your support. Enjoy reading the report and please note: We love feedback!

Kind regards,

Winfred Ngabiirwe  
Executive Director





# Departmental Messages

## Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning Department

At the heart of our core values is managing GRA as a learning organization. As such, we always seek to integrate processes and procedures that enhance organizational learning but as well, strengthen our effectiveness in addressing human and resource rights concerns in Uganda's extractives sector. In 2018, GRA further strengthened this position through creation of an independent Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) department. Part of its mandate is to track progress towards results but also generate information that informs our development programs.

I am glad to be a member of the department that also works to ensure that GRA remains accountable to our beneficiaries, donors and other stakeholders, largely through results. As a unit, we remain committed to regular engagements with our stakeholders, especially beneficiaries for feedback and reflection on our work. Lastly, we will continue to implement activities aimed at generating and sharing information on the status of Uganda's extractive sector with a view of affected people's concerns and interests. We believe that the information will not only be utilized by GRA as an organization but also our partners as we seek to improve governance of the sector for the benefit of the people!

**Herbert Mugisha Manig**

Director Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning

## Finance & Administration Department

The year 2018 started out on a great note for the Finance and Administration department. As we come to the end of the financial year, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to getting us where we are. GRA staff reshuffle saw the department grow from team of 4 to 6. This meant that work was more evenly distributed and department more focused and effective. In the year, GRA received its highest income ever. This meant that there were more disbursements and accountabilities to do.

With the bigger team, efficiency and compliance to the GRA internal policies remained the team's top priority. The department supported the program team and the organization as a whole to comply with statutory obligations, donor and organizational policies and guidelines. On a sad note, as the year was winding down, it took our, Finance Officer, Ms. Monicah Kimuli (RIP). This unfortunate event left a huge gap not only in the department but in our hearts. Despite the heartbreak, we managed to rebuild the department and close the year. As 2019 starts, we are optimistic! With the growth in GRA's thematic areas, the Finance department is ready to support programs with fundraising. Compliance to the law and value for money will be our top priorities.

**Paul Ahimbisibwe**

Director Finance & Administration

## Programs Department

2018 was a very busy year for the department. The department restructured and strengthened the community based monitoring model that is comprised of a network of community based monitors. As such, the department has seen an improvement in tracking and documentation of human rights trends associated with the extractives sector.

In 2018, the department built and strengthened relationships and partnership with national and grass root networks such as; the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development and in particular the Directorate of Geological Survey and Mines (DGSM), Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Gender, Labour and Social Development, Mubende United Miners Assembly (MUMA) and district local governments among others. As a department charged with direct activity implementation, we have witnessed some changes in the communities that GRA serves. The unit mainly focused on organising communities especially women and young people to establish new and effectively utilise the existing platforms in order to defend and protect their human and resource rights. However, the shrinking civic space, secrecy that shrouds the extractives sector continued to be the major challenges to our work. In 2019, the department will mainly focus on Strengthening Corporate Accountability Transparency (CAT) Program in order to contribute towards enhancing transparency and accountability in the extractive sector.

**Carolyn Nakajubi - Amena**

Programs Manager







# 2018 Gains in Figures



**3,460,000**

Estimated number of people reached through different media platforms.



**3,252**

People directly reached with information on human and community resource rights



**221**

Community members trained on different aspects of human and community resource rights



**201**

Local leaders trained on natural resources and human rights



**104**

Cases reported by community based monitors in the 11 districts of GRA's operation



**77**

Community based monitors documenting and tracking human rights trends associated with oil, gas and mining in 11 districts.



**13**

Cases resolved by Community Based Monitors and their leaders.





# 1.0 ENHANCING RESPECT FOR HUMAN & COMMUNITY RESOURCE RIGHTS

The program focuses on building the capacity of communities and local governments to be at the forefront of protecting and defending their human and resource rights. In line with the program, GRA trained a total of 221 community members, 201 local leaders in the districts of our operations and directly reached 3,252 extractives sector affected persons with relevant information on human and community resources rights associated with the extractives sector. The trainings and sensitisation events majorly focused on land rights, community participation and integration of gender concerns.

As a result, GRA has in the last 12 months witnessed improved pro-activeness in form of community led petitions, citizen led sensitisation meetings and communities are engaging regular their leaders and investors on their interests and concerns. In addition, GRA has also seen local leaders and private investors in the sector, respond to concerns raised by communities in form of provision of more information on recruitment procedures and processes as well as compensation and valuation systems.



