

# **ACTION ORIENTED RESEARCH TO STRENGTHEN BUNYORO KINGDOM TO DEFEND HER CULTURAL HERRITAGE FROM NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT IN UGANDA**



**His Majesty-Solomon Gafabusa Iguru 1st -The Omukama of Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom**

**COMPILED BY SELECTED CULTURAL LEADERS FROM BUNYOROKITARA KINGDOM**

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## **Acknowledgement**

*This report on Action Oriented Research is aimed at Strengthening Bunyoro Cultural Institution to defend her cultural heritage from destruction by the emerging oil and gas industry in Uganda. This study was prepared by selected cultural leaders from Hoima, Buliisa and Kibaale districts and specifically from the villages of Kakindo, Nyakabingo, Kaiso, Tonya, Bugoigo, Kizonge, Buseruka, Kigoroby, Butiaba, Bugambe and Buliisa Town Council with the Principal Private Secretary to the King of Bunyoro, Hon. Yolamu Nsamba as the Lead Research Facilitator in collaboration with the National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE) as the Coordinating Institution. This work has been supported financially by Revenue Watch Institute (RWI). The planning, facilitation and coordination of this report was facilitated by a technical committee comprising of Frank Muramuzi, Dennis Tabaro and Bwengye Rajab Yusufu of NAPE.*

*The Kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara acknowledges the tireless efforts of the kingdom cultural leaders, the oil host community groups and individuals who have contributed to field data collection for this report. The Omukama extends his appreciation to NAPE and Revenue Watch Institute (RWI) that provided financial support, cordination and technical advice that enabled the field research team finalize this research work.*

*NAPE and the Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom leaders have noted from information documented by this study that the current contentious issues regarding the oil and gas industry that are being addressed by government and the Oil Companies are still by far lacking. More attention seem to be directed towards the economics of the industry than the significance of Bunyoro cultural institution that has united close to six million people in five districts of Buliisa, Hoima, Masindi, Kibaale and Kiryandongo for centuries.*

*Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom has not been involved in the negotiations of the oil deals so far struck between Uganda Government and the oil companies. Cultural resources are being destroyed by the on-going oil drilling activities without permission from the Omukama. Many more Bunyoro resources are endangered by future oil developments in form of oil pipelines, refineries, spills, fires and loss of land of the Omukama s subjects to various oil companies and land speculators. The kingdom is concerned that despite the Omukama having exclusive user-rights over kingdom resources as enshrined in the 1933 and the 1955 Bunyoro Agreements, the contracting parties in the oil deals (oil companies and Uganda Government) ignored the fact that the kingdom is a major stake-holder in the Oil Industry that deserves a substantive share of the oil revenues to fulfill her mandate. There are fears that the oil industry will have significant negative impacts on the Kingdom s cultural heritage that the Omukama must insulate from imminent abuses.*

*The kingdom therefore, urges all who have unfairly claimed the power and knowledge of the kingdom resources and the indigenous communities illegally to relinquish them and also inform them to stand warned that destruction of the documented cultural resources will be accounted for in the future be it in Uganda or abroad even when the oil resource becomes exhausted. The kingdom also urges its subjects particularly the oil host communities to resist all those activities aimed at destroying Bunyoro-Kitara s long time tested culture and resources.*

*NAPE finally promises to continue working with the Bunyoro Cultural Institution, the local Oil Advocacy groups who are members of Oil Watch network Uganda (OWN-U) coordinated by NAPE and AFIEGO and Oil host communities to use this report in advocating for good governance of Uganda s oil and gas resources so that it benefits all Ugandans.*

*Produced with financial support from:*



*Cordinated by:*



# CONTENTS

## Table of Contents

Acronyms.....	3
Map showing Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom Oil Lands and Cultural Resources.....	5

### SECTION A

Introduction to the Action Research.....	6
Rationale.....	6
The process.....	7
Diagnosis Stage.....	8
Commissioning Action Research & Identification of the Research Team.....	8
Training the Research Team.....	8
Field Data Collection.....	9
Supervision of Field Research.....	9
Feed Back and Application.....	9
Participation and Sample Size.....	9
Research Challenges.....	9

### SECTION B

Brief Historical Background of Bunyoro Kingdom.....	10
The Monarchy.....	11
The Oil in Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom.....	11

### SECTION C

Research findings.....	12
Abuse of Omukama's "User Rights".....	12
Trespass on Royal Ancestral Burial Grounds.....	12
Trespass on Shrines in Ancestral Homelands.....	12
Abuse of Lake Albert, Rivers and Lagoons.....	14
Illegal Occupation of coastal / Lakeshore Villages (Hills).....	15
Destruction of Herbal Medicine.....	15
Threat to Forests and Tree Cover of Cultural Significance.....	15
Threat to Cultural Mines.....	15
Distorted Pattern of Traditional Population Settlement.....	15

### SECTION D

Summary table of Endangered or Destroyed Cultural Resources due to Oil Industry activities in Bunyoro sub-region.....	17
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### SECTION E

Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom demands.....	18
Table of Action Research Team comprising of Bunyoro Kingdom cultural leaders & technical committee members.....	19

**Acronyms**

AFIEGO	Africa Institute for Energy Governance
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
HM	Herbal Medicine
NAPE	National Association of Professional Environmentalists
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
OWN-U	Oil Watch Network-Uganda
PPS	Principal Private Secretary

