

Dear World Bank Board of Directors,

We are residents from over a dozen villages in the Mbarali District of Tanzania who live in fear of being evicted from our homes, our livelihoods destroyed, and losing more loved ones to violence by TANAPA rangers. Our suffering is the result of the government's plan to expand Ruaha National Park. We were shocked when we heard the government announce it was grabbing our land and over 20,000 of us would be forced from our homes. But we never gave our consent to leave our villages, which are legally registered.

The government has not shared with us resettlement plans and we do not know where we will go. Our lives have been put on hold. We do not plant our fields. School repairs and construction has stopped because we do not know when the evictions will come. People have lost hope of living, as our lives depend on land being taken away by the government.

When we learned about the REGROW project and how the World Bank is funding the government's plans for the Ruaha Park, two villagers submitted a complaint to the Inspection Panel on behalf of the community. In June, after the complaint was filed, we began to hope we could remain in our villages. For the first time in years, we hoped the disappearances of our sons and brothers and violence against our daughters and sisters would end and the rangers responsible be brought to justice. In August, members of the Inspection Panel visited several of our villages. We shared with them firsthand the truth about what the government is doing to us with the World Bank's money. After these meetings, we thought our nightmare would soon be over.

After months of waiting, our hope began to disappear. We recently learned that millions of dollars continue to be sent by the World Bank to TANAPA and other government agencies responsible for our misery. We do not understand why US\$28 million was sent to the project even after our request for inspection was submitted. The Inspection Panel members heard directly from us about the devastating impact of the REGROW project on our lives. Given what we have shared, how can the World Bank keep financing the project?

As we waited, tragedy struck us again. On October 28, Zengo Dotto and five other herders were at their camp in Udinge sub-village of the Mwanawala Village, which the Panel visited. A low flying helicopter of TANAPA scared cattle and dispersed them into the Ruaha Park and then several rangers went to seize the cattle. The herders resisted the seizure of the animals and the rangers gunned down Zengo Dotto, aged just 21 years.

We are relieved to learn that the investigation will at last move forward after the long wait. Our lives have been on hold since the October 2022 eviction announcement. The repeated brutal violence and cattle seizures by rangers is the way the government is trying to remove us. We have received no assurances we will be permitted to stay and plead with you not to wait until it is too late to protect our lives and land rights.

Finally, we also want to make it clear to the World Bank that we reject the dispute resolution process as we do not trust the government to remedy these wrongs. Maybe the dispute resolution can work in some places, but we know it will fail in Tanzania. In desperation, we are writing to petition you, the Executive Directors of the World Bank, to please stop financing the REGROW project and answer our calls for justice. We are tired of living in constant fear for our lives.

We wait to hear from you,

Impacted Villagers from Mbarali District. We go unnamed because we fear our government.