3,252

Extractives sector affected persons reached with relevant information on human and community resources rights.



221

Community members trained in 11 districts



201

Local leaders trained in natural resources governance and human rights

## Buseruka community petitions company in the oil sector over local employment

The increased construction of oil and gas related infrastructure projects presents opportunities for host communities to get jobs. Employment is seen as one of the ways through which community members can benefit from the exploitation of mineral resources in their midst. In Buseruka Sub county, Hoima district, Community Based Monitors and their leaders petitioned SBC Uganda Ltd over limited employment of host community members in the ongoing airport construction.

In September, Community Based Monitors (CBMs) from Buseruka sub county received numerous complaints over limited employment of host community members by SBC Uganda Limited – a company contracted to construct the Hoima International Airport. The Monitors reported the issue to the chairman LC I Kitegewa B, with whom they later convened a community meeting and developed a petition. The petition was submitted to the General Manager SBC Uganda Ltd, with copies to the Buseruka Sub county Chairperson, area Member of Parliament, and the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) Hoima district. As a result of the petition, the Company has since reached out to the community to explain their recruitment procedures and also share available opportunities for host communities among others. Additional community members have since been employed. Community Based Monitors and local leaders attribute the additional recruitment of community members to the petition



Buseruka community members in a meeting

© GRA



## A copy of community petition to SBC Uganda Ltd

KABAALE PARISH  
BUSERUKA SUB-COUNTY  
P.O BOX 2, HOIMA  
DISTRICT  
24<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2018

THE MANAGER  
SBC UGANDA LIMITED  
HOIMA OFFICE

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: PETITION ON EXCLUSION OF HOST COMMUNITY IN JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

We the community members of Kabaale Parish Buseruka sub-county, Hoima District aware of;

- ✓ The developments ongoing in our area
- ✓ The need for skills for jobs
- ✓ Provisions of local content (giving first priority to project affected persons)
- ✓ Our responsibilities and duties as citizens to support government programs
- ✓ Our economic rights to engage in meaningful employment and commitment of government to support us enjoy this right;

Express our displeasure for being excluded in job opportunities at the Airport Construction site in Buseruka Sub-county. We have written to your office calling for an urgent action into our concern raised above.

We note that several community members have applied for jobs since the start of the project in 2017, but none have been considered for local content fulfillment.



We further bring to your attention that employing from the local labor reduces on the costs for the company since the locals are easily accessible.

We feel hurt that a project that is on land that belonged to us, that we suffered for its purpose at the time of acquisition, compensation, resettlement and restoration and still continue to suffer for is not helping to further elevate our livelihoods/welfare yet one of the objectives of any resettlement and compulsory acquisition should be to improve the welfare/livelihoods of the project affected persons.

We further feel that as Ugandans, we should not be discriminated for whatsoever reasons in job offers at the project site as provided by the Equal Opportunities Commission. We say this because we have heard of corridor talks to the effect that the "Locals are lazy" as one of the reasons we are not given jobs. This is unfair to us and a generalization that is against the principles of equity.

It is upon this background that we petition the concerned officers and further make the following demands;

As a community we demand to know, be given reasons as to why SBC is not considering us for jobs in the Airport project yet many people outside the project area have been employed. In this regard, we request for a community meeting with the management of SBC Company, Local and District leaders for us to be made to understand this reason and raise more concerns with your offices and officials present. The community meetings should be well publicized for all to attend.

We demand that our people are considered for jobs that they qualify for especially those that have applied for casual jobs and left out.

Additionally, we demand that all job adverts at the Airport construction and other projects in the area are openly and transparently advertised and copies of adverts put in trading centres of the surrounding villages as well.

We reached these demands and petition decision unanimously during our village/parish meeting held in Kabaale on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2018 that was attended by community members and some leaders of our community. These participants appended there signature to this petition and other members in support of this



action, too signed this petition. We call upon all the concerned to consider and respect our pleas, listen to us and give us an audience.

We are grateful for the developments at the site and are readily available for any further constructive engagement to this effect.