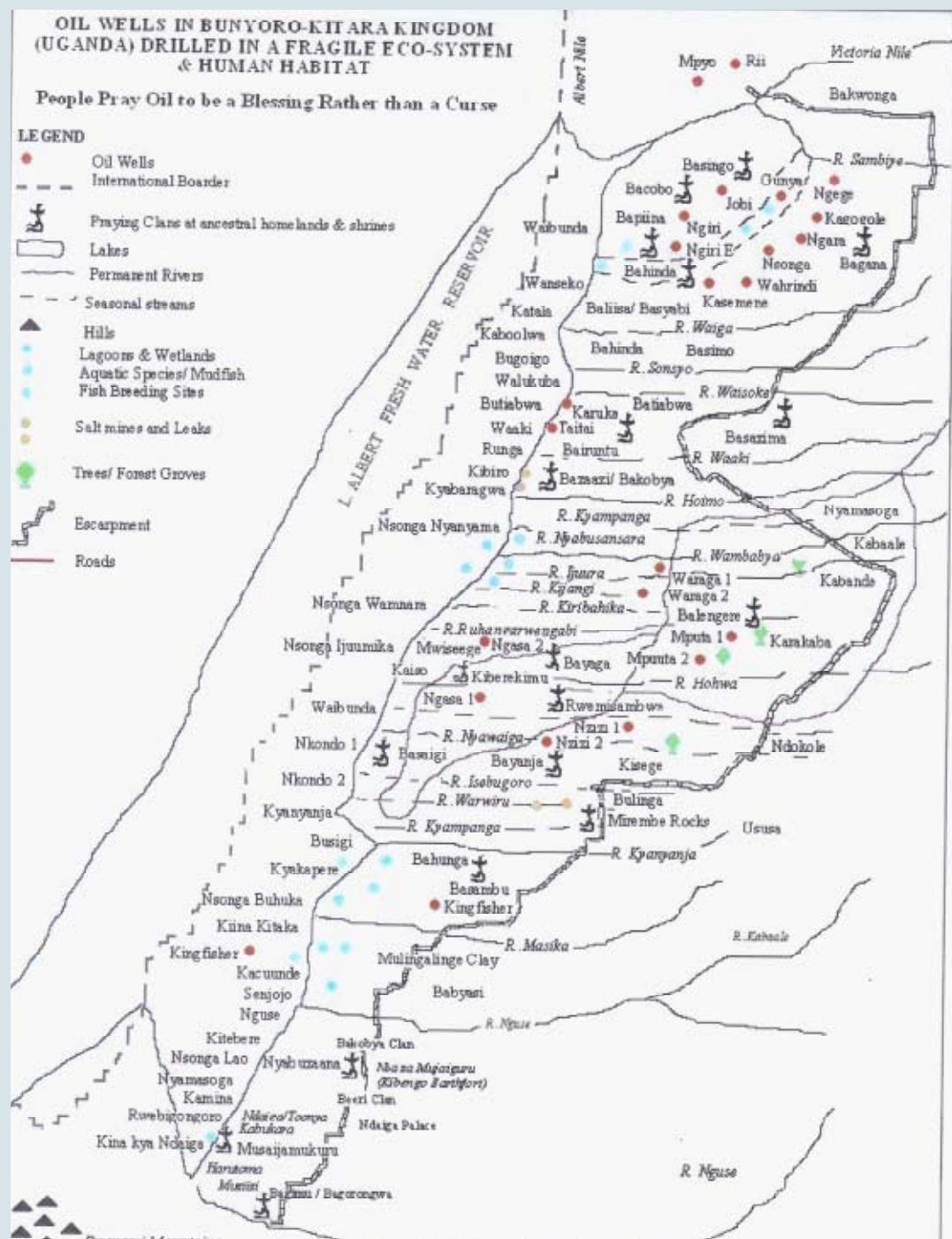
**Tables:**

- 1. Summary of endangered or destroyed cultural resources due to oil industry activities in Bunyoro sub-region
- 2. The research team comprising of selected Bunyoro-Kitata cultural leaders and technical team members

**Figures:**

- 1. Map showing Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom oil lands and cultural resources
- 2. Photograph showing research team Meeting His Majesty, Solomon Gafabusa Iguru 1<sup>st</sup>, The Omukama of Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom
- 3. Action research team comprising of Bunyoro kingdom cultural leaders

**Figure 1:**  
MAP showing Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom oil lands and cultural resources



## SECTION A

### 1. Introduction to the Action Research

This action oriented research report was commissioned by NAPE in November 2011 till February 2012 in the Albertine Oil region specifically in selected districts of Bunyoro Kingdom i.e. Hoima, Buliisa and Kibaale. The overall objective of this research was to generate and document information that would strengthen the advocacy capacity of Bunyoro Cultural Institution to defend her cultural heritage from the negative impacts of an emerging and fast growing oil and gas industry in Uganda.

#### 1.1 Action Oriented Research

- Wikipedia (October 2010), calls Action Oriented Research a methodological approach for doing collaborative research with practioners and community partners that can inform practice, programmes, community development and policy while contributing to the scientific knowledge base. A group of people identify a problem, research on it, document it as evidence and do something to solve it, see how successful their efforts have been and if not satisfied, try it again. Therefore, Action Oriented Research is a reflective process of progressive problem solving led by individuals working with others in teams or as part of the community to improve the way they address issues and solve problems in real life.
- It is at times referred to as participatory research or collaborative inquiry
- At times its called emancipatory research
- To put it simple, Action Research is “ learning by doing”

##### 1.1.1 Aims of Action Oriented Research

- Contribute to the practical concerns of the people in an immediate problematic situation. Therefore there is a dual commitment in action research to study the system and collaborate with its members in changing the system to what is together regarded as desirable direction.

##### 1.1.2 Attributes of Action Oriented Research

- Primary focus is turning the people involved or with the problem into researchers
- Open discussion -People learn best and more willingly apply what they have learned when they do it them selves
- Open acknowledgement of biases to each other as participants
- Learning by action.

##### 1.1.3 Principles of Action Oriented Research

- Reflexive critique – A documented account of a situation –Notes, transcripts records of truth in a social setting
- Co – researching – Participants in Action oriented studies are co-researchers
- Collaborative approach. The principle of collaborative resource pre supposes that each persons ideas are equally significant as potential resources for creating interpretive categories of analysis, negotiated among participants.
- Open discussion of one’s interpretations, ideas and judgements
- Theory, practice, transformation-For action researchers, theory informs practice, practice refines theory, in a continuous transformation.