Yours

Wamani Richard

Chief Petitioner

Cc. Hon MP Bugahya County

Cc. RDC Hoima

Cc. LC V Hoima

Cc. LC III Buseruka Sub-county

*The other petitioners are signed under here and represent some of those people that have applied for jobs at the site.*

Confirmed by  
Wamani Richard  
TEL 0788371921

## Hoima district integrating community concerns in valuation processes

GRA worked with a number of districts affected by oil, gas and mining activities to ensure that land acquisition and compensation processes reflect the interests of affected communities. Below is a case of Hoima.

“

My name is Andrew Mugisha, Land Valuer Hoima district. I'm part of the committee charged with development of compensation rates in the district. [Since transferred to Kikuube district]. Before GRA started working in Hoima, the district would not adequately consult with communities and get views on draft compensation rates. As such, property compensation rates rarely reflected the concerns of community members.

With support from GRA, the Committee has been able to go out to communities and collect views on draft rates. As a result, the district has adopted this strategy and has consistently come up with compensation rates that largely reflect the interests of the project affected persons.

Community members now participate and appreciate the process through which compensation rates are generated. This is contributing to reduced community complaints relating to crops and property compensation except land whose value is determined by chief government valuer.

”



Andrew Mugisha, Land Valuer Hoima district



## Community Based Monitors at the forefront of activism

GRA uses a network of Community Based Monitors to track and document human rights trends associated with oil, gas and minerals sector in 11 districts. Together with their local leaders, monitors mediate, resolve and refer human and resource rights cases in the extractives sector.

My name is Joseph Ojok [Not his real name]. I'm a resident of Muvule I village, Muvule parish, Ngwendo sub county, Buliisa district. In March 2018, I got a job with Techlab (U) Limited as a casual labourer. Techlab (U) Limited is one of the companies sub contracted by Total E&P Uganda for water installations in the camps. At the time, I was earning Shs 8,000/= per day, which was low. In addition to low pay, there were disparities in the wages of casual labourers from different companies contracted by Total E&P Uganda.

Together with two of my co - workers, I reported the issue of low pay and

disparities in wages to a GRA Community Based Monitor. Since Techlab (U) Limited was sub-contracted by Total E&P Uganda, the Monitor raised the issue with the area Community Liaison Officer (CLO) for Total.

The CLO visited our place of work, interviewed us on the working conditions and the wages. Later, the CLO convened a meeting with the different sub-contractors in which wages of casual labourers were increased to Shs 20,000/= per day. I'm now enjoying my Shs 20,000/= per day due to the interventions of the Monitor,"

“

**I'm now  
enjoying my  
Shs 20,000/=  
per day  
due to the  
interventions  
of the Monitor.**

”



## Rwamutonga community now able to defend & protect their land rights

In August 2014, 250 families in Rwamutonga village, Bugambe Sub county, Hoima district were evicted after their land was fraudulently titled and leased to an investor to set up an oil waste treatment plant. The families spent over 30 months in an Internally Displaced Persons Camp (IDP) under squalid conditions. Though they are back on the land, its ownership remains contested in courts of law.

GRA trained selected Rwamutonga community members and leaders on land rights, advocacy and mediation among others. GRA's interventions aimed at building capacity of community members to defend and protect their land rights and interests. These interventions triggered the pro-activeness and vigilance of community members in protecting their land rights.

For-instance, community members and their leaders, petitioned and have continuously engaged with Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters to investigate the fraudulent titling of their land. Some of the community leaders who spoke against this land fraud were arrested and detained on fabricated criminal charges.

This prompted community members to petition the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), over the arrests and detention of their leaders on trumped up charges. As a result of the petition, the DPP discontinued criminal proceedings against four community members.







Rwamutonga community members in a training

©GRA



# Enhancing capacity of CSOs to thrive in a shrinking civic space

GRA trained 32 representatives from civil society organisations in the Albertine graben on the legal and regulatory framework that govern the NGO sector. As result, a number of the trained civil society organisations reported increased understanding and compliance with the relevant laws that govern the sector.



Improved civic space enables meetings like these to take place

© GRA

“The training helped us to understand our obligations under the different laws. I was able to understand CSOs requirements under the different laws such as Anti- Money Laundering Act, though we [organisation] have not yet registered an accountable person with the Financial Intelligence Authority.”

Asaba Harrison,  
M&E Officer, Kakindo  
Orphans Care (KOC).