## 1.2. Rationale of this Action Research

- NAPE in close collaboration with the King of Bunyoro and his Principal Private Secretary initiated this Action research study purposely to address the practical concerns of Bunyoro Kingdom and its subjects over the increased threats of an emerging oil and gas sector to the institution's cultural heritage. The King of Bunyoro together with his principal private secretary informed NAPE in April 2010 the urgency of the need to strengthen his institution to advocate for its cultural heritage as a governance, human right and accountability issue since destruction of the cultural sites of the kingdom by illegally grabbing their land, destroying ancestral burial sites, cultural forests and grazing lands means violating the food rights, the access rights to natural resources and the environmental beauty on which the kingdom and its subjects have survived on for centuries. It was noted that despite the king having exclusive user rights over resources that lie in kingdom land such as rivers, lakes, minerals etc these are being exploited without information disclosure and in close consultation with the kingdom, a fact that is slowly but steadily creating space for future conflicts and human suffering. It was also noted that the abuse of these cultural resources was being accelerated by the fact that they are not documented and thus investing oil companies and government were not taking them seriously.
- Thus as a follow up to the lessons learnt while implementing the past Action Oriented Research project by local host community groups which ended April 2011, NAPE found it fit to strengthen the advocacy capacity of the Bunyoro cultural institution through action research to demand her cultural heritage rights from the oil companies and the government.
- The kingdom needs to be brought on board as a strategic force that adds more strength to advocacy work of the host community groups and local people since it is legally recognized as the custodian of the kingdom property, resources and the rights of its subjects (the Banyoro people).

## 1.3. The process

- Bunyoro Kingdom in close consultation with NAPE commissioned this action research undertaking in November 2011 as a follow up to the meeting NAPE held with the King / Omukama and his Principal Private Secretary in April 2010 at the Kingdom Palace in Hoima District.



*Frank Muramuzi of NAPE and Jerusha of FGHR Meeting His Majesty, Solomon Gafabusa Iguru 1<sup>st</sup>, The Omukama of Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom, April 2010*



### 1.3.1. Diagnosis Stage

This involved a series of communications and planning action meetings on how to raise the resources needed to undertake this study. To keep the thoughts alive, a technical research team at NAPE was instituted to plan and follow up the planned work and mobilize financial resources to get the work started. This team kept update communications with the Kingdom through the selected Lead Research Facilitator-Hon. Yolamu Nsamba - The Principal Private Secretary to the King of Bunyoro. In November 2011, NAPE secured financial support from Revenue Watch Institute (RWI) and there after, plans to implement the project started with Bwengye Rajab of NAPE taking the overall coordination of the implementation exercise.

### Commissioning Action Research & Identification of the Research Team

This was embarked on after convening a meeting with the lead Research Facilitator and planning to conduct a field visit in the oil rich region purposely to identify the field research team. A research team was identified by the Kingdom largely comprising of elderly cultural leaders from the villages of Kakindo, Butiabwa, Kigoroby, Kaiso, Tonya, Bugambe and Buseruka among others.



*Action Research team of selected Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom Cultural Leaders with the PPS to the Omukama of Bunyoro Kitara-January 2012)*

### 1.3.2. Training the Research Team

The community research team was trained in the following areas by NAPE; The practical theory of action oriented research, identifying research areas, formulation of research questions, data collection, analysis and interpretation, advocacy and lobbying using research findings, problem solving in undertaking research and field data reporting.

### 1.3.3. Field Data Collection

Each member of the research team was given research materials in form of papers, pens, books plus other field resources to enable him or her compile the cultural information in his area of coverage. These were later to be gathered together by the lead Research Facilitator

and coordinator at NAPE for Compilation, sharing with both the field research team and the technical committee for further input and refinement. Data was collected on existing and threatened cultural resources of the kingdom such as burial grounds, caves, ecosystem resources such as lakes and rivers, cultural sites, cultural herbal medicines, hunting and fishing grounds among others. A series of local setting meetings were organized to discuss, share and orient each other on the compiled document.

#### **1.3.4. Supervision of Field Research**

The field research was supervised through physical meetings and field visits. The NAPE projects Coordinator maintained contact with the research team and also visited the oil region purposely to assess research progress and provide onsite support and advice to individual Research team members.

#### **1.3.5. Feed Back and Application**

Data collected from the field was analyzed, interpreted by the field research team and lead facilitator and compiled into a draft report. The report was subjected to reviews by the technical committee of the project. Individual field reports of raw data were also bound together in one document for future learning and consultation for details.

Based on the compiled analyzed data, the kingdom generated a set of demands that would form a basis for present and future advocacy And engagements with stake holders including oil companies, government, financiers and civil society on issues related to protection of her cultural heritage and demand for revenue sharing on its ancestral resources.

#### **1.3.6. Participation and Sample Size**

The field research team compiled the information from their elderly cultural experience, making transect walks and consultations. Approximately, 6,000 respondents from more than 10 villages were involved in generating the information.

### **1.4. Research Challenges**

- (a). Terrain of the region: The specific areas where the information was obtained have got a hard terrain with valleys and escarpments and this delayed the speed of accomplishing the data collection exercise since most of the research team members were elderly senior citizens in the age bracket of 50-80 years.
- (b). Misinterpretations: Some participants first misinterpreted the data collection guidelines but this was overcome by constant interactions and support by the NAPE project coordinator and the Lead Research facilitator who were always available in the field to support the exercise.
- (c). Logistics and Facilitation to Move in the Project Area: Resources availed to the field research team were not adequate to cover all the field costs.