© GRA

## 2.0 PROMOTING GENDER & INCLUSIVENESS IN NATURAL RESOURCES GOVERNANCE

The program focuses on addressing systematic and structural barriers as well as gender inequalities that continue to undermine the rights and interests of different groups such as women, young people and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

In the mining districts of Mubende, Kassanda and Buhweju, GRA's interventions focused on promoting safe and productive spaces for women involved in Artisanal and Small Scale Mining and strengthening women associations to lobby for better working conditions. As a result, Women have acquired mineral licenses and own gold pits.

In oil and gas communities, GRA interventions dwelt on integrating women and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in land acquisition and resettlement discussions. As such, the target beneficiaries are not only informing these processes but also part of the monitoring network holding their leaders and themselves to account.



## Empowering women miners to acquire mineral licences

In 2017, GRA supported women involved in mining to organise and access platforms that would advance their cause for safe and productive spaces. This led to the formation of a women only mining association – Mubende Women Gold Miners Association (MUWOGOMA). The association has grown and by the end of 2018 had acquired a prospecting licensing to prospect for gold.

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Namatovu Zabibu Jalia, Chairperson Mubende Women Gold Miners Association (MUWOGOMA)

**M**y name is Namatovu Zabibu Jalia, I'm the chairperson Mubende Women Gold Miners Association (MUWOGOMA). After the eviction, I was hopeless, I did not know what to do and how I could fend for my family. When GRA came in, we [women involved in mining] were organised into an association – Mubende Women Gold Miners Association (MUWOGOMA) to have collective voice on issues affecting women in the gold mining in Mubende district.

In many meetings and trainings by GRA, I came to know my rights and the value of speaking out on issues affecting women gold miners. I didn't know that we had rights as women to even own gold pits.

GRA also supported us to register MUWOGOMA at the district level as an association and later as a company limited by guarantee. The Association has since acquired a prospecting licence to prospect for gold and has applied for a location licence. Therefore, when we go back to the mines, women will not return only as casual workers, but as investors with mining area and licence.

## A copy of MUWOGAMA's prospecting licence

FORM A  
Reg. 4.

00011135  
No. ....

THE MINING ACT.  
THE MINING REGULATIONS.

### PROSPECTING LICENCE

This prospecting licence is hereby granted to \* MUBENDE WOMEN GOLD MINERS ASSOCIATION LIMITED, OF P.O BOX 16365 KAMPALA.

SELF for one year from 18<sup>TH</sup> 10/2018 to prospect for minerals. as agent for

2. This licence is subject to the provisions of the Mining Act and the applicable Mining Regulations.

**Fees of: Shs.** 500,000/- paid; vide Receipt No. 219000922069 of 08<sup>TH</sup> 10 year 2018.

Dated this 18<sup>TH</sup> day of OCTOBER, year 2018.

AGNES ALABA  
Commissioner for the Geological Survey and Mines Department.

**COMMISSIONER**  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY & MINES DEPARTMENT  
P. O. BOX 9 ENTEBBE - UGANDA

state the name and address of that person.

## Women miners in Buhweju now own gold pits

Women play an active role in artisanal and small scale gold mining, amidst hurdles. They are involved in sieving for the precious metal – gold often without protective gears, carrying sand and cooking among others. In 2017, GRA supported women involved in gold mining in Buhweju to form Buhweju Women Gold Miners Association. One year down the road, the association has made progress. As Jane Ahimbisibwe, the vice chairperson of the association narrates, by the end of the 2018, the association had acquired gold pits and devised alternative sources of income to reduce dependency on the meager earnings from gold mining.



Jane Ahimbisibwe, Vice Chairperson  
Buhweju Women Gold Miners Association

Before GRA started working in Buhweju district, artisanal and small scale miners were united under – Buhweju Small Scale Miners Association.

“ I did not know that if we worked as a group, we could graduate from carrying gold sand and become our own bosses. ”

However, women were not playing an active role in the association and we had been left out in determining how the mines are run. In 2017, GRA helped us to organise ourselves into a mining association – Buhweju Women Gold Miners Association (BWGMA). The association was intended to enable us speak with one voice on issues affecting women in gold mining such as; lack of protective gears, exploitation, poor payment etc. I did not know that if we worked as a group, we could graduate from carrying gold sand and become our own bosses.

Last year [2018], members of association pooled together resources and acquired two gold pits in Lwengwe gold mine, Lwengwe sub county, Buhweju district. We plan to acquire more gold pits. We also looking at alternative investments such as saving scheme to reduce dependency on men.



# Supporting formalisation of Artisanal and Small Scale Miners (ASMs)



Bukya John Bosco, Chairman Mubende United Miners Assembly (MUMA)

My name is Bukya John Bosco, I'm the Chairman Mubende United Miners Assembly (MUMA). We [Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Miners in Mubende] were evicted from the gold mines in August, 2017. At that time, we had groups of miners but were not very active.

We worked individually and as such, we were not recognized by government. Global Rights Alert (GRA) came in and supported us to get more organised and formalised. From a series of GRA meetings and other events, I got to know that we [ASMs] have rights as citizens to get involved in any business of our choice and in this case mining. We also didn't appreciate our responsibilities such as respect for environment, payment of taxes and compliance with labour laws among others.

Through working with GRA, I came to appreciate the importance of coming together as artisanal small scale miners under an umbrella body. As such, we formed Mubende United Miners Assembly

(MUMA), which now consists of 21 associations comprised of both women and men groups, under which we have been able to advocate for acquisition of mineral licences.

Each association under MUMA has so far acquired a prospecting licence and now in the final stages of being granted location licences. This is an achievement because we are now recognised by government and feel more secure as Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Miners.

I have also been equipped with skills to constructively engage with central and local governments and large scale investors among others. For instance, we had a conflict with the Federation of Artisanal and Small Scale Miners, because it did not represent the interests of ASMs in Mubende. Through working with GRA, the conflict was resolved. MUMA and the Federation are now co-investors with whom we share 30 percent of the mining area in Kassanda district the President allocated to us.

## Championing the interests of PWDs in the oil, gas and minerals sector

Edith Barungi is a Community Based Monitor for Kiziranfumbi Sub County, Kikuube District. As a councilor representing People with Disabilities (PWDs), she is passionate about their inclusion in the oil and gas discussions. She is interested in seeing that PWDs are not left out in the discussions shaping Uganda's natural resources sector.



Edith Barungi, Community Based Monitor  
Kiziranfumbi Sub-county, Kikuube District

I joined GRA as a Community Based Monitor (CBM) for Kiziranfumbi, Sub County, Kikuube District [Formerly Hoima district]. I appreciate GRA, for her work in promoting the participation of PWDs in the oil sector. I'm grateful for my Community Monitoring work where I track and document human rights issues arising out of oil and gas investments.

I have gained more popularity in my community since I interact with many people during this work. Through GRA trainings, I started to care about the issues affecting our community and how we can solve them. I have gained experience in community service like child protection & support. For instance, working hand in hand with the Coordinator for PWDs Hoima district, I mobilized 24 young people with disabilities and they received support from Sight Savers International.

Sight Savers International paid their fees at Nile Vocational Institute in Duhaga, Hoima municipality where they were equipped with different vocational skills. Working with GRA has helped me acquire leadership skills and built my confidence. I have participated in national level discussions on issues concerning PWDs in the extractive industry development and the inclusion of PWDs in the sector. It is also through GRA that I have been able to engage with different people and further advocate for the rights of PWDs. For instance, I helped a person with disability whose land was used without compensation during the construction of Hoima-Kaiso- Tonya road. I refereed the matter to Justice Centres Uganda (JCU) where he was offered legal support. I hope that PWDs will benefit from oil and gas in our backyard.



# Working with the media to disseminate information and raise awareness on resource rights

Information plays a key role in enabling community members, leaders and private investors make informed decisions. As such, in 2018 GRA utilised print, electronic and online media platforms to share key information on human and community resource rights in the extractives sector. In order to provide media platforms for community members to articulate their

interests and concerns to duty bearers and private investors, GRA conducted community based radio debates (kimeeza) in Hoima and Kakumiro districts. Through different media platforms, <sup>2</sup>an estimated 3,460,000 people were reached with information on human and community resource rights in the extractives sector over the last one year.