## SECTION B

### **Brief Historical Background of Bunyoro Kingdom**

Bunyoro Kingdom was the strongest pre-colonial institution in East Africa. Chwa II Kabarega, also known as Kabalega, was the Omukama of Bunyoro from 1870 to 1899. When he was crowned king, he set out to develop his new Kingdom via trade and especially the Kibiro Saltworks. Unfortunately the British sought to colonize his Kingdom, but he resisted.[1]

On 1st January 1892 the British declared war on Bunyoro. For a period of nearly nine years he was able to defend Bunyoro Kingdom against the British who enlisted help from the countries and Uganda tribes including the Baganda and mercenary soldiers enlisted and hired from Somalia, Sudan and India.

On 9th April 1899 Kabalega was wounded in battle by the British, who were able to capture him together with Mwanga the Kabaka of Buganda. He was exiled to the Seychelles Archipelago and imprisoned on Mahe Island for 24 years. His son Kitahimbwa then still a minor was placed as a puppet on the throne and was a powerless. The kingdom was administered directly by the colonial authority as an occupied country.[1] In 1923, Kabarega was given permission to return to Bunyoro but died in Jinja on 6 April 1923, shortly before reaching the borders of the kingdom.[2]

When Great Britain colonized Uganda in 1900 it paid soldiers that fought on their side parcels of land. The beneficiaries were issued land titles known as Mailo land. This was done with no regard at all for the clans that had lived on ancestral homelands for very many generations. Clans everywhere were dispossessed of ancestral homelands. The new landlords that the British created were protected by a 1900 Buganda Agreement which was illegal in British law.

No single clan anywhere in Uganda including the clan leaders in Buganda endorsed that agreement. The 1900 Buganda Agreement was signed after the British enthroned minors as puppet kings of Bunyoro and Buganda. They put a four year old boy, Kitahimbwa Karukara on the throne of Bunyoro and a one year old infant, Daudi Cwa on the throne of Buganda. They signed the 1900 Agreement with Baganda soldiers that betrayed the Kabaka and fought alongside the British colonial forces of occupation.

Clan leaders (Abataka) have ever since opposed the manner in which they were dispossessed of their ancestral lands. Many of these Mailo lands are in South Bunyoro areas that the British annexed to Buganda. Although the king of Bunyoro never signed that agreement with the British all land in Bunyoro and the rest of Uganda not given out as Mailo land was by law designated to be Crown land. This reduced the inhabitants to a status of mere squatters and they have since been denied any land rights from the time the lands on which their ancestors lived was declared Crown Land. What this implied is that it was property of the British Monarchy. Great Britain illegally and directly reaped the benefits for several decades up to the time Uganda became independent.

Many inhabitants of ancestral homelands were evicted and their lands were often designated waste lands which the Governor declared either game or forest reserves. This was done without paying compensation to the inhabitants.

The Banyoro were not a party to the 1900 Agreement which the British used to benefit their Crown and to render the inhabitants landless. Yet these inhabitants belong to clans that have lived on these ancestral homelands since the reign of King Omucwezi Ndahura whose reign historians acknowledge after in-depth studies of the early history of this kingdom. (See Tantala, Rene Louisa, (Ph. D. Thesis) *The Early History of Kitara in Western Uganda: Processes Models of Religious and Political Change*, The University of Wisconsin, Madison 1989).

### **The Monarchy**

The Omukama, King of Bunyoro-Kitara, His Majesty Solomon Gafabusa Iguru 1 is the 27th King in the Babiito clan, the current reigning dynasty now in its 19th generation. Since one generation is estimated to last 27 years the Babiito have been on the throne for more than 500 years. They were preceded by two other dynasties namely the Batembuzi and the Bacwezi on which the Monarchy of Bunyoro-Kitara is anchored.

### **The Oil in Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom**

Oil as a natural resource in Bunyoro-Kitara kingdom land that was known to exist as early as the kingdom existed. People used to see signs of oil seepages in their lands until the colonialists attempted to tap it in 1923 when a first shallow well was drilled at Butiabwa and named Waki 2. Both the 1st and 2nd World Wars as well as post independence political turmoil in Uganda interrupted further drilling until 2006 when a United Kingdom listed Company -Tullow Oils Plc discovered 12 oil locations in the Kaiso Tonya area. Since then, other oil companies have entered the industry. Currently they include, Tullow, Total, CINNO, Neptune and Dominion. They have been engaged in a series of oil drilling and development activities that have raised a lot of expectations, worries and joys. People from both the local communities and urban centers expect that the discovered oil resource will spur sustainable growth and development while others are already anticipating an imminent oil curse.

Pessimism is justified by the fact that; oil companies have been operating in the country without an adequate legal regime to monitor and regulate their activities. There are worries that oil production sharing agreements were signed without participation of key institutions such as Bunyoro Kingdom that hosts the oil resource on its lands. There are also concerns that the emerging oil industry will deplete most of the ecosystem resources since oil wells discovered are located in fragile ecosystems such as lakes, rivers and wild life reserves as well as crop husbandry and cattle. People are scared of likely future oil spills that may result to, internal and cross boarder conflicts over resource use and control, ethnic tensions and above all erosion of the long time tested cultural heritage of Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom.

This is because the entire Albertine Rift right away from the boarders of Southern Sudan down to the southern boarder with Rwanda has been divided into eight oil blocks moreover, almost 96% of these appearing in protected / environmental sensitive areas. These blocks are:

- a) EA5 RHINO CAMP BASIN - Size 2941sq.km
- b) EA1 PAKWACH BASIN - Size 4285sq.km
- c) BULIISA DISCOVERY AREA - Six discoveries Ngege, Kasemene, Kigogore, Wairindi, Ngara and Nsonga
- d) BUTIABA DISCOVERY AREA - Two discoveries - Taitai and Karuka oil wells
- e) KAISO-TONYA DISCOVERY AREA - Four discoveries - Mputa, Nzizi, Ngassa and Waraga oil wells
- f) KING FISHER DISCOVERY AREA - Size 344 sq.km
- g) KANYWATABA PROSPECT AREA - size 171 sq.km
- h) EA4B - LAKE EDWARD / GEORGE BASIN - Size 1018 sq.km