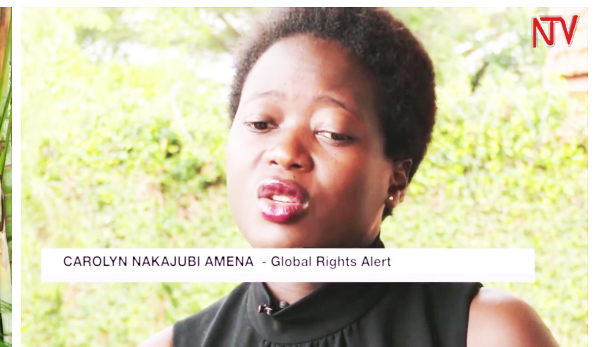
**panorama**  
YEAR 2017  
**Women exploited in Buhweju gold mines**  
Wages: From dawn to dusk, women in Buhweju toil in gold mines for as low as Shs100 per bag of rocks they have to lift from the pits, writes Emmanuel Mutalibwa  
**Shs10b**  
A new dirt road snakes through the verdant hills of Buhweju district, a few kilometers from the oil refinery. The climate here is cool and consistently rain may prompt the women to divert the security of this landscape. To the farmers, it is harvest time as they carry their produce to the markets. Here, it is a communique to find women and children engaged in hard labour to provide for their families. This group of women and children are a tribe by the name of the Buhweju. They are known for their hard work and are often seen carrying heavy loads of rocks on their heads. The women are poorly paid and there is no food. They travel here to work in the mines. They have to walk back to their homes. The women are often seen carrying heavy loads of rocks on their heads. The women are poorly paid and there is no food. They travel here to work in the mines. They have to walk back to their homes.



**Daily Monitor**  
31  
**10,000 Gold miners facing evictions**  
Evictions: According to reports, the walking of women in gold mines is planning. The women are often seen carrying heavy loads of rocks on their heads. The women are poorly paid and there is no food. They travel here to work in the mines. They have to walk back to their homes. The women are often seen carrying heavy loads of rocks on their heads. The women are poorly paid and there is no food. They travel here to work in the mines. They have to walk back to their homes.



**Daily Monitor**  
31  
**Oil refinery resettlement has cost us our livelihoods**  
Richard Orebi  
In 2012, government, through the ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, embarked on a process of compulsory land acquisition of 29 square kilometers for the construction of an oil refinery and other related infrastructure. The refinery land covers 13 villages in Kabale, Rukungiri sub-county in Hoima. Consequently, the Energy ministry contracted Strategic Friends International (SFI), a local firm, to carry out a Resettlement Action Plan (RAP). During the RAP process, affected persons were given two options: cash compensation or resettlement. Out of 1,221 affected households, 93 opted for resettlement and the rest cash compensation. I was among the 93 households that opted for resettlement. In 2014, government purchased a piece of land in Kyakabaga parish, Rukungiri sub-county, where we would be resettled – the resettlement village. I was excited about being resettled in Kyakabaga, since I would be able to tap into opportunities in the oil and gas sector presents. However, little did I know that resettlement would cost me and other affected persons our livelihood! To its credit, government started with consulting project-affected persons on how Kyakabaga – the resettlement village – should be planned. We asked government to construct houses in our respective pieces of land, and not in a 'satellite city' government was proposing. The rationale was for us to have space to continue with our usual activities such as rearing animals in addition to farming. Before my land was acquired by government, I used to rear goats, pig poultry which supplemented my income from crop farming. However, all this is not possible in the resettlement village. Government constructed for us homesteads in an urban setting in what officials term 'satellite city'. All our houses are packed together in an urban setup far away from our pieces of land where we are supposed to cultivate and rear animals from. This is absurd. Yet, livestock and poultry, although small scale, help us supplement our income from subsistence agriculture. As a result, the resettlement has cost us and other project-affected persons our livelihood. Ironically, government has pledged to give each household one cow and two goats, under the Livelihoods Restoration Program. So, are we going to rear animals in a 'camp' that they call a 'city'? This is likely to force project-affected persons to sell off the animals and become poorer. In my culture and in many African cultures, the dead are buried near our homesteads. Are we to bury our loved ones in a satellite city? Government has promised to off



<sup>2</sup>The statistics were generated from the estimated reach of the different media platforms





# GRA's work as captured in the media

22 NEW VISION, Thursday, February 14, 2019

BUSINESS &amp; TENDERS

NEW VISION, Thursday, February 14, 2019 23

## WOMEN RETURN TO GOLD MINES AS LICENCE HOLDERS

As the energy ministry prepares to sign licensing licences for the 21 mining associations in Mubende, one of them is a women only association – the Mubende Women Gold Miners Association. Pascal Kwesiga examines what the women's association stands to gain

Women perform possibly the most hazardous and taxing tasks in the gold mining sector in Uganda. They face all manner of exploitation and abuse in the male-dominated artisanal gold mining industry.

Yet they are paid pennies for extracting gold from ore using the banned lethal mercury, lifting bulky sacks of ore and doing other tasks for gold mining pit owners, who are mainly men. However, in a matter of days, the women, who have been engaged as casual labourers for years, will return to Mubende district's gold mining areas as licence holders.

The energy ministry is set to sign licensing licences for the 21 mining associations in Mubende, including the Mubende Women Gold Miners Association (MUGOMWA).

The licences are expected to be issued before the end of this month. This is the first time women in Uganda are getting into the lucrative gold business in such a big way. If approved, they could also open the multi-billion dollar gold market.

Bank of Uganda statistics indicate that more gold is being exported from Uganda than was the case a few years ago. The gold exports rose from 11kg worth about \$227,000 in 2016 to 8,751kg worth \$340m in 2016. The figures for 2017 and later are not yet available.

The 21 associations now eyeing the big gold were formed by the artisanal gold miners, who were evicted from Mubende gold mines in 2017 as the energy ministry sought to get them (miners) organised and brought under a policy and regulatory framework currently under review. The associations are run under the umbrella of Mubende United Artisanal and Small Scale Miners' Assembly.

The associations will be operating on 20-25% of the mining area relinquished by the mining licence holders – ALC Uganda's member institutions from President Yoweri Museveni.

The MINUGOMWA chairperson, Julia Namuwasa, said the women are excited at the prospect of getting a licence.

A licence holder is issued for small mining investments. It is granted to citizens of Uganda or a company in which Ugandans own at least 51%. It is renewable after every two years. Mining



Women working in one of the gold mines in Mubende district. (right) Processed samples of gold. With the women getting their own licences, it is believed that the exploitation of women in the mines will reduce

working as soon as we get the licence. As women, we are glad we will be going back as licence holders," she added.

However, getting the women organised and their association registered has involved a series of meetings and negotiations between women and men.

Namuwasa said the women had been helped by the Global Rights Alert (GRA), a local non-governmental organisation, to get organised into an association and registered. The organisation, she explained, held several meetings with them (women) to generate a consensus on the formation and registration of the association.

"Since the evictions, we (women) have been saving and training small businesses

we are going to start mining this and get more money," she added.

The women, Namuwasa stated, will return to the mines more empowered and organised to run gold mining pits and other activities associated with the industry, instead of relying on men for casual jobs.

However, for the women to engage in meaningful mining and related activities in the mines, she said, they will need funds.

Questions have, however, been asked if the women have the capacity to mine, process, and market the gold without being cheated.

Namuwasa was emphatic that the association would seek assistance to be able to avoid such scenarios.

There are women members in the other 20 male-dominated associations, but they are not the forefront of running the business, she said.

The decision to form an association, she explained, was informed by the fact that women were not given land rules and positions in former other associations dominated by men, yet they performed key tasks in the mines. The women also wanted to fight business associated with working in the mines.

"For example, there are cultural beliefs that when women get close to the pits, the gold disappears. There is also belief that you cannot find gold if you sleep with a woman," she said.

Getting the women organised and their association registered has involved a series of meetings and

"Women who have the capacity will own gold pits and machines, but there are women who will be involved in the service industry, owning saloons and restaurants. We need to access the Women's Fund to get machines for mining and extracting gold. We do not want to be employee again. We want to be employers," she said.

NEGATIVE, asked: How will this benefit the women? Nkwesiga said the association

of licences will empower women to provide for their families and keep their children in school. "If you are being paid

3000 for carrying a basin of ore from the pit to the drying area, you are not going to be employed in the same way when you become a

women boss. There are more positive benefits. Now women need to be helped to run the association and acquire licences," Nkwesiga added.

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organisation, executive director Winnie Nyabwasa, said the registration of an association and the acquisition of a licence is a big achievement and has elevated the status of women in the mining sector.