## SECTION C

### **Research findings**

This study was commissioned to document how the emerging oil industry will or is already negatively impacting on Bunyoro Cultural Heritage. Documentation of this information would create basis for engagements and dialogue by the Bunyoro cultural institution with stake holders in defending and protecting its cultural resources. The findings on how oil is impacting on Bunyoro culture are as presented below:

### **Abuse of Omukama's "User Rights"**

Omukama was allowed exclusive user rights of lands in the wild life reserves where oil wells have been discovered. The said user rights are spelt out in the 1955 Bunyoro Agreement. The Uganda Constitution is Silent about those user rights although it never repealed the 1955 Agreement. The Restitution Statute reinstated the Omukama as a Traditional Ruler with all his Privileges. The Omukama regards the provisions of the 1955 Bunyoro Agreement still valid and binding. The constitution of the republic of Uganda recognizes the Omukama as a trustee on behalf of his subjects and trustees worldwide are entitled to 12.5% share of royalties. It is not adequate to have agreements signed between the Oil Companies and the Government of Uganda without acceptance of his majesty -the Omukama of Bunyoro-Kitara. The onus is on the Oil companies to secure user rights from the Omukama of Bunyoro-Kitara otherwise they are acting in breach of the constitution of the Omukama deems the Oil Companies liable.

### **Trespass on Royal Ancestral Burial Grounds**

The oil companies have trespassed on royal tombs and Bayaga clan sites that are revered and sacred. These include the tomb of Omukama Isaza Nyakikooto Waraga Rugambnabato where king Waraga was buried during the eleventh century. Tullow Oil Company sunk an oil well at this site and has turned the site into an area where communities are prohibited to go. Yet this site used to be a place of prayer and sacrifice. There are many similar sites that people frequented for purposes of praying and these are shown on the map appended on page 5.

### **Trespass on Shrines in Ancestral Homelands**

Clans at Albert Lakeside villages include: Bakwonga, Bagana, Bamooli, Bapiina, Basazima, Basingo/Batera, Basambo, Bahunga/Bagabo, Bayanja, Bazaazi, Batiabwa, Basimo, Basansya/Bayaga, Bairuntu, Batandu, Basiabi, Baliisa, Bakindwa/Bahinda, Babwongo, Bacobo. All these clans have ancestral shrines where they pray and offer sacrifices to the clan spirits whenever they experience both social and economic problems. People visit the ancestral shrines to thank the spirits for whatever good things they may have received like when fish catches fail or harvests are very small people pray the spirits to avert such calamities. On the other hand when Sambiye River floods and makes available plenty of mud fish, people (the Bagungu) in a ceremony, welcome Sambiye the spirit of a river that brings fish before it empties itself into Lake Albert during the rains.

This traditional religious ceremony like many others is about food for nutrition especially protein that pregnant mothers and children need. It is also about a specific livelihood that is



currently threatened. Nine oil wells have been drilled in the Sabiye River Valley. The danger for pollution is imminent. Prayers and sacrifices are made at twenty other known sites namely: Wanseko, Wankende, Waluhoiza, Katala, Karakaba, Kaboolwa, Kibiro, Waraga, Toonya, Busigi, Mirembe rocks, Nkondo, Kaiso, Nsonga Ijumiika, Nsonga Nyanyama, Nsonga Buhuka, Kacunde, Nsonga Nkondo and Rwemisambwa.

The Basambo clan has around the mouth of the Albert Nile Waja Buliba shrine which is a mound at which people gather and start performing the rituals before they join a procession to the edge of the lake and board canoes and row into the lake to sacrifice chicken and seeds.

There is a Bayanja clan shrine between Warwiru village astride River Nkondo in Kabwoya and Kyanyanja in Kyangwali sub-county. The Rocks at the escapement are said to be an abode of Kakuba, a clan spirit people petition when fish catches decline. They also petition Kakuba when malaria strikes. Kakuba also ensures safety of adolescent girls from sexual abuses and accepts sacrifices of millet grain and peas.

Between Rivers Masika and Kyanyanja there is a shrine for the Bahunga/ Bagabo clan at Nsonga Buhuka. It consists of four ritual huts for the spirits of Kagoro, Wamara, Mulindwa and Kyomya. Within the huts are ritual items including pots and backcloth. Mwija stream traverses this ancestral homeland and enters lake Albert at Kyabasambu where there is a forest grove where people cut construction wood. It also stores ancient pots, guords (ebisisi) and other items for ritual use

At Kiina there is a shrine site marked by a stone named Musaijamukuru and a tree. This shrine is active in the dry season. Rituals from here move to the islands of Kamagana and Kiina. There is excellent clay for making water pots, smocking pipes and cooking pots at Mulingeri. There is a traditional hunting range on which people may hunt and obtain animal protein. The fishing grounds here have always been accessed by the community since they are outside the protected areas. Fishermen catch Nile Perch, Ngara, Ngasa, Tilapia and Marinda to feed and nourish their families.

A Balengere clan has the shrines of Wamara and Kaliisa consisting of two huts for these spirits. This is also a community hunting range that clans may access to hunt game for meat. People spend as many as three days dancing for these spirits and make sacrifices of goats to ensure successful hunting and to ward off diseases like measles. No domestic animals are reared on this range. Leopards inhabit River Ruhanga Rwengeye.

There is at the mouth of River Wambabya in Tonya village, a shrine of Mugonje a spirit of the Basingo Clan. The site caretaker is priestess Nyanyama whose representative dances here as Nyanyama rhythmically responds to the music seated and wrapped in backcloth. Heritage Oil Company constructed a camp here without consulting Basingo clan leaders and destroyed items of intrinsic value that belonged to the clan which were kept in Atwangwe River forest thicket which was a habitat of a friendly leopard. This small forest consisted mainly of Mpohwa trees from which people obtain herbal medicines.

The Basingo ancestral land has the following Lakeside villages: Kabanda, Izingi and Mbegu.

Kiribahi stream is within the shrine area. During the rainy season this river is a source of various types of mudfish. Other seasonal streams in the area are: Kanagiyo, Wangwe and they empty into the Lake Albert. When the plain is inundated Izingi becomes an island across Mbegu village known for its sisal plants that Kyebuza a Muhamba clansman named Kyabuza planted long ago. The site is active during the dry season and people in small groups of up to fifteen, make sacrifices of either hens or goats for the spirits. The inhabitants raise here livestock including sheep, cattle and goats that graze the pastures at the coastal plain. These are at risk of becoming extinct in future due to the likely menace of oil pipeline spills and fires since villages such as Mbegu host oil wells.

### **Abuse of Lake Albert, Rivers and Lagoons**

The inhabitants of Bunyoro-Kitara have accessed freely Lake Albert fresh waters. People have enjoyed this God given right since time immemorial. Lake Albert provides vast ecosystem services for Western Uganda being the largest water reservoir which supports the maintenance of the water table of the entire region. It is a source of fish protein for the entire people of Bunyoro-Kitara and her neighbors. It is a source of employment for fishing communities and fish vendors. It also facilitates water transport within the region.

Lake Albert moisture feeds the rivers that empty into this lake and facilitate sustainable replenishment of fresh water for drinking by people, for domestic use, for livestock and for wild game. It maintains the seasonal cycles of vegetation cover. Along the river banks we see pasture for livestock and wild game. People also carry on fishing in the permanent rivers that include: Sambiye, Waiga, Sonsyo, Waisoke, Waaki, Hoimo, Wambabya, Hohwa, Nguse and Muziizi. They also fish in the seasonal streams, a feature of the lakeside wetlands characterized by lagoons that are fed by the seasonal rivers. These are habitats of species of mud fish which are easy to catch and that provide fishing employment for communities that live in the area. The seasonal rivers are: Sambiye branches, Waibunda, Isebagoro, Nyawaiga, Kiizi, Nyabusasara, Kijangi, Kiribahika, Kyampanga, Nkondo, Murubuga, Masika, Kamagara and Nyabikyora. The lagoons are the following: Karubanga wetlands, Kiizi kya Nyanyama, Kibunda Kiina, and Kaiso.

Petroleum deposits discovered in the Albertine Graben that are currently being developed experts say will have to be forced by pressure to come to the surface. Heated fresh water must be pumped into the oil wells to force the oil out. The amount of water required will amount to 150 trillion gallons. The Omukama is concerned that the inhabitants of the Kyangwali, Bwikara, Kaiso, Toonya and Buliisa who live in the Albertine Graben and have used fresh water since time immemorial will be deprived of fresh water supplies since as of now, oil wells such as Ngasa 2 have been sunk 30 kms deep into Lake Albert waters.

There are no assurances made at all that oil drilling operations will use and not abuse Bunyoro fresh waters: The agreements signed between the Government of Uganda and the Oil Companies guarantee neither the sustainable safety of the quality and quantity of fresh water supplies nor the restoration of water quality for the benefit of the inhabitants after 150 trillion gallons of water are contaminated by petroleum extraction processes? The Agreements do not provide alternative water supplies in the event of pollution: The terms that have been agreed with petroleum companies to access and use local water supplies

including the rivers, streams and the lake (Albert) are also not clear. The Omukama feels there should be an alternative emergency source of fresh water for his subjects in the event of kingdom waters being polluted.

### **Illegal Occupation of coastal / Lakeshore Villages (Hills)**

At the coastal plain there are high ground raised villages above the altitude of the coastal plain which people use for settlement and livestock grazing because it is not water logged. These areas are also habitats of game species hunted for meat and a source of protein for the communities. Landing sites are identified with the names of these high ground villages that communities cultivate to grow food. South of River Wambabya are eighteen villages: Mwisege, Kyehoro, Kyampanga, Sebagoro, Nyawaiga, Kisega, Wawire, Nkondo, Ndokole, Bulinga, Ususa, Rwirgi, Kyakapere, Kyabasambu, Buhuka, Kiina, Kacunde and Senjojo. Some of these villages host oil mining camps and military army barracks. These villages will be crisscrossed by oil pipelines that will transport heated crude oil of temperatures of around 200°C to the proposed oil refinery at Kibaale Buseruka Sub-county, Hoima district. The safety of community residents in these various villages hangs in jeopardy. The kingdom further notes that there is no oil company operating on ugandan soil that has proven expertise in rift valley oil drilling and this further complicates the safety of the Banyoro in this oil-rich valley.

### **Destruction of Herbal Medicine**

Life is precarious within the fragile eco-system of Kaiso, Toonya, Buhuka, Kibiro, Butyaba and Buliisa which happens to be a habitat of disease vectors responsible for rampant malaria, cholera, bilharzias, elephantiasis etc. To survive in this fragile eco-system people have evolved sophisticated knowledge of herbal medicine and this has enabled them to survive through the millenniums. They use wild plants including: Aloe Vera that grows all over the coastal plain to cure numerous diseases. In addition are the baobab trees (Baligwamabere / Omwikya) whose fruit juice people at the coastal plain also freely use to cure diseases that include hypertension and diabetes. Although poisonous snake bites are common at the hot coastal plain cure is never difficult to find. They are treated with the earth tulips (Bitunguru bya Kanyamunya) that grow there and are a freely accessed herbal medicine. The kingdom is concerned that the health of its subjects will be at increased risk given an imminent loss of medicinal plant species in the event of oil spills and if pipeline fires raze the area. Already, oil wells such as Nzizi in Hoima and Kasemenie 2 in Buliisa have been located in these sites.