"Previously, women faced all sorts of exploitation in mines, in silence. But now, they have a fully registered mining association and have a licence to operate on their own. We are going to have women bosses and women with a voice in the industry who are able to address their issues. Previously, women



A female gold miner uses a plastic basin to wash rock dust with water, to extract gold nuggets, at Lukole village, Mubende district

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### Empowered women

The chairperson of Artisanal and Small Scale Miners' Association, John Bosco Bwalya, said since women now have mining rights, they could engage in actual mining or sell their parts. About 30 licence holders are expected to be issued to the 21 associations.

Some of the 21 associations asked for more than one or two licence holders. Depending on the capacity, it is up to us to decide when to start work. We are seeing a return of the legal miners to the mines now," he added.

An official at the energy ministry, who asked not to be named, said each licence covers a land area of over 10 hectares.

"The women can now engage in mining or get carriers who can help them. They are going to be doing and improved because they have mining rights. By the end of two years, they will even be more powerful," Bwalya noted.

The ministry has issued prospecting licences to the associations.

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### Economy



Women filter sand in search for gold in Mubende

## For women in gold mines, it's a chance amidst hurdles

ALON NINGWASA

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Statistics of all the women working in gold mines and as artisanal miners are difficult to come by. Just Kasekende said of the three mining sites in Mubende, they are grouped in clusters of between 20 and 30 women.

A joint study on the gender dimension of (T)S&S (tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold) in the Great Lakes Region, including Uganda, found a significant proportion of artisanal miner communities comprise of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including the elderly, women and youth.

"While these groups, including the elderly, women and youth, face additional disadvantages owing to the discriminatory beliefs, impediments to their agency and bargaining power, and limited knowledge of women's and girls' work, and lack of access to and control of key assets and resources derived from them," said the report, done by the Gender Resource Facility (GRF), sponsored by Netherlands' Royal Tropical Institute and Jomo Kenyatta School of Management.

Women and girls, the study said, are restricted to work in mining, education and training and denied freedom to participate and influence decisions that concern them.

They are the lowest paid and this is increasing their vulnerability to sexual, physical and sexual and gender-based violence.

Perhaps Kasekende commiserates a little further. In Mubende, they earn \$10 per bag of sand carried on a three-day journey. On longer distances, it increases to \$100 but one has to carry 100kg of sand to earn a sizeable amount.

Sometimes, she said, accidents happen when at work and women are injured but it is not the responsibility

of the company to treat them. "If the boss is good, he pays for treatment. But we usually pay for ourselves in case you are injured," she said.

Nkwesiga told The Observer on Monday that women women in the mining industry, especially artisanal miners, were the "dark side to the sector". Government doesn't give them due attention, she said.

"Most women are artisanal miners and need favourable regulations to improve work environment. Even men in the sector are going through a lot," Nkwesiga said.

For women, it is harder to find places of convenience like toilets and clean water when they are working. Julia Namuwasa, the leader of Mubende Women's Association, said in addition to lacking general materials for use like bathing, overall and gloves, lack of access to critical facilities like clean water and toilets was an obstacle.

"There are no toilets and we fetch water from far," Namuwasa said. "The only change is that at least we can now meet our employer once a month."

Government has a women funds programme to help various women groups start small projects but women in the mines have not been able to access it.

Namuwasa said "We failed to understand the whole idea of women funds."

Yet women in gold mines in Uganda remain optimistic of the future even though things haven't changed fast – the fact that they can now talk meetings with their bosses makes it a positive sign.

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Within these groups, women and girls face additional disadvantages mainly owing to discriminatory beliefs, impediments to their agency and bargaining power.

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## 3.0 INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING



**G**RA continues to position herself to be the leading the civil society organisation in promoting and defending human and community resource rights in the extractives sector. In order to realise this, GRA developed and started implementation of the 10-year Institutional Growth Strategy and Program of Work which sets out priorities and guides operations as well as resource allocation.

GRA conducted tailor-made trainings aimed at improving staff understanding of the extractives value chain, integration of gender in the sector, community engagement strategies, financial and project management among others. GRA also developed and revised selected policies and manuals aimed at strengthening our internal operations. In order to improve communication to stakeholders, GRA redesigned her website to match the current trends.

For more information visit us on; [www.globalrightsalert.org](http://www.globalrightsalert.org)

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# WOMEN IN ARTISANAL AND SMALL SCALE MINING (ASM)

OUR CALL:

**"Regularize the ASM sector so that we can work in a safe and productive environment that benefits us and our families."**

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