### **Threat to Forests and Tree Cover of Cultural Significance**

There is accelerated loss of forest and tree cover in the areas of Buhuka, Kaiso, Toonya, Kibiro, Butyaba, and Buliisa. Rwabalendere cultural forest where the Bayanja clan obtained building construction wood has vanished. The site is occupied by an oil well camp site. The Community has not been compensated for this loss of construction materials. No alternative source of wood was provided before this destruction. The cultural forest below Ndokole hill was destroyed by Heritage oil Company and the community deprived of a useful source of construction wood. No alternative was ever provided. Other cultural forests with functions similar to Kihagya cultural forest risk future extinction in the name of oil development and the kingdom takes this as critical issues of concern. Already, oil drilling tests are being

conducted in Kyamwana village in Kibiro parish, Hoima district where there are resources of cultural significance such as Kibiro Hot Springs.

### **Threat to Cultural Mines**

Within the oil exploration areas are a number of cultural mining sites such as the Kibiro Salt works that have existed since time immemorial and were a critical resource that the kings controlled during the reign of Omukama Cwa II, Kabalega and is still recognized by the Omukama today. This site and others are currently threatened by developments in the oil industry.

**Distorted Pattern of Traditional Population Settlement:** Currently there is cultural dilution caused by immigrant ethnic tribes taking advantage of the oil boom. This development is upsetting social harmony due to conflict over the use of scarce resources including land. New settlements are making ever increasing demands on the very limited public investments in the area for social amenities like schools and health facilities. This also results in tensions and calls for increased public investment into these amenities so as to cope with the growing volumes.

More important to note is that new ethnic groupings migrating into Bunyoro are coming with large herds of domestic animals, grabbing Bunyoro lands and hiding behind rich government officials. The Omukama warns that who ever is acquiring even an inch of Bunyoro land is doing it illegally and will thus loose it at an appropriate time.

## SECTION D

**Table 1: Summary of Endangered or Destroyed Cultural Resources due to current Oil Industry development Activities in Bunyoro Sub-region**

SUMMARY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES VULNERABLE TO OIL DRILLING			
Cultural Resources	Status (endangered/ destroyed)	Location	Oil well affecting the cultural sites
1. Lake Albert: Source of fresh water, fish and water table maintenance	Endangered	Western Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom	23 oil wells may use fresh water and deplete the water table. Effluents likely to flow or seep underground into the lake and pollute it
2. River Zolya, Waiga, Sambiye and its branches: Source of fish protein	Endangered	Kakindo-Buliisa	Ten Oil wells: Kasemene I, 2 & 3, Wairindi, Jobi, Nsoga, Ngara, Kigogole, Ngege, Gunya, Ngiri I and II,
3. 21 clan prayer sites for fish catches to increase at Sambiye, Waluhoiza, Songamari, Katala, Mityoma, Karakaba, Butiabwa, Songalendu, Kaboolwa, Kibiro, Bwirebutakya, Waraga, Nkondo, Kyanyanja, Kyabasambu, Nsonga Nyanyama, Nsonga Ijuumika, Nsonga Wamara, Mirembe, Rwemisambwa, & Kyanyanja.	Endangered (interfered with and some inside oil wells exclusive zones)	Lake Albert eastern shores	21 Oil wells are affecting the various sites as exclusive oil zones to which the inhabitants are denied access.
4. Tomb / shrine of King Isaza Nyakikoto Waraga Rugambanabato	Endangered	Kaiso Tonya	Waraga I & Waraga II
5. Rivers Wambabya and Nyabusansara, among others	Endangered	Tonya parish	Waraga I & Waraga II
6. Kiizi Lagoon / fishery	Endangered	Kaiso-Tonya	Waraga I & Waraga II
7. Tonya shrines site for Bazazi /Bakobyia Clan	Endangered	Kaiso –Tonya	Waraga I & Waraga II
8. Kiizi Lagoon Fishery	Endangered	Kaiso Tonya	Mputa I & Mputa II
9. Kabwoya Game Reserve	Endangered	Nkondo parish  Kabwoya Sub-county	12 Oil wells

10. Izingi Lagoon & Rivers Ijuura, Kijangi, Kiribahika & Rwengo source of mud fish	Endangered	Kaiso-Tonya	Mputa I & Mputa II
11. River Hohwa	Endangered	Kaiso	Ngasa I & Ngasa II Oil wells
12. Wanjoki/ Kisega fish breeding site, Kibunda lagoon and Rivers Hohwa, Kyampanga & Nyawaiga.	Endangered habitats of mud fish and hippos	Nkondo, Isebagoro, Nyawiga	Nzizi I & Nzizi II Oil well
13. Buhuka /Kiina/ Nyabkyora & Kicunde Lagoons and rivers Kyanyanja, Nyabikyora, Kamagana and Masika	Endangered	Buhuka, Kyangwali	King Fisher Oil well
14. Mirembe rocks	Worship site intruded	Heritage camp site	Kingfisher
15. Aloe Vera medicinal herbs	Endangered	Coastal plain	All oil wells
16. Baobab tree medicinal herbs	Endangered	Coastal plain	All oil wells
17. Mikooge trees medicinal herbs:	Endangered	Coastal plain	All oil wells
18. Bitunguru bya Kanyamunya medicinal herbs.	Endangered	Coastal plain	All oil wells
19. Kibiro salt mines & hot springs	Endangered	Kibiro parish  Kyamwana - Village	Kyamwana oil well (old)
20. Bugungu Wildlife reserve	Endangered	Butyaba Buliisa sub-county	Karuka oil wells



## SECTION E:

### Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom Demands

Kingdom demands the Following to Avert threats to Her Cultural Heritage:

- Restitution of Omukama's exclusive user rights of lands in the wild life reserves where oil wells have been discovered. The said user rights are spelt out in the 1955 Bunyoro Agreement. The Uganda Constitution recognize the Omukama as a trustee on behalf of his subjects. The Omukama regards the provisions of the 1955 agreement and the constitution of Uganda as still valid and binding. It is not adequate to have agreements signed between the Oil Companies and the Government of Uganda without consulting the Omukama. The onus is on contracting parties i.e. the Government of Uganda and the Oil companies to secure user rights from the Omukama of Bunyoro-Kitara. As a trustee, he demands the minimum of 12.5% share of oil and other natural resources revenue according to standard worldwide recognized practice.
- The contracting parties must appropriately compensate all people whose properties have been destroyed by the oil and gas exploration and drilling activities. There is need to protect cultural resources being destroyed by ongoing oil drilling activities without permission from the King and many more that shall be endangered by future developments in the Oil Industry due to the laying of oil pipelines, construction of refineries and the imminent oil spills and fires
- Protection of the lands of the Omukama's subjects which are currently being grabbed by various companies and speculators in the name of developing the oil and gas industry. The Omukama demands that Banyoro be given land titles as per provisions of the 1955 agreement.
- Effective restitution of the Omukama's exclusive user rights over resources in kingdom lands enshrined in the 1933 and the 1955 Bunyoro Agreements, the contracting parties involved including the oil companies and government have ignored although legally the Omukama is a substantial stake holder in the Oil and Gas Industry.
- Award of a substantial share of the oil revenue to enable the king to fulfill his legal mandate because the oil industry is bound to make a significant negative impact on the cultural heritage of the Kingdom that the King is duty bound to insulate from imminent abuses.
- Relinquishing unfair claims, power and knowledge of the kingdom and her indigenous communities illegally done.
- All people must desist from the destruction of the documented cultural resources and must stand warned that they shall account for any destruction done in the future be it in Uganda or abroad even in the event of the oil resource becoming exhausted.
- All stakeholders must desist from destroying ancestral burial sites, cultural forests, grazing lands and cultural minerals. Companies drilling oil and government must explain and account for those already being destroyed in places such as Tonya, Waraga among others.
- All stakeholders must desist from violation of the food rights of Omukama's subjects to access natural resources and their enjoyment of the environmental beauty and related attributes on which the kingdom and its subjects have derived their livelihood for centuries.
- Disclosure of information to the Omukama concerning the use of rivers, lakes, minerals currently being exploited, a development that is slowly and steadily creating space for future conflicts and human suffering.
- Legal recognition of the rights of the Omukama's subjects (the peoples of Bunyoro) as representing the king's interests on the ground who are current custodians of kingdom property, resources and cultural property and assets.
- Address a historical injustice perpetrated by adherence to the 1900 Buganda Agreement

that established Mailo land tenure system. It rendered clans to become landless squatters on ancestral homelands. Today they continue to be denied fair compensation because they are not land owners and are being given pittances for crops enumerated although they are losing lands which the oil industry actors have embarked on occupying.

- Restitute all clan ancestral homelands that were illegally declared wastelands by colonial rulers and designated as reserves and their inhabitants that had lived on them through the millenniums were evicted with neither compensation nor proper legally prescribed resettlement.
- Concretize speculative policies about oil drilling and development activities that have raised false expectations and worries among both rural urban communities that expect discovered oil resource to spur sustainable growth and development as well as an imminent oil curse.
- Assure the people that there is no likely future oil spills that may result to, internal and cross boarder conflicts over resource use and control, ethnic tensions and above all erosion of the long time tested cultural heritage of Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom. The Omukama calls for modern oil drilling facility and adoption of internationally recognized oil drilling practices. Oil Companies should also prove expertise in rift valley oil drilling otherwise they will be held accountable for any present or future accidents.
- The Oil Companies and concerned government authorities must seek express permission from the Omukama before carrying oil drilling activities from culturally sensitive areas
- Seek express permission from the Omukama before turning any village or cultural site for the Kingdom into an oil waste / chemical dumping site or constructing oil worker's camps
- Restore to the indigenous communities the sites encroached on by oil camps and military barracks. Recognize the sacred sites that people frequent to make sacrifices and pray the gods to secure their daily needs such as fish catches which are critical in ensuring the nutrition of mothers and infants.
- Include Bunyoro Kingdom in the negotiations of oil deals that are hosted on the kingdom's land. The oil companies and concerned government authorities must seek express permission from the Omukama before any drilling activities in cultural sensitive areas.
- Increase public investment into social amenities for education and health to cope with rising demands for services generated by immigration of opportunity seekers in the oil industry. This is necessary to reverse growing social disharmony and conflict over the use of scarce resources subject to increasing demands on very limited public investments in the area including schools and health facilities and other infrastructure.

**Table 2:****Action Research team comprising of Bunyoro kingdom cultural leaders:**

No.	NAMES	HOME AREA	TELEPHONE
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3.	Rwamukaaga Eriab (Researcher)	Ndaragi Village –Kigorobya sub-county –Hoima district	0775487005
4.	Isaac Bitamale (Researcher)	Kakindo Cell – Buliisa Town Council	0783605614
5.	Asuman Irumba (researcher)	Kaiso Tonya Village –Buseruka Sub-county	0775165174
6.	Isaac Akugizibwe (Researcher)	Kizonge Village – Butasa Town Council	0772338657
7.	Rev Kajura Jonathan (researcher)	Kankwanzi Village – KyanaISOKE Sub-county, Kibaale district	0772861510
8.	Peter Nyakatura (researcher)	Kikaya Village – Bugambe Sub-county Hoima district	0774376292
9.	Margret Byarufu (Researcher)	Kinsansya West Village – Kigwera Sub-county Buliisa district	0752257805
10.	Muhumuza Joseph (Researcher)	Busongo Village Butyaba Sub-county Buliisa district	0772324622
11.	Ntamala Jilly (researcher)	Nyakabingo Village Buseruka Sub-county Hoima	0784819997
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Oil drilling at Lake Albert shoreline -Bunyoro sub-region



Wildlife of the Albertine Rift-Bunyoro Sub-region





Oil pipelines meander through forest areas



Members from select communities in Kihagya forest in Bunyoro learning about conservation of cultural forests



A sacred cave where members of community consult their gods for blessings in Bunyoro, Hoima district



Omukama Kabalega's Burial Ground at Mparo in Hoima district -Bunyoro Sub-region